



Catholic Social Workers National Association

January 2007

Letter from the President:

Catholic Social Workers National Association (CSWNA) has had an exciting first several months. CSWNA was introduced at the Catholic Charities USA Conference in Minneapolis in September 2006. Joan Rangel, CSWNA's Board Chair, and I traveled to Minneapolis for this event. This was a wonderful opportunity to introduce CSWNA to all those who attended the conference. As a result, several new members joined the Association with great excitement. The new members are excited that finally they now have a professional association to belong to that identifies with professionally that with and supported their faith.

While in Minneapolis, we were invited to the College of St. Benedict to present to the MSW class. During our visit in Minneapolis, we were blessed with the opportunity to visit and speak with MSW students and faculty from several schools of Social Work in the Minneapolis area. Upon our return to Indianapolis, Susan Leininger, CSWNA's Membership Director, and I attended the Catholic Men's Conference in Indianapolis. This again, was another blessing great event that produced positive feedback and new memberships. It has been reassuring that Catholic Social Workers find the Association the answer they have been looking for and unable to find.

During the past six months, we have been working very hard to build this Association. As you are aware, it takes many people to make this happen. I would like to thank the Indiana University/Purdue University Computer Information Technology department for their assistance with the CSWNA website, as well as. A special thank you goes to Yuchen (Patrick) Sung, an IT student who volunteered his services and designed our website. Other special thanks go to Professor Ed Sullivan for his expertise and assistance with the website and his patience in teaching me how to use a new program to which the site was converted.

I would like to invite each one of you to be an active member of your Catholic Social Workers National Association. If you have suggestions, concerns, or questions, please feel free to contact me at .

Immaculate Heart of Mary, cause of our joy, pray for us.

Kathleen Neher

Kathleen Neher, MSW, LSW, President/CEO

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Mission Statement Revision:

The mission of Catholic Social Workers National Association is to promote the implementation of Catholic Social Teachings in social work practice as we support competent professional social workers living out their baptismal call to be the hands and feet of Christ.

The Ethics of Stem Cell Research

An Ethical Overview of Current Types of Stem Cell Research:

Embryonic Stem Cells: (pluripotent stem cells harvested from living embryos which are 3-5 days old) always morally objectionable, because a young human must be destroyed in order to harvest his or her stem cells.

Embryonic Germ Cells: (pluripotent stem cells derived from germ cells [sperm or egg-production cells] of fetuses) – morally objectionable when utilizing cells derived from elective abortions, but morally acceptable when utilizing cells from spontaneous abortions (miscarriages) if the parents give informed consent.

Adult Germ Cells: (pluripotent stem cells derived from testicular biopsy) morally acceptable, assuming informed consent of the adult donor.

Umbilical Cord Stem Cells: morally acceptable, since the umbilical cord is no longer required once a baby has been delivered.

Placentally-derived Stem Cells: morally acceptable, since the afterbirth is no longer required once a baby has been delivered.

Post-Natally Derived (Adult) Stem Cells: (e.g. stem cells from bone marrow or blood or fat from liposuction) – morally acceptable, assuming informed consent from the adult donor.

De-Differentiation Strategies:

(pluripotent stem cells derived from treating adult cells with chemicals or other bio-active substances to “back-differentiation” them towards a more primitive state) – morally acceptable as long as the de-differentiation procedure doesn't go so far as to make a human embryo.

Reprogramming Strategies: (pluripotent stem cells derived using a modified nuclear transfer technique, for example ANT-OAR) – morally acceptable as long as the reprogramming generates a distinctly non-embryonic entity, that is to say, a cell or group of cells that is not an organism, from which stem cells could be obtained.

We must chart a path toward a future in which the power of science is carefully ordered to serve and safeguard human life and human dignity.

Pacholczyk, Rev. Tadeusz, Ph.D.

*Director of Education of the National Catholic Bioethics Center.
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006,
Washington, DC*

Dorothy Day

*Co-founder of
the Catholic Worker Movement*



Dorothy Day was born on November 8, 1897 in New York City and later moved to Chicago after surviving the San Francisco earthquake. Dorothy converted to Catholicism in 1927 after the birth of her daughter. Dorothy Day and **Peter Maurin** founded the Catholic Worker Movement in 1933.

Dorothy opened the first House of Hospitality in 1933. Her Catholic movement is grounded in a firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person. Dorothy resisted the notion that there had to be so many poor people in a country of so much wealth.

