

BUSH WALKS FINE LINE ON STEM CELL ISSUE

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, released the following statement today on President George W. Bush's address last night on stem cell research:

"Bush went two for three last night. He did the right thing by opposing any federally-funded stem cell research that would require the killing of new embryos. He also did the right thing by appointing Dr. Leon Kass the chairman of his Council on Bioethics; no one in the nation is more qualified to chair this important council than Dr. Kass. But Bush erred when he said human embryos 'have at least the potential for life.'

"A human embryo *is* a human life and if allowed to mature naturally—without human impediment—he or she will in most instances develop as a fetus, infant, child and adult. Oddly enough then, Bush's conclusion, while morally defensible, is grounded in a first principle that is fundamentally flawed. Had he said life begins at conception and therefore no new embryos can be killed for the sake of science, he would have been on better footing.

"Already the chorus has begun that we need to go further and allow stem cell research on embryos currently frozen. Some want to go even further and allow embryos to be created for the sole purpose of extracting new stem cells. These positions are morally repugnant and that is why the conclusion that Bush came to last night is preferable by far.

"The Catholic League will continue to monitor this issue. Our first priority is to confront people like Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington who want to marginalize the Catholic voice on this issue. The Catholic Church's position on human life issues is critical and it is the job of the Catholic League to

see to it that it is given a fair hearing in all quarters."