Catholics who are endorsing this should know where the money is going.

Fr. Michael Duffy explains:

We’ve all seen it, and many of you have probably done it. Many celebrities, politicians and even priests have done it. There is a great amount of good that comes about from furthering awareness of such a terrible disease. Since July 29th, $5.5 million has been raised for ALS research. The problem that I have with the ALS Ice Bucket challenge is that the ALS Association is a supporter of embryonic stem cell research.

The American Life League website has done the leg work on this particular charitable cause. From ALSA.org:

“Adult stem cell research is important and should be done alongside embryonic stem cell research as both will provide valuable insights. Only through exploration of all types of stem cell research will scientists find the most efficient and effective ways to treat diseases.”

From the Life League website:

In an email to ALL from Carrie Munk at the ALS Association:

The ALS Association primarily funds adult stem cell research. Currently, The Association is funding one study using embryonic stem cells (ESC), and the stem cell line was established many years ago under ethical guidelines set by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS); this
research is funded by one specific donor, who is committed to this area of research. In fact, donors may stipulate that their funds not be invested in this study or any stem cell project. Under very strict guidelines, The Association may fund embryonic stem cell research in the future.

Saint John Paul II said in 2003:

Any treatment which claims to save human lives, yet is based upon the destruction of human life in its embryonic state, is logically and morally contradictory, as is any production of human embryos for the direct or indirect purpose of experimentation or eventual destruction.

While I can’t donate to the ALS Association, I will certainly pray for those that suffer from this disease. I’ll also be on the lookout for a charity that doesn’t violate the sanctity of human life.

And he’s found one. Visit the link to learn more.

Meantime, a commentator in Washington sees a different problem:

This is, quite frankly, an insult to the parts of the world that have little or no drinking water readily available. It’s in especially poor taste this summer, with much of the western and southwestern United States dealing with one of the worst droughts in decades. There are even D.C. area residents who have been instructed to boil their water this week, due to unsafe conditions.

The bigger issue, though, is the look-at-me culture this promotes. Hashtag activism is not real activism. Dumping a bucket of ice water over your head does not make you a hero. Posting about it on social media and challenging others to do the same certainly doesn’t either.

Let’s be very clear about something. I am all in favor of raising money for ALS. It’s an awful, progressive, deadly disease for which we have no cure. I watched my uncle Chris, a proud Navy pilot, reduced to a wheelchair, his chest heavy with each breath, before it eventually took his life.

So, instead of wasting several gallons of cold water and shouting out your non-achievement from the rooftop, I have a better idea. There are plenty of organizations in this country that need your time, attention and charity.

UPDATE: One writer at Slate gives the origin of this particular challenge, and says: enough, already.

Snip:

More than anything else, the ice bucket videos feel like an exercise in raising awareness of one’s own zaniness, altruism, and/or attractiveness in a wet T-shirt.

That’s why I’m proposing what is sure to be an unpopular alternative to the #icebucketchallenge. It’s called the no ice bucket challenge, and it works like this:

1. Do not fetch a bucket, fill it with ice, or dump it on your head.
2. Do not film yourself or post anything on social media.
3. Just donate the damn money, whether to the ALS Association or some other charity of your choice. And if it’s an organization you really believe in, feel free to politely encourage your friends and family to do the same.