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Biweekly Ethics Update

1 message

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Biweekly Ethics Update



The Moral Mind



Bioethical Insights in *Magnifica Humanitas*

Joseph Meaney, PhD, KM

In his first encyclical letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV focuses on Catholic Social Teaching as applied to Artificial

Intelligence (AI). Within this context, several of his points highlight bioethical challenges in the current digital revolution. The pope reaffirms that AI is a system of advanced data processing that imitates the human intellect but completely lacks a body, emotions, moral conscience, and spiritual capacity. He stresses the harmfulness of the transhumanist and posthumanist technological aspirations that undermine the dignity of the human person in multiple ways.

...to continue reading, click [here](#).

Press Statements

Marie Hilliard Appointed to OPTN Ethics Committee

Dr. Marie T. Hilliard, RN, NCBC Senior Ethicist, has been appointed to the Ethics Committee of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN), a regulatory agency responsible to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Dr. Hilliard will serve as an At Large member, joining eighteen other professionals including other At Large and regional representatives of the United States. As an At Large member, Dr. Hilliard will represent the general membership or the public on issues of interest or concern. The Ethics Committee guides the OPTN Board of Directors concerning OPTN policies and practices related to organ donation, procurement, distribution, allocation, and transplantation so they are consistent with ethical principles.

...to continue reading, click [here](#).

From the US Bishops

Religious Freedom Week

Religious Freedom Week 2026 is taking place June 22–29. Religious freedom allows the Church, and all religious communities, to live out their faith in public and to serve the good of all. Beginning June 22, the feast of **Sts. Thomas More and**



John Fisher, the USCCB invites Catholics to pray, reflect, and act to promote religious freedom.

Each day during Religious Freedom Week, the USCCB lifts up a particular religious liberty topic at the forefront of the Church. It invites you to pray with each of these important topics and learn more about how human dignity is protected whenever we protect religious freedom. To learn more about the selected topics, click [here](#).

From the Canadian Bishops

Statement by the Standing Committee for Family and Life to the Catholic Faithful in Canada and All People of Good Will Voicing Concern and Calling for Prayers on the 10th Anniversary of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (“MAID”)

A decade has passed since Bill C-14 received Royal Assent on 17 June 2016, legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide across Canada, and permitting eligible adults, under specified conditions, to access what is legally termed “Medical Assistance in Dying” (“MAID”). As we mark this sobering anniversary, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (CCCC) Standing Committee for Family and Life invites the Catholic faithful and all people of goodwill to voice renewed concern about “MAID,” to remain steadfast in opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide, to pray for the conversion of hearts and minds away from this practice, and to be present to persons who are sick and vulnerable.

...to continue reading, click [here](#).

NCBC Publications

Available Now: *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services*, Seventh Edition

This seventh edition of the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* (ERDs) was approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in November 2025. The ERDs distill authoritative Church teachings and resources from the

Catholic moral tradition to help Catholic health care address clinical issues across the lifespan, as well as in organizational ethics, with fidelity and integrity.

The ERDs present a theological basis for Catholic health care ministry together with specific directives that "promote and protect the truths of the Catholic faith as those truths are brought to bear on concrete issues in health care" (Preamble, p. 5). They are an indispensable resource for health care ministry sponsors, trustees, administrators, chaplains, physicians, health care personnel, and patients, as well as for all professionals, ethicists, educators, and others interested in the principles and practice of Catholic health care.

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

Seventh Edition

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The seventh edition of the ERDs includes updates and new content on topics including referral for immoral procedures, assisted reproductive technologies, palliative and hospice care, and medical interventions for those who experience gender incongruence.

Standard Pocket Size Version

[Purchase NCBC Books and Resources](#)

Bioethics and Public Policy

Bioethics Public Policy Report

The NCBC's [update on public policy](#) developments in bioethics and health care on the state, federal, and international levels.

[Sign Up for NCBC Education Programs](#)

Video, Radio, and Podcasts



New Frontiers in Bioethics and Falling Fertility

Relevant Radio, The Drew Mariani Show

Drew and NCBC Senior Ethicist Father Tad Pacholczyk discuss DNA editing and cloning (5:22) and take calls on various topics: epigenetics (14:03), cloning (20:27), the personality of clones (22:26), and shortcomings of institutional review boards at universities and research facilities (25:02).

CMA Boot Camp and the Principle of Double Effect

Driving Home the Faith, Sacred Heart Radio, Cincinnati

NCBC Director of Education Joe Zalot and Ken Craycraft discuss Joe's recent presentation on double effect at the 2026 Catholic Medical Association (CMA) Boot Camp for medical students. They cover what the CMA is, the purpose of the boot camp, as well as the four elements of the principle of double effect.



