



# *Thinking* Bioethics

Talk 7

# Issues and Agendas

Wednesday 18th April

In the final talk in our series we consider topical bioethical issues in the light of what we have learned. We also ask whether the apparently piecemeal evolution of our bioethics is underpinned by more coherent agendas: Are humans special and does it matter? And just what is the population problem?

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**Speaker**

**Pauline Gately**

Who has an MA in Bioethics from St Mary's where she also guest lectured. She both observes and engages in the public debate on bioethical issues and this talk is the fruit of that experience.

**When?**

7.30 (light refreshments) for 8pm

**Where?**

Parish Hall,  
Christ the Prince of Peace,  
Portmore Way, Portmore Park Road,  
Weybridge KT13 8JD

**Is there a charge?**

If you have not registered for the full series of talks we suggest a donation of £5 to help cover costs.

**For the full timetable**

Go to [www.cpp.org.uk/bioethics.html](http://www.cpp.org.uk/bioethics.html)  
or call Pauline on 01932 852759

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**Creative Leap**

We acknowledge with gratitude the generous support of our friends at Creative Leap ([www.creativeleap.com](http://www.creativeleap.com)) in preparing the promotional materials for these talks.

# Pauline Gately

Her bioethical experience is primarily at 'grass roots'; working first with a Life Group, assisting in setting up a Life house and strengthening other groups, and then with lobbying and briefing locally on topical issues and legislation. However she also both follows and engages in the wider public debate, mainly through the internet.

She has a MA in Bioethics from St Mary's University College and has guest lectured at St Mary's on her research topic which she is also currently writing up for publication.

She is married with two adult children and, in what feels like a legacy from a former life, she has a BSc in mathematics and is an Associate of the Institute of Actuaries.

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## Synopsis

The content of this talk is necessarily flexible: We will examine topical issues in the light of what we have learned with the aim of complementing, but not duplicating, earlier talks.

If time permits we will also look at possible underlying agendas: In public debate bioethical challenges are frequently presented in the context of individual, personalised 'hard cases' and argued in terms of human rights and appeals to compassion. We will have seen that the law often changes in discrete steps in response but without apparent reference to any deeper moral framework or to the logical consequences. There may, however, be more coherent but less apparent underlying agendas. We consider the evidence and reflect on whether and how these might be influencing debate.

Some or all of the following topics may be addressed:

1. Human exceptionalism: Should humans always be accorded exceptional rights by virtue of their intrinsic nature or is the life of a newborn human of less value than the life of a pig, a dog, or a chimpanzee, as Princeton's Professor of bioethics argues?
2. The population problem: What is it and how do population considerations impact bioethical debate?
3. When 'compassion' trump principle: The consequences of the Tony Bland judgment.

## Suggested advance reading

<http://www.cpp.org.uk/bioethics.html>