**Secular Challenge Definition Sheet**

Secular Definition of Terms

1. **Abortion**: the termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the death of the embryo or fetus (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*).

Embryo: An organism in the early stages of growth and differentiation, from fertilization to the beginning of the third month of pregnancy (in humans). After that point in time, an embryo is called a fetus. (Medicine Net)…especially: the developing human individual from the time of implantation to the end of the eighth week after conception (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*)

1. **Euthanasia**: Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide refer to deliberate action taken with the intention of ending a life, in order to relieve persistent suffering. (*Medical News Today*)…

also called mercy killing, act or practice of painlessly putting to death persons suffering from painful and incurable disease or incapacitating physical disorder or allowing them to die by withholding treatment or withdrawing artificial life-support measures. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

1. **Human Embryonic Stem Cell (HESC) Research**: Most embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos that develop from eggs that have been fertilized in an in-vitro fertilization clinic—and then donated for research purposes with informed consent of the donors. (*US NIH*)

The main goal of HESC research is to identify the mechanisms that govern cell differentiation and to turn HESCs into specific cell types that can be used for treating debilitating and life-threatening diseases and injuries. *(Stanford University, Ethics of ESC Research*)

1. **Human Cloning**: Human cloning is the creation of a genetically identical copy of an existing, or previously existing, human being or growing cloned tissue from that individual. The term is generally used to refer to artificial human cloning; human clones in the form of identical twins are commonplace. (Science Daily)

There are three different types of artificial cloning: gene cloning, reproductive cloning and therapeutic cloning. Gene cloning produces copies of genes or segments of DNA. Reproductive cloning produces copies of whole animals. Therapeutic cloning produces embryonic stem cells for experiments aimed at creating tissues to replace injured or diseased tissues. (*NIH Human Genome Research)*

1. **Marriage** The state of being husband and wife; the legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. (*Am. Heritage Dictionary*)

A legally and socially sanctioned union, *usually between a man and a woman*, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring… The universality of marriage… is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions for which it provides structure…Perhaps its strongest function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization…*The most universal ritual is one that symbolizes a sacred union….* By the 21st century the nature of marriage in Western countries—particularly with regard to the significance of procreation and the ease of divorce—had begun to change. In 2000 the Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriages… (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

**The Catholic Position**

**Abortion**

* CCC 2270 (Jer 1:5;Job 10:8-12; Ps 22:10-11; Ps 139:15; see also Companion to CCC; Fifth Commandment)

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life…

* CCC 2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion…
* CCC 2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense…
* CCC 2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation…
* CCC 2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being…
* CCC 2275 One must hold as licit procedures…which respect the life and integrity of the embryo…it is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation…

**Euthanasia**

* CCC 2276: Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect…
* CCC 2277 Whatever its motives and means direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.
* CCC 2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are… extraordinary, dangerous or disproportionate… can be legitimate.
* CCC 2279: Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted…
* Physician assisted Suicide: Even though a person with a terminal illness might seek drugs to commit suicide, it is, in fact, relief from suffering that is sought…palliative hospice care is available.…the “right” to die has morphed in some cases into the “duty” to die...
* We are stewards, not owners of the life God has entrusted to us. *Bishop Michael Sheridan*

**Embryonic Stem Cell Research**

* The central issue is the destruction of human embryos. One can never destroy human life for therapeutic reasons, no matter how good the reason, no matter the benefit. *The Catholic Church’s Teaching Regarding Stem Cell Research By Lucas Pollice, M.T.S.)*
* Medical research must refrain from operations on live embryos, unless there is a moral certainty of not causing harm to the life or integrity of the unborn child and the mother, and on condition that the parents have givers their free and informed consent to the procedure. *Donum Vitae # 4:*
* No objective, even though noble in itself, such as a foreseeable advantage to science, to other human beings or to society, can in any way justify experimentation on living human embryos or fetuses, whether viable or not, either inside or outside the mother’s womb” (*Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 1987*).
* ”…it must nonetheless be stated that the use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed to a child once born, just as to every person.” (*Pope St. JPII, EV, 63)*

**Human Cloning**

* Human cloning is intrinsically illicit in that, by taking the ethical negativity of techniques of artificial fertilization to their extreme, it seeks to give rise to a new human being without a connection to the act of reciprocal self-giving between the spouses and, more radically, without any link to sexuality. This leads to manipulation and abuses gravely injurious to human dignity (*DIGNITAS PERSONAE, 48* )
* If cloning were to be done for reproduction, this would impose on the resulting individual a predetermined genetic identity, subjecting him – as has been stated – to a form of biological slavery, *(DIGNITAS PERSONAE, 29*)
* From the ethical point of view, so-called therapeutic cloning is even more serious. To create embryos with the intention of destroying them, even with the intention of helping the sick, is completely incompatible with human dignity, because it makes the existence of a human being at the embryonic stage nothing more than a means to be used and destroyed. It is gravely immoral to sacrifice a human life for therapeutic ends. (*DIGNITAS PERSONAE, 30*)
* The Holy See looks upon the distinction between "reproductive" and so-called "therapeutic" (or "experimental") cloning to be unacceptable. This distinction masks the reality of the creation of a human being for the purpose of destroying him or her to produce embryonic stem cell lines or to conduct other experimentation. Human embryonic cloning must be prohibited in all cases regardless of the aims that are pursued. (*Pope St. JPII, Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 2001, No. 19)*

**Homosexual Marriage**

* God himself is the author of marriage…The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries…the wellbeing of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life. (*CCC 1603*)
* …And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful…(CCC 1604)
* By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory…(CCC 1652)
* Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered…Under no circumstances can they be approved. (*CCC 2357-2359*)
* “Let us not be naive: this is not simply a political struggle, but it is an attempt to destroy God’s plan. It is not just a bill (a mere instrument) but a ‘move’ of the father of lies who seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God.” (*Then Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, on a 2010 bill in Argentina legalizing Homosexual Marriage*)