

# REP. McDERMOTT GUILTY OF CATHOLIC BAITING

In yesterday's debate over bills on human cloning, Rep. Jim McDermott of Washington state supported the Greenwood substitute amendment that would allow human cloning to make human embryos for research. In the course of his remarks made on the House floor, he made several statements about Catholicism that were offensive.

McDermott likened the current debate on cloning to an ancient story about the pope and the Spanish king. Here is how he began: "We are like the 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish king who went to the Pope and asked him if it was all right for human beings to drink coffee. The coffee bean had been brought from the New World. It had a drug in it that made people get kind of excited and it was a great political controversy about whether or not it was right to drink coffee. And so the Spanish king went to the Pope and said, Pope, is it all right."

Then, in an obvious reference to Pope John Paul II's recent denunciation of stem cell research, McDermott commented, "Well, we had that just the other day, and the Pope said, this is not right." McDermott then brought up Galileo and pointedly said of his colleagues that "here we are making a decision like we were the house of cardinals on a religious issue...."

Catholic League president William Donohue responded as follows:

"Congressman McDermott is out of line. He is acting like a bully instead of a statesman. The pope, representing the Catholic Church, has every right to voice his position on any issue he wants. Rep. McDermott is free to disagree, but he is not morally free to disabuse his office by engaging in

Catholic baiting.

"If Rep. McDermott wants to debate the scientific merits of stem cell research or cloning, I will be happy to do so. But he'll first have to learn how to check his thinly-veiled contempt for the role of Catholics in deciding public policy issues."