Gene Editing on the Unborn

The Catholic Connection with Teresa Tomeo on EWTN Radio

Teresa Tomeo and Father Tad talk about new research at Columbia University involving experiments carried out on human embryos. The experiments could have been done using animals; there is a real danger to reducing young and vulnerable human beings to just another lab entity to be poked, prodded, and experimented upon. Respecting the life of the little human should be the first priority, rather than destroying human lives for their research value. The institutional review boards that are supposed to look at the ethical side of the research are too often giving a green light without duly considering the moral implications of what they are being asked to approve.

Catholic Bioethicist Warns of Ethical Violations in Human Embryo Gene Editing

EWTN News Nightly

NCBC Senior Ethicist Dr. Joseph Meaney shares a Catholic perspective on 'base editing,' a technique of early gene editing in human embryos that allows scientists to precisely alter individual genetic 'letters.' The central moral concern is that the embryos do not survive the process.

[Invite an NCBC Speaker](#)

NCBC in the News

Scientists Unethically Experiment On the Unborn to Improve Gene Editing Techniques, Bioethicist Says

National Catholic Register

Father Tad comments on research being done on the unborn at Columbia University that is fraught with severe ethical concerns. He claims that genetic experimentation being done on unborn children in these trials could have been done on animal embryos. Also, the unborn being sourced by researchers are "leftover children" from in vitro fertilization procedures or human embryos created for the purpose of experimentation. Additionally, the human embryos produced in these experiments were oftentimes then intentionally sacrificed to obtain their embryonic stem cells for more research. Father Tad reminds us that "human embryos are among the most vulnerable of God's creatures... Human embryos are a special class of individuals deserving of special protections."

'Base Editing' Embryos' Takes a Further Unethical Step

National Catholic Register

Dr. Joseph Meaney also discusses the research being done at Columbia University, noting that it is being hailed as a scientific milestone rather than a giant ethical violation. He then comments on the eugenic and transhumanist goals of gene editing in the IVF industry, while pointing out the good potential uses of gene editing for legitimately therapeutic purposes.

FTC sues transgender health group over 'deceptive claims' about child treatments

EWTN News

NCBC Senior Ethicists Dr. Joseph Meaney and Father Tad are quoted in this article regarding the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) suing the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). Meaney pointed out that WPATH operates as "more of a pro-transgender activist organization than an objective healthcare association." Father Tad warned that "when a group of scientists ventures to offer statements about values or ethics, the general public makes the broader assumption that they are offering an 'objective' or 'scientifically informed' viewpoint when in fact it may be little more than raw advocacy masquerading as scientific truth."

Gallup poll: Social acceptance of birth control, kids outside of marriage decreases in 2026

EWTN NEWS

Father Tad and Dr. Joseph Meaney comment on the latest encouraging polls where the views of Americans on a number of moral issues such as extramarital sex, gambling, birth control and having children outside of marriage showed a decrease in support.

Lancaster Catholic Seniors Explore Real-Life Ethical Dilemmas, Gaining Insights and Influencing Bioethics Studies Elsewhere

The Catholic Witness

Seniors at Lancaster Catholic High School in the Diocese of Harrisburg share their experience taking part in a rigorous college-level bioethics course developed by the NCBC as part of a pilot program to test its effectiveness, with the aim of taking the lesson plan nationwide. NCBC Director of Education Joe Zalot explains that this course "introduces students to many of the health care and bioethics challenges that we face as a society today... Students are learning what the Church teaches, why it teaches what it does, and how to apply these teachings to respond to complex health care and bioethics challenges." The students interviewed shared how influential this course was for them, remarking on how it has made weighty and hard-to-understand Church teachings digestible and how it has been influencing their future careers and understanding of the faith.

Sign Up for NCBC Membership

Are you a doctor, nurse, patient, health care power of attorney, scientific researcher, medical student or resident, or someone else facing tough ethical decisions in health care and biomedical research? Are you a priest, chaplain, friend, family member, or someone else asked to advise on these matters? Our team is here to help you understand and apply the moral teachings of the Catholic Church to the challenges you face:

Request a Free Ethics Consultation

Please pray for our work and consider financially supporting our mission of defending the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research!

Make a Financial Gift

The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) provides education, guidance, and resources to the Church and society to uphold the dignity of the human person in health care and biomedical research, thereby sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ and his Church. The NCBC envisions a world in which the integral understanding of the human person underlying Catholic teaching on respect for human life and dignity is better understood and more widely embraced in America and worldwide.

The NCBC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax-deductible.