

Access to Ultrasound

The Texas Catholic Conference *supports the ability for women seeking abortions to view ultrasound images of their unborn child.*

You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew; my bones were not hidden from you, When I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth. Your eyes foresaw my actions; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be. (New American Bible, Psalm 139:13-16)

A Texas Bishop Speaks:

"At Loreto House, a pregnancy resource center in the Diocese of Fort Worth, we have seen that ultrasound images have proven to mothers that they are carrying a tiny new human life in their womb. The use of this technology has been life-saving."



-Bishop Kevin Vann, Diocese of Fort Worth

Church Teaching

- ★ In Luke 1:44 God uses the Greek word "brephos" to describe how the as-yet unborn John the Baptist "leaped in the womb for joy" while in the presence of the unborn Christ. In the very next chapter the same word "brephos" is used to describe the already born baby Jesus (Luke 2:12). God sees them as babies, whether born or unborn, with all the God-given human dignity and the same right to life afforded to adults. (*Dr. William R. Lile, Jr., FACOG, Surgical Advances for Unborn Patients 2004 Respect Life Program*)
- ★ Do we recognize that the innate dignity of every individual rests on his or her deepest identity - as image of the Creator - and therefore that human rights are universal, based on the natural law, and not something dependent upon negotiation or patronage, let alone compromise? And so we are led to reflect on what place the poor and the elderly, immigrants and the voiceless, have in our societies. How can it be that domestic violence torments so many mothers and children? How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space - the womb - has become a place of unutterable violence? (*Pope Benedict XVI, 2008 World Youth Day*)
- ★ Physical life, with which the course of human life in the world begins, certainly does not itself contain the whole of a person's value, nor does it represent the supreme good of man who is called to eternal life. However it does constitute in a certain way the "fundamental" value of life, precisely because upon this physical life all the other values of the person are based and developed. The inviolability of the innocent human being's right to life "from the moment of conception until death" is a sign and requirement of the very inviolability of the person to whom the Creator has given the gift of life. (*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Donum Vitae*)

Resources

- ★ **US Conference of Catholic Bishops** Abortion page (www.USCCB.org/prolife/issues/abortion/)
- ★ **Second Look Project** presents basic facts regarding abortion to help people make informed decisions based on fact rather than emotion (www.SecondLookProject.org)
- ★ **National Catholic Bioethics Center** The NCBC conducts research, consultation, publishing and education to promote human dignity in health care and the life sciences, and derives its message directly from the teachings of the Catholic Church (www.NCBCenter.org)

The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) is the association of the 