Excerpt from *Rewriting the Code of Life*
Jennifer A. Doudna

*The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly, Volume 17, Spring 2017, Number 1*

Today, advances in DNA sequencing capabilities together with studies of gene function have provided a wealth of information about the genetic changes that lead to disease. In the past, without the means of making specific and efficient modifications to the DNA of a cell – its genome – our ability to act on such information was limited. However, this barrier has been upturned by the rapid development and widespread adoption of simple, inexpensive, and effective method of making precise changes to genes and genomes. Known as CRISPR-Cas9, or CRISPR for short, this technology is a result of fundamental research into an adaptive immune system in bacteria. Building on earlier technologies, CRISPR-based methods are transforming the biological sciences as researchers worldwide employ these tools to change DNA sequences – by introducing or correcting genetic mutations – in a wide variety of cells and organisms.

**Should we begin editing genes in unborn children to lower their lifetime risk of Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease, or diabetes?**

But there are also profound implications of using CRISPR not to treat disease but rather to prevent it altogether by editing the DNA of ova, sperm, or embryos. The CRISPR technology can create heritable genetic changes when used to alter the germline, the genetic information that links one generation with the next. Assuming that gene editing is proved safe and effective, it may be desirable to fix disease-causing mutations permanently before they cause human suffering. Yet once it becomes feasible to change the DNA sequence of mutated genes back to their normal versions in embryos, temptations to alter normal genes to supposedly superior versions will arise. Should we begin editing genes in unborn children to lower their lifetime risk of Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease, or diabetes? What about endowing unborn children with beneficial traits, such as increased strength and cognitive abilities, or cosmetic traits like eye and hair color? Who will decide the answers to such questions, and how will the outcome affect our future world?

**The Power and Potential of Rewriting the Code of Life**

Because CRISPR enables precise and relatively straightforward DNA editing, every genetic disease that is caused by a single underlying mutation is now a potentially treatable target. Even some cancers may soon be treated with immune cells that have been programmed to hunt down and destroy tumors. Although there is still much work to be done before CRISPR therapies will be available to human patients, their potential is clear. Gene editing holds the promise of life-changing and, in some cases, life-saving cures.

“Not long ago, a little 3-year-old girl ran up to me and kissed the large crucifix which hangs on my rosary. She looked up at me with a sweet and innocent smile, and I looked back with love and gratitude. Her instinct, this simple, tender gesture, reminded me of the love that can be born when we kiss each other’s crosses and carry one another’s burdens. Suffering can lead us to isolate ourselves or hide our weaknesses, yet this child taught me that our sufferings, the crosses in our lives have the capacity to unleash love in the world.”

Sr. Maris Stella, SV
FROM THE DIRECTOR

The State of Ohio has once again executed a convicted prisoner. I suppose for some people this is not news they give much attention. For me it is very sad news. We stepped away from this State sanctioned killing for three and a half years. However, this past July we began again. On July 26, 2017 Ronald Phillips was executed for the horrible rape and murder of Sheila Marie Evans, 3-year-old at the time. We grieve for the life of this innocent young girl and the tragedy of her last moments on earth.

We know that punishment is due those who commit such crimes. Yet the Catechism (#2267) tells us:

Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.

If, however, non-lethal means are sufficient to defend and protect people's safety from the aggressor, authority will limit itself to such means, as these are more in keeping with the concrete conditions of the common good and more in conformity to the dignity of the human person.

Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm - without definitely taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself - the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity "are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

Again we fall into the category of not an “absolute necessity” because we have the means of a life sentence with no option for parole. So we begin again our prayer and our activism to stop this moral wrong of our judicial system.

