

March 12, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I was pained to learn about several hundred chimpanzees who are confined in unacceptable conditions at the University of Louisiana – Lafayette’s New Iberia Research Center. I understand that you have already received a letter from The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) regarding its investigation of New Iberia and how it found chimpanzees – both isolated and group-housed – whose natural instincts have been perverted by captivity and frequent frightening experiences.

I have watched videotape of these chimpanzees and what I see is a sorrow so deep that it radiates from their eyes during quiet times and bursts forth in anger and frustration when they are being harmed or harassed with dart guns or needles.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “Animals are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals....It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly." Part Three, Section Two, Chapter Two, Article 7, 2:2416

The chimpanzees at the New Iberia Research Center and other laboratories are tyrannized by those who use them in experimentation and we are wrong to do this. I ask that you support the retirement of all chimpanzees from research life and return to them some semblance of what God originally intended for them.

God bless you Secretary Sebelius.

Father Charles Jacobs  
Holy Trinity Church