

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

21 September 2000

Dear Secretary,

On behalf of the Caroline Centre for Health Ethics Inc I wish to make a final submission to the Inquiry into Human Cloning. I have consistently argued against the cloning of human embryos and the destruction of these embryos to obtain human embryonic stem (ES) cells for therapeutic purposes or medical research. This use of ES cells would be unethical because it involves collusion with the destruction of human embryos to obtain the ES cells. I stand by this position. I was recently pleasantly surprised to find that Pope John Paul II said the same thing in his authoritative and important address to the 18th *International Congress of the Transplant Society Rome on 29 August 2000*. This address has been published in *L'Osservatore Romano* in the Weekly Edition in English 30 August 2000. I quote here the relevant text:

Methods that fail to respect the dignity and value of the person must always be avoided. I am thinking in particular of attempts at human cloning with a view to obtaining organs for transplants: these techniques, insofar as they involve the manipulation and destruction of human embryos, are not morally acceptable, even when their proposed goal is good in itself. Science itself points to other forms of *therapeutic intervention* which would not involve cloning or the use of embryonic cells, but rather would make use of stem cells taken from adults. This is the direction that research must follow if it wishes to respect the dignity of each and every human being, even at the embryonic stage.

In addressing these varied issues, *the contribution of philosophers and theologians* is important. Their careful and competent reflection on the ethical problems associated with transplant therapy can help to clarify the criteria for assessing what kinds of transplants are morally acceptable and under what conditions, especially with regard to the protection of each individual's personal identity.

I fully agree with what Pope John Paul said in the above text.

With my best wishes for your work

Yours sincerely

Rev Dr Norman Ford SDB

Director

Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics Inc.