

Bioethics and the Family
Circular 2007-04

To: All Parish Priests – Diocesan and Religious:

Last January 9-10, 2007, at EDSA Shangrila Hotel, Manila, the CBCP organized a second International Conference on Bioethics and the Family. I want to bring to your attention its conclusions for dissemination to your Faithful at Mass and on other occasions in fulfillment of our Teaching office:

1. The human embryo is a human person, composed of body and soul, from the moment of his/her conception, endowed with all the potentialities, proper identity, individuality, and uniqueness, and hence has an inherent dignity that must be respected and protected throughout his/her entire life.
2. Created in the image of God, the human embryo has God-given inviolable rights and is destined to eternal life.
3. The human family founded on the institution of marriage (which includes fatherhood, motherhood and childhood) is the natural and fundamental group unit of society. Its right as a social unit, and not merely of its members as individuals, have to be respected and promoted.
4. We acknowledge the contributions of science to provide cure and alleviate suffering. However, ethics and social morality set limits for which is permissible in scientific discovery and the application of scientific knowledge.
5. The claim by some scientists that human embryonic stem cells can be used for treating adult tissue is false, and hence must be debunked. Only adult stem cells have this ability.
6. There is a need to be genuinely discerning and critical of organizations and systems -- national and international – that seek to abrogate the country's sovereign constitutional protection of the family, parents' rights, and the right to life.
7. Contraception which gave rise to what Pope John Paul II referred to as the "culture of death" has stimulated sharp increases in adultery, pre-marital sex and homosexual activity. With it, the abominable crime of abortion has been condoned and even considered a right. This loss of respect and care for human life at its beginning has led to the loss of respect and care of its natural end, as in the evils of euthanasia and abandonment of the elderly and the handicapped.
8. Various faiths and cultures, at the national and international levels, must mutually cooperate to promote, strengthen and protect human life and the family.

9. The government, particularly the legislators, has also the moral obligation to promote and protect human life from its beginning, as well as the dignity of marriage and the family.

Invoking the God of life, may our families be inspired, strengthened and challenged by the examples of the Holy Family: Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in responding to our vocation to serve the Church and Society by caring for human life and serving the family, the basic unit of society.

Given in the Chancery in Fairview, Quezon City, this 22nd day of January, in the Year of Our Lord, 2007.

Most Rev. Antonio R. Tobias, DD
Bishop

Attested by:

Rev. Fr. Jaime Z. Lara
Chancellor

P.S. The Center of Family Ministries (CeFAM) of the Ateneo de Manila University wishes to announce its 2007 Summer Seminar Workshop on Premarital and Marital Counseling to be held on April 16-28, 2007. Those interested to attend may get an application form from Mr. July Panday and read the brochure of the program in our Diocesan Chancery Bulletin Board.