

Michigan Catholic Conference



510 South Capitol Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48933
517 372-9310

7 October 2008

Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Each weekend in our liturgy, in our Profession of Faith, we proclaim the Holy Spirit as “the Lord and Giver of life.” At that moment we affirm a truth that must permeate all aspects of our lives as Christians. Even more, it is a vision and light that we must proclaim within a society seemingly indifferent to the sanctity of human life. For that reason, we, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Michigan, urge Catholics and all people of good will to vote no on Proposal 2.

Proposal 2 is a constitutional amendment that would expand human embryo and human embryonic stem cell research in Michigan. Such research, which is already legal in our state, would broaden the scope of the law to allow for human embryos to be destroyed, with no legislative oversight or regulations. **Embryonic stem cell research is intrinsically evil and morally unacceptable as it necessitates the willful destruction of the earliest stage of human life.** The Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraph 2274 helps guide our direction on this critical subject: “*Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.*”

Many of our fellow human beings struggle daily due to illness or disease, some more painfully than others. Thanks to the advancements in medical science, those suffering from debilitating diseases are being treated, even cured with the progress achieved from *adult* stem cell research. This research, which does not involve the destruction of human embryos, must be supported in the public sphere as well as in the medical field, where professionals take an oath to “do no harm.” Medical science serves humanity to heal and to promote life from its earliest moment of conception until natural death. The destruction of human embryos for experimental purposes represents a profound violation of this most trusted responsibility.

If this proposed constitutional amendment were to pass, human embryo destruction would become an industry completely immune from any state or local law. The potential is immense for abuse, financial profit and other activity that thrives in an unregulated environment. Proposal 2 also presents a grave threat to the state’s ban on human cloning, where human beings are manufactured in a laboratory to preset specifications before their stem cells are extracted. In fact, nothing in this proposed amendment safeguards Michigan’s ban on human cloning. Proposal 2 goes too far.

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As servants of God fortified by our faith, we must acknowledge that the destruction of human embryos for scientific research purposes is against God's command: "Thou shall not kill." As servants of God filled with hope, we must confront this evil of our age. Please join us in praying and working for the defeat of Proposal 2 this November. May each of us "rediscover and make others rediscover" the sacred value and dignity of every human life.

Sincerely in the Lord,

His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit

Most Reverend Patrick R. Cooney
Bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids

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