Prior to the execution of Ronald, Sister Helen Prejean wrote a statement to those who stood in opposition to this moral ill. In it she said:

“We shelter ourselves from this truth by hiding the execution away in a tiny chamber with only a few witnesses. Those witnesses are further protected from the truth because mixed into the lethal cocktail that is injected into the prisoner is a paralytic agent whose sole purpose is to mask the suffering this human being is experiencing. We must be brave enough to look squarely at both moral horrors: the death of a little girl on the one hand and the state-sanctioned murder of an adult man on the other. We must look at them both and then choose life. Choosing life for an innocent is an easy thing to do; choosing life for the guilty, that is a far harder thing. But it is what we must do if we truly stand for life.”

The best way to find out information from the Church regarding the status of future executions, calls to action for scheduled executions and actions to end the death penalty in Ohio, read and follow the Ohio Catholic Conference at www.ohiocathconf.org/. Ohio is scheduled to execute 26 more inmates through 2020. May God help our efforts to stop state sanctioned execution permanently.

Peggy Gerovac

“Every life has its challenges and sufferings; and how we respond to these, at times, unwelcome invitations, and the decisions we make at such crucial junctures, have the capacity to define who we are and to set the trajectory of one’s life. Times of suffering or vulnerability can also surprise us with the blessedness of unleashing hidden reservoirs of love, and grant us the gift of a fresh perspective on what is really important. These moments also remind us that the value and dignity of each life rests not in what we have, or what we can do or produce; but rather in the innate and inviolable dignity that we are each God’s gift, and that our life rests securely in His hands.”

Mother Agnes Mary, SV

Imprint, Spring 2017 Issue
Reflecting moral principles drawn from the just-war tradition, the Second Vatican Council’s discussion of war and peace focuses mainly on issues of national policy and the role of statesmen and military decision-makers. But Vatican II also devotes a notable passage to public opinion.

Here is how the council puts it in its “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”:

“Nevertheless, men should take heed not to entrust themselves only to the efforts of some, while not caring about their own attitudes. For government officials who must at one and the same time guarantee the good of their own people and promote the universal good are very greatly dependent on public opinion and feeling. It does them no good to work for peace as long as feelings of hostility, contempt and distrust, as well as racial hatred and unbending ideologies, continue to divide men and place them in opposing camps.

“Consequently there is above all a pressing need for a renewed education of attitudes and for new inspiration in public opinion. Those who are dedicated to the work of education, particularly of the young, or who mold public opinion, should consider it their most weighty task to instruct all in fresh sentiments of peace.

“Indeed, we all need a change of heart as we regard the entire world and those tasks which we can perform in unison for the betterment of our race” (Gaudium et Spes, No. 82).
Haunting Human Trafficking Experiences

Sadly, in our day and age, there are far too many people who experience slavery in a very literal way, while countless others have no idea that this phenomenon even exists. Even more tragically, many people are still caught up in the mindset of blaming the victim. For this reason, the need to share these all-too-real stories is all the more pressing.

The story of a 29-year-old man from northern Africa, who was forced to work in the business of a family friend. He was suffering from tuberculosis, yet made to work under threats of violence for 16-20 hours a day, every day, for no pay. He was not allowed to have contact with his family. His identity documents were taken. He was allowed access to medical treatment only when his tuberculosis was so advanced that the trafficker feared he would die.

The story of an 11-year-old girl from Central America, who was sold by her parents to a man and woman who brought her to the United States as a servant. She slept on the floor in the room with the three younger children she took care of. She had to cook and clean, getting up at 5 am and going to bed after midnight. Although she made the food at the house, she was not permitted to eat. She was allowed to leave only for school, which is the only place she had access to food. When she started her period, she was not allowed to use feminine hygiene products that the wife had in the house. She endured frequent sexual abuse by the husband.

The story of a 17-year-old young man whose parents advertised him online for sex acts from the age of 3. While this began in his home country, it continued when he and his family arrived in the United States. They moved around often, and he did not attend school regularly. Men would come to his parents' house, and the boy would be given a variety of drugs by the buyers who would rape him. His parents told him that if he didn't comply, they would send him back to his war-torn country and he would surely die. He jumped out of a third-story window to escape and was found by a passerby, naked and barely alive, with broken arms and legs.

These haunting stories, with only a few details changed to protect the individuals' anonymity, are just a few of the trafficking horrors that happen regularly in our country. Although they happen to American-born individuals as well, refugees and immigrants are particularly vulnerable. As their hosts and their neighbors, each of us must respond to the moral imperative to fight this "shameful and intolerable crime," as Pope Francis called it. https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/july-august-2017/allies-in-fight-against-human-trafficking (shortened for length)

CLE Unites to End Human Trafficking

—10 Years In—

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Windows on the River | 2000 Sycamore Street

11:30am Registration | 12:00pm Luncheon

$75 | $45 Non-profit Affiliation | $550/table of 8

The Collaborative is marking its 10 year anniversary, 2007-2017. Please join us in continuing our mission to educate, advocate, and connect services on behalf of trafficked persons.

Program Participants

The Honorable Patricia A. Gaughan: Chief Judge, United States District Court Northern District of Ohio

Justin Herdman: US Attorney, Northern District of Ohio

The Honorable Marilyn B. Cassidy: Judge, Cleveland Municipal Court, Human Trafficking Specialized Docket

Theresa Flores: Survivor, Author, Founder of SOAP, Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution

collabtoendht.org | 440.872.6500
When you ask God to come, He comes. I know He’s there. I can feel it. And when someone is dying, you think that room is part of this earth? No! You are not in this world. You have entered the vestibule of heaven.

Can you tell us about a time when you have experienced this?

One day I was leaving for Washington, and I got a call from Metropolitan Hospital. They had a woman they had found under the highway. Could they send her right to Calvary? She had no family; she wasn’t speaking. She was filthy, and her name was Angela. So I said, “Ok, we’ll take her.” And as I was leaving, Angela was coming in; she had a big tumor coming out of her back. She had chopped red hair, no teeth. She had AIDS, hepatitis, and was draining all kinds of infected material. Of course our cancer care technicians were anxious to go to work on her. I was in Washington for one day, fighting for funding. When I came back I went upstairs to see her, and I couldn’t believe what they’d done. They cleaned her out, worked on her mouth, did her hair, did her nails. She didn’t look like she understood anything, but I said: “I’m going to promise you, Angela, that I will see you three times every day.” I thought, “Three times a day I’m going to come in and touch you and tell God, ‘I’m going there because of my love for You.’” Six weeks later, I’m coming back from Washington again feeling discouraged. I think, “Oh, I won’t go see her tonight; I’ll see her tomorrow.” Then I think, “No, I’d better go. I’ll feel miserable tonight if I don’t go.” I go up to the floor, and Angela is dying. So I take off my coat, and I take her hand, put it on my cheek and I say, “Angela, I’m staying.” Exactly 90 minutes later, I hear, “Dr. Michael. Dr. Michael.” I couldn’t believe my ears. I jump up, and I’ve got her now as tightly as I can, and I say, “Angela?!” She said, “Dr. Michael, tonight, in a few hours, I’ll speak your name to God.” She never spoke another word. She closed her eyes and left this earth.
Executions Resume in Ohio
On July 26, 2017, Ronald Phillips was executed. Gary Otte's execution is set for September 13, 2017. Alva Campbell's execution is scheduled for November 15, 2017. Twenty-four additional executions are scheduled through April 2022. A Harvard study shows that most Ohio death row inmates have serious impairments.

Action is requested for Ohio House and Senators to pass legislation to prohibit the use of the death penalty for persons with certain kinds of severe mental illness. (HB 81 & SB 40).

LAKE COUNTY’s 24th ANNUAL LIFE CHAIN
Intersection of Mentor Ave (Rt20) and Reynolds (Rt. 306)
Sunday, October 1st, 1:30-2:30pm
Park on the outer edges of Points East Shopping Center.
Sponsored by Immaculate Conception Pro-Life Commission
For Info: Jean 440.942.7906

Eucharistic Adoration St. Ladislas Church
2345 Bassett Road, Westlake
Sunday, October 1st
Following 11am Sunday Mass
Eucharistic Adoration from 12:30pm to 1:30pm
Closing Benediction 1:30pm
Please join us in prayer to bring an end to abortion, an increased awareness to all life issues and your intentions.

Mass & Rosary for Life
St. Andrew’s Abbey
2900 Martin Luther King Dr.
Saturday, October 7
8:30am Confession
9:15am Mass for the Unborn
After Mass, Divine Mercy
Chaplet & Rosaries in front of
Preterm—12000 Shaker Blvd.
All other Saturdays we will
assemble in front of Preterm at 9:30am

Catholic Charities Disability Services 40th ANNUAL WALK OF HOPE
St. Augustine Church
2486 West 14th Street, Cleveland
Saturday, October 7th
8:30am Registration
9am Walk through Tremont
10:30am Raffle Drawing with Local Celebrities
11am Special Walk around Lincoln Park
Info, call 216-334-2963 or mjscott@ccdocle.org

“Respect Life” Mass & All-Night Adoration
St. Mary’s Church,
250 Kraft Street, Berea
Pray with us at any time during the night!
Friday, October 13, 7pm Mass
Hourly devotions, led by volunteers all night.
Light refreshments in vestibule.
Closing Benediction:
8am, Saturday October 14
Call Vicky: 440-823-5141

Congratulations to Embrace Clinic & Care Center!
Part of the Community Pregnancy Center
180th 1st St. NW, Barberton | 330.825.1900

On July 13th, they held an Ultrasound Open House and Dedication. Clients can now receive free nurse pregnancy consultations and first trimester ultrasounds.
Please contact them if you can help their ministry!
CHOOSE LIFE! BANQUET & FUNDRAISER
Friday, November 3, 2017
Windows on the River

Join us in celebrating 20 years of the Choose Life! Program, which has educated over 56,000 students about the sanctity of human life. Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Roger W. Gries will be honored with the “Packy Hyland Life Legacy Award”

Doors open at 6:15pm for music, silent auction items including a Marblehead vacation condo, $2000 cash raffle and themed raffle baskets. Guest Speaker is Dr. William Lile, FACOG

www.prolifedoc.org

Call 216-661-6616 for reservations: $65/person, $500/table of 8 persons

Blessed Are The Peacemakers:
Re-imagining a World of Active Nonviolence
September 30, 2017|9am-5pm|JCU Dolan Center
Sponsored by the Diocesan Social Action Office

Inspired by the April 2016 Non-violence and Just Peace Conference held at the Vatican, the focus is creative solutions to peace building and active non-violence. Opportunities for education, dialogue rooted in the Catholic Peace Tradition, engaging and bringing a creative understanding towards Catholic Social Teaching and building peace in our communities and the world.

Keynote is Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International and the key organizer of the Vatican Conference, speaking on Integrating Gospel Nonviolence into the Life and Mission of the Church. Workshops will be held on racial injustice, building authentic community, nuclear disarmament and Just War tradition, climate change and migration and refugee concerns.

More information can be found at http://ccdocle.org/events/blessed-peacemakers-re-imagining-worldactive-non-violence including links to register. Cost is $20 (early registration) and students are free. There is a separate Friday evening speaker reception at 7pm
Rewriting Life: First Human Embryos Edited in U.S.
Steve Connor  July 26, 2017 MIT Technology Review

The first known attempt at creating genetically modified human embryos in the United States has been carried out by a team of researchers in Portland, Oregon, MIT Technology Review has learned. . .

Although none of the embryos were allowed to develop for more than a few days—and there was never any intention of implanting them into a womb—the experiments are a milestone on what may prove to be an inevitable journey toward the birth of the first genetically modified humans.

In altering the DNA code of human embryos, the objective of scientists is to show that they can eradicate or correct genes that cause inherited disease, like the blood condition beta-thalassemia. The process is termed “germline engineering” because any genetically modified child would then pass the changes on to subsequent generations via their own germ cells—the egg and sperm.

Some critics say germline experiments could open the floodgates to a brave new world of “designer babies” engineered with genetic enhancements—a prospect bitterly opposed by a range of religious organizations, civil society groups, and biotech companies.

In the U.S., any effort to turn an edited IVF embryo into a baby has been blocked by Congress, which added language to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration funding bill forbidding it from approving clinical trials of the concept.

Despite such barriers, the creation of a gene-edited person could be attempted at any moment, including by IVF clinics operating facilities in countries where there are no such legal restrictions.

Threats to the Integrity of the Healing Relationship
To gain access to health services today, a person must first meet the means test of legitimate need, which is more often determined by the insurance industry than by a clinician. Managed care, itself morally neutral, is essentially managed cost, and it remains a constant and ominous threat to the integrity of the healing relationship. This corporate business model partitions patients into illnesses and problem-based categories and promotes an image of the sick as containers of disease. At the same time, it splinters the personhood of the clinician and emphasizes his role as a technician rather than a healer. It thus erodes the moral center of health care, the personhood of both the patient and the clinician. It is this, perhaps, that is the primary cause of moral distress.

An Experience of Caring for the Dying
“...we must recognize the absolute necessity of being present as a community to others in their need if they are to gain confidence in life. Human life is not meant to be lived in isolation. ... Those who are ill can experience God’s enduring love for them through the loving care and concern of the Christian health care community.” (Joseph Bernardin, “A Sign of Hope: Pastoral Letter on Health Care”)

This is an awesome opportunity that we must not let pass. If we fail to live the words “How can I help you?” then the promise to care will fail to bring the healing of Jesus to those who are sick. We cannot become complacent about our promise to care, for the care of the sick was the heart of Jesus’s ministry. As models of his life and messengers of his words, we have been charged to embrace this promise, which is Jesus himself.

Ministry to the sick, “the highest form of the imitatio Dei,” when viewed in partnership with Jesus, the Author of all life, is a very special aspect of the stewardship of creation, because it concerns the summit of creation, human beings (Abraham J. Heschel, “The Patient as a Person”). Through it, we nurture the life and the hope that are in us all, we ease the pain that diminishes us, and we accompany one another on the ultimate journey.
Excerpts from *Advance Directives to Withhold Oral Food and Water in Dementia: A Surrogate’s Moral Obligations* by Ann M. Heath

_The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly_  
*Volume 16, Autumn 2016, Number 3*

**Euthanasia as a Crime against Life**

Euthanasia is a “crime against life” and a grave violation of the law of God. (34) It is defined as “an action or an omission which of itself or by intention causes death, in order that all suffering may in this way be eliminated. Euthanasia’s terms of reference, therefore, are to be found in the intention of the will and in the methods used.” (CDF, *Declaration on Euthanasia*) From this definition, it is clear that an advance directive that requires withholding oral food and water when they are not physically burdensome, solely for the purpose of causing death so that suffering may be eliminated, contains both an intention of will and a method that constitute euthanasia. (John Paul II, “Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State)

The primary argument in support of euthanasia is based on a death-focused conception of autonomy in which the “freedom of self-determination includes the freedom to choose to be killed,” and “meaningful human dignity...consists in the ability to control one’s own life and death and to determine the manner of one’s demise.” (William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*) This notion of autonomy purports to be expansive and noble, but in reality it is based on elitism and fear, confining and debasing all those involved.

Euthanasia advocates conceal this fact by using euphemisms that blur distinctions between euthanasia and assisted suicide to make the acts seem more palatable. For example, physician-assisted suicide is now called aid-in-dying, and both it and euthanasia may be referred to simply as assisted death or assisted dying. (Menzel and Steinbock, “Advance Directives, Dementia, and Physician-Assisted Death”) But “no word has the power to change the reality of things.” (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*) The need to disguise these acts merely confirms their moral depravity. We must “have the courage to look the truth in the eye and to call things by their proper name, without yielding to convenient compromises or to the temptation of self-deception.” (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*)

**US Bishop’s Guidance on Girl Scouts**

*Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly, June 4-10, 2017*

“There are various ways that Catholic scouting and scouting in general can be fostered. The following are some considerations. Again, for every diocese, the diocesan bishop has authority and discretion when it comes to supporting and directing Catholic scouting within the diocese. …

“Find ways to foster communication between diocesan leaders, parishes and schools, and parents of Catholic scouts.

“Establish a key contact/structure within the diocese to facilitate the reception and communication of any concerns and questions with the local council and the pertinent national scouting committee as necessary.”.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops,

“Questions and Answers About Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and About Catholic Scouting” (2014)
September 27 through November 5, 2017

Unite with hundreds of other cities around the world for the largest and longest coordinated pro-life mobilization in history: the 40 Days for Life campaign. Recognizing that “with God all things are possible,” people of faith are praying that this effort will help bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

40 Days for Life has achieved proven results:

750,000 people mobilized worldwide
154 converted abortion workers
13,305 lives saved from abortion
86 abortion facilities closed

40 Days for Life is made up of three components:

PRAYER & FASTING: believers throughout our city are invited to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting for an end to abortion

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: help take a positive, upbeat pro-life message to every corner of our city through media efforts, advocacy, and public visibility

PEACEFUL VIGIL: stand for life during a 40-day peaceful public witness at the vigil sites listed below...

Preterm – Cleveland 12000 Shaker Blvd. Peggy 216-382-9170
Planned Parenthood 25350 Rockside Road John 216-641-6587
Family Planning – Painesville 54 South State Street Renee 440-520-3493

Learn how you can speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves by visiting:

www.40daysforlife.com/cleveland

John, Campaign Director  216-245-9744
"Christians are not exempt from the darkness, either external or even internal," he said. "They do not live outside the world, but because of the grace of Christ received through baptism, they are men and women who are 'oriented': they do not believe in the darkness, but in the light of day; they do not succumb to the night, but hope in the dawn; they are not defeated by death, but long for resurrection; they are not crushed by evil because they always trust in the infinite possibilities of goodness."

Receiving the light of Christ at baptism, he said, Christians are called to be true "Christophers" or Christ-bearers, "especially to those who are going through situations of mourning, desperation, darkness and hatred."

Christians who truly bear the light of Christ's hope, he said, can be identified by the light in their eyes and by their serenity "even on the most complicated days."

- Pope Francis
August 2, 2017

Among Church documents, *Digitas personae* most directly addresses gene therapy:

For a moral evaluation the following distinctions need to be kept in mind. *Procedures used on somatic cells for strictly therapeutic purposes are in principle morally licit*. Such actions seek to restore the normal genetic configuration of the patient or to counter damage caused by genetic anomalies or those related to other pathologies. Given that gene therapy can involve significant risks for the patient, the ethical principle must be observed according to which, in order to proceed to a therapeutic intervention, it is necessary to establish beforehand that the person being treated will not be exposed to risks to his health or physical integrity which are excessive or disproportionate to the gravity of the pathology for which a cure is sought. The informed consent of the patient or his legitimate representative is also required.

The moral evaluation of germ line cell therapy is different. Whatever genetic modifications are effected on the germ cells of a person will be transmitted to any potential offspring. Because the risks connected to any genetic manipulation are considered and as yet not fully controllable, *in the present state of research, it is not morally permissible to act in a way that may cause possible harm to the resulting progeny.*
Nuclear weapons

IN BRIEF, Our Sunday Visitor Newsweekly
July 23-29, 2017

Agencies of the U.S. and European Catholic bishops have called for all nations to develop a plan to elimi-
nate nuclear weapons. A joint declaration released July
6 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the
Conference of European Justice and Peace Commis-
sions called on the United States and European nations
to “map out a credible, verifiable and enforceable
strategy for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.”

PLEASE CONTACT US TO POST YOUR VOLUNTEER NEEDS AND UPCOMING EVENTS.
ALL OF OUR ADS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE FOR PARISH USE!

Contact Us

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