Dorothy believed in the works of mercy as stated in the gospel of Matthew 25. Dorothy advocated that each of us take personal responsibility for our neighbor in need and perform works of mercy at a personal sacrifice. Today, Catholic Social Workers are in over 140 communities in thirty-two states and eight foreign countries.

“The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us? When we begin to take the lowest place, to wash the feet of others, to love our brothers with that burning love, that passion, which led to the Cross, then we can truly say, ‘Now I have begun.’”

“If I have achieved anything in my life,” she once remarked, “it is because I have not been embarrassed to talk about God.”

VATICAN CITY (Catholic Online) – *“The Christ child born in Bethlehem is crying out to the world appealing to respect children and to protect them from the many ways they are abused today,”* said Pope Benedict XVI.

In his homily for Christmas Midnight Mass, the pope said that faithful are called to *“set out in our hearts to see the child lying in the manger. God’s coming into the world as a baby, teaches us to love the little ones ... to love the weak ... (and) respect for children. The child of Bethlehem directs our gaze toward all children who suffer and are abused in the world, the born and the unborn,”* Benedict said, the latter reference suggesting the church’s stand against abortion.

The pontiff singled out children who are forced to become *“soldiers in a violent world”* and who *“suffer deprivation and hunger,”* as well as youths who are unloved. *“In all of these, it is the child of Bethlehem who is crying out to us; it is the God who has become small who appeals to us.”*

“Let us pray this night that the brightness of God’s love may enfold all these children. Let us ask God to help us do our part so that the dignity of children may be respected,” he said, adding that the world needs *“the light of love”* more than *“the material necessities of life.”*

The promise of Christmas is the realization that God makes Himself small so *“we could understand Him, welcome Him and love Him. God’s sign is the baby in need of help and in poverty. He does not come with power and outward splendor. He comes as a baby – defenseless and in need of our help.”* He said that God’s son is the eternal word that came *“small enough to fit into a manger.”* God’s gift celebrated at Christmas is himself that *“is no longer beyond the reach of our heart. He has become our neighbor, restoring in this way the image of man, whom we often find so hard to love.”*

“Christmas has become the feast of gifts in imitation of God who has given himself to us. The pope urged the faithful during the Christmas season not forget to give “the true gift: to give each other something of ourselves, to give each other something of time, to open our time to God. In this way, anxiety disappears, joy is born and the feast is created.”

He called on Catholics to not only give to those who will give in return, *“but give to those who receive from no one and who cannot give you anything back. This is what God has done,”* Pope Benedict said. *“Let us love God and, starting from him, let us also love man, so that, starting from man, we can then rediscover God in a new way! Let us ask the Lord to grant us the grace of looking upon the crib this night with the simplicity of the shepherds, so as to receive the joy with which they returned home,”* the pope concluded.

Earlier in the day, the pope used his weekly Sunday Angelus blessing to pilgrims and tourists to ask the world to overcome prejudice. Speaking from a window overlooking the square, the pope said people should strive to *“overcome preconceived ideas and prejudices, tear down barriers and eliminate contrasts that divide – or worse – set individuals and peoples against each other, so as to build together a world of justice and peace.”*

Twelve hours after the solemn Midnight Mass, Benedict delivered the traditional “Urbi et Orbi” speech to tens of thousands in St. Peter’s Square, appealing for a just peace and resumed negotiations in the Middle East, a healing of fratricidal wounds in Darfur and the rest of Africa, hope for a democratic Lebanon and an end to the violence in Iraq. Mankind, an apparent *“sure and self-sufficient master of its own destiny”* which has reached other planets, broken the human genome code and made the Earth a global village with communications technologies, still needs a savior in its fight against war, poverty, enslavement and unbridled consumerism, the pope said. In his annual midday “Urbi et Orbi” address, the 79-year-old pontiff, dressed in gold vestments, told the thousands gathered in a sunny St. Peter’s Square here that humanity’s technological advance has yet to conquer its most troubling problems.

I invite you to read ***Poverty in America, A Threat to the Common Good – A Policy Paper of Catholic Charities USA.***

Catholic Charities USA’s Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America is a multi-year, multi-faceted approach to alleviating poverty in the United States. Catholic Charities USA’s member agencies provide much needed services of food, housing, health care and economic assistance to the most poor and vulnerable in communities across our nation. CCUSA serves nearly 7.5 million people every year. *Catholic Charities USA, 2006*

Marriage Enrichment Resources

- CANA – Marriage Preparation
- Catholic Center for Peace in the Family
- Defending Holy Matrimony
- Marriage: the mystery of faith love
- Pastoral Solutions Institute
- Retrouvaille