

## **COMMENTS FROM CARDINAL O'BRIEN AFTER DEBATE IN HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**WEDNESDAY 21 MAY 2008**

It was with a sense of disappointment that I heard the results of the recent votes in the House of Commons regarding the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill.

I hope that no false hopes have been raised concerning cures for various diseases, following on decisions regarding honouring research on embryonic stem cells. Along with very many people of goodwill, I pin my own hopes for cures on research on cord blood and adult stem cells and I am very happy to help fund such research.

The vote on the abortion limit was similarly disappointing. The frightening figure of 206,000 abortions in Britain in 2006 seems set to rise – surely something which must give us all intense cause for concern. Just a few days ago, along with Cardinal Brady, President of the Bishops' Conference of Ireland, and Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, I issued a statement which indicated: "Not nearly enough time has been given to discussing these issues and these questions require answers before and not after legislation". I still believe that answers must be given to the questions which we posed at that time and which, no doubt, will concern, not only ourselves, but future generations.

I take this opportunity of thanking most sincerely those who have written in support of me and who have expressed their views strongly to their Members of Parliament. I know that they will share my heartfelt disappointment but I assure them that the moral future of our country is still of the greatest concern to very many people of goodwill and it is something for which I personally will continue to fight.

+ Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien  
Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh