Online Catechism Lesson 12: Blood transfusion, transplants, and research are not intrinsically sinful

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

1. Blood transfusions are allowed for the sake of saving or enhancing lives.

2. Human body parts can be transplanted into other humans for the sake of saving or enhancing their lives, but never at the expense of the life of the donor. The only body part that it is forbidden to transplant is a head (if it were possible) because the head is the most unique physical thing that distinguishes one person from another.

3. Research that requires the taking of a human life, which includes harvesting aborted fetuses for research or medicine or any other reason, is a mortal sin of murder.

4. It is immoral and mortally sinful to buy or sell human body parts for a profit by middle men. However, individual donors can receive money for the body parts they provide, such as for giving blood or kidneys. And the hospital and doctor that performs the operation can receive a profit.

5. Animal body parts can be transplanted into other animals or humans for the sake of saving or enhancing their lives.

6. Research can be done on living animals (such as vivisections) and dead animals (such as dissections), as long as its purpose is to save or enhance lives. However, any torture or otherwise undue pain inflicted on living animals is condemned, as well as any research for psychological purposes.

7. Research on living humans must not intentionally cause permanent damage or undue pain or be used for psychological purposes.

8. Dead humans can be used for research provided their body and body parts are treated respectfully and buried after use.

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men