

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

“The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception; and therefore from that same moment his rights as a person must be recognized, among which in the first place is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life.”

Donum Vitae “Instruction on respect for human life in its origin and on the dignity of procreation (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith “ 22 February 1987)

The Church has repeatedly emphasised the sanctity of human life from the first moment of existence. She has warned against methods which seek to undermine the protections afforded to the most vulnerable members of the human family.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill is an important piece of legislation that is making its way through the Westminster Parliament. This new law will address issues about infertility treatment and experimentation on human embryos. Its provisions will extend to Northern Ireland. The subject-matter of the legislation raises profound moral questions. Many of the proposals contained in the Bill are very disturbing to those who seek to safeguard the family and promote the right to life. Particular concerns include:

• The proposal to create embryos that are half human, half animal. Such hybrid embryos are an affront to human dignity.

• The extension of the scope of scientific research on human embryos.

• The suggested removal of the need to have regard to a child’s need for a father when IVF methods are used.

• The threat that legislators will use the opportunity of the Bill to propose further liberalisation of the law on abortion.

All these issues raise fundamental questions about what it means to be human; the role of fathers and mothers; and the needs of children. Many of the key proposals in the Bill run counter to the Christian understanding of the person and human dignity.

The Bill has been passed by the House of Lords and is now being scrutinised by the House of Commons. Time is therefore of the essence. Cardinal Brady is urging Catholics to contact their local MP to register their protest about the legislation. It is vitally important that legislators hear the views of those concerned for the common good of society.

Parishioners can obtain postcards produced by the “Passion for Life” campaign. These are available in the Parish Churches and should be forwarded to the local MP. Additional internet resources on the Bill are given below.

Links

Passion for Life

Campaign website providing information on the Bill.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill

Site hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Pro-Life Group

Write to Them

Website providing contact details for MPs.