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## Excerpts from “The Evil of Embryo Destruction”

By Archbishop Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

....[W]e oppose the use of immoral means to achieve seemingly good goals, even when they include possible medical cures. Why? Because if the bloody legacy of the last century has taught us anything, it's that the end never justifies the means.

The immorality of destroying human embryos does not rest on ...a “rigid postulate.” Rather, the sacredness of human life is the constant teaching of the Christian faith from the Didache of the first century through Vatican II.

....[T]hese microscopic clumps of cells are genetically complete and unique human individuals. Their tiny size does not diminish their humanity – by exactly that same bad logic, an infant would be less human than an adult....The term “unneded” is also quite curious. It reveals a utilitarian ethic that denies human dignity and treats people as objects to be manipulated. Practitioners of this ethic were tried as war criminals less than 60 years ago. Today, they promise miracle cures while ignoring a constant principle of morality – we may never do evil so that good may result from it. The cures promised are hypothetical, but even if real, they can never justify the evil of embryo destruction.

Does fidelity to sound moral principles leave us without hope of medical advances? Not at all. Stem cells derived from adult tissue and from the placenta after childbirth have produced promising results, even while the use of embryonic cells to treat Parkinson's Disease patients has proved disappointing.

## Liberationism at Center for Action and Contemplation

by Stephanie Block

In 1984, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published an *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the “Theology of Liberation,”* a document that outlined the errors of the expanding theological movement of liberationism. Those errors are many and consequential. Liberationism, like Marxism, perverts the Christian meaning of “the poor” and understands poverty in purely in terms of economics and class struggle. Secondly, liberationism, like Marxist relativism, abandons the truth. Liberationism also reduces the spiritual to politics, taking concepts whose primary intention, meaning or import is spiritual and reinterpreting them to signify merely the political or material, undervaluing the effects of personal sin and overvaluing structural (or societal) sin. Economic or socio-political structures are misunderstood as root causes of evil rather than as a *consequence* of human actions, done by free and responsible persons. The *Instruction* also notes that the radical deliverance of Christ, offered to both freeman and slave, “does not require some change in the political or social condition as a prerequisite for entrance into this freedom.” (IV.13) The Good News cannot be reduced to an earthly gospel. (VI.4)

To support its theses, however, liberationism routinely reinterprets Scriptures and other matters of the Faith. The *Instruction* gives as an example: “...[T]he liberation of Exodus cannot be reduced to a liberation which is principally or exclusively political in nature.” (IV.3) Nor can scripture be used to teach that a given political or economic system liberates. “God is the defender and liberator of the poor.” (IV.6)

Despite such clear instruction, a recent article carried by *Radical Grace* (July/September 2001), the newspaper published quarterly by the Center for Action and

*“Liberationism...” continued on p. 7*

**...[N]on-embryonic stem cells  
can be acquired through entirely  
moral means.**

-- Archbishop Charles Chaput

*Los Pequeños Pepper, page 5*

To the editor:

During our attendance at the Southwest Charismatic Conference at Glorieta on the weekend of 8-18-01, my wife Ramona and I heard a most beautiful talk on the Eucharist by Fr. Daniel Balizan concerning the lack of reverence with which many communicants receive Our Lord Jesus. He reminded us about Who is present in the appearance of the bread and wine and spoke about the many ways in which some people nonchalantly go up to receive Him. As an example, he mentioned going up to receive while chewing gum and being indifferent to the Lord's awesome presence. Later on, while the congregation was going up to receive the Eucharist, I was moved almost to tears as I witnessed people approaching the priest and other Eucharistic Ministers with beautiful gestures of reverence. Thanks to Fr. Balizan for that touching talk.

Sincerely,  
Archie Dow

*"Liberationism..." from p. 5*

Contemplation, enthusiastically embraced the theology of liberation. "For All Flesh that Suffers Has God Close at Hand: Liberation Theology and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Communities," by Ellen Grigsby (a CAC Board member) finds gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (g/l/b/t) a "later development within liberation theologies." Grigsby's liberationism challenges traditional expressions of revelation by asking the reader to consider: "[W]hat if a community begins to believe in a God who is bigger than conventional boundaries would have us accept, a God whose divinely created order is more diverse than the principalities define as normal...?" Spiritual direction from this "god" are to come from "a Spirit-filled community" that will delegitimize "systems of political-economic-social control." G/l/b/t theologians, according to Grigsby, suggest "that a close reading and careful translation/interpretation of

the Bible from a contextualist/historical perspective uncovers misreadings that have been used to attack g/l/b/t people." The punishment of Sodom, Grigsby writes, was not because of Sodom's homosexuality, but for its lack of hospitality.

*The Center for Action and Contemplation operates on the Archdiocesan property of Holy Family Parish and was promoted, as recently as September 2001, in the People of God as one of several "retreat centers in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe" suggested as a place to locate a spiritual director or to "grow in the spiritual life." Recent speakers at the Center have included dissident Catholic Call to Action supporters, a Wiccan ecofeminist, and practitioners of eastern mystical traditions.*

## **Bishop Trautman Cancels CAC Program**

Bishop Trautman, ordinary of the Diocese of Erie in Pennsylvania, cancelled a Center for Action and Contemplation "internship on the road" program because of the activist background of Ellen Grigsby, whose article on gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender liberationism was featured in the August/September issue of *Radical Grace*. Grigsby is not only on the CAC Board, but serves as the Chapter Coordinator of the Southwest Chapter of the United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian/Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender Concerns. "He could not risk the possibility of a question regarding gay/lesbian "lifestyle" being raised and affirmed during any question about justice," Kathleen O'Malley of CAC wrote in the August/September 2001 *Radical Grace* article on the cancellation.

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