

# BISHOPS RESTATE PREEMINENCE OF LIFE ISSUES

On June 13, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops struck a blow to the culture of death by reaffirming its rejection of embryonic stem cell research and human cloning.

It was important for all Catholics to acknowledge that the first and most important issues affecting public policy are the life issues. To maintain that other issues i.e., poverty and housing, are the moral equivalent of matters like abortion, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and direct euthanasia, is to denigrate the privileged position that the life issues have in Catholic teachings.

In the statement, *On Embryonic Stem Cell Research*, the bishops referred to the harvesting of embryonic stem cells as “the deliberate killing of innocent human beings, a gravely immoral act.” They also said that “Human cloning is intrinsically evil,” something which “shows disrespect for human life in the very act of generating it.” These words were chosen carefully, and they reflect the sentiments of Pope Benedict XVI who recently stated abortion was a “non-negotiable” issue for Catholics.

The life issues are of preeminent importance to Catholics. For one to discuss social justice, for example, while dismissing the life issues is profoundly un-Catholic.