

# Michigan Catholic Conference



September 10, 2007

Dear Father/Deacon/Pastoral Administrator:

The issue of stem cell research has created a great deal of controversy in our state and our nation. Misleading news reports and deceitful public information have erroneously conveyed the Church's position. In an effort to communicate to the faithful the relationship between stem cell research and the Church's teaching on human life, the diocesan bishops have implemented a statewide education program.

This program is the largest education endeavor undertaken by the Church in our state. It includes participation at the parish level through the enclosed resources and focuses on three critical points:

- There are two different types of stem cell research, adult and embryonic.
- Adult stem cell research, which does not harm the embryo, is morally permissible and is providing treatments for over 70 different medical conditions. Embryonic stem cell research, which involves the direct killing of human embryos and leads to human cloning, is morally unacceptable and is providing no treatments.
- The Church is supportive of ethical means to assist the suffering and protect human life through the advances made with adult stem cells.

On October 1 the Conference will send to every registered Catholic home in the state a letter signed by Michigan diocesan bishops, a 12-minute DVD and an informative brochure – both titled *The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures AND Protecting Life*. Parish participation is critical to the success of this education program. Enclosed in this mailing is a copy of the aforementioned DVD and brochure, a Focus essay, a series of questions and answers that will enable your parish staff to answer any questions that may arise, and sample bulletin announcements. If necessary, the Conference can provide a VHS copy of the DVD.

I respectfully encourage use of these materials in your parish on Respect Life Sunday. Focus, which may be inserted in bulletins or placed in prominent places, is available in quantities at no cost, and may be requested by contacting Beverly Starrak at (517) 372.9310. For additional assistance in implementing the program, your bishop has appointed an individual to act as liaison between the diocese and the Conference.

Catholics have the right and duty to help all who are suffering, and medical science, through adult stem cell research and its proven track record of success, has opened a door of hope. Thank you for your efforts toward ensuring the success of this unprecedented program.

With warm personal regards, I am

Cordially,

Sr. Monica Kostielney, RSM  
President and Chief Executive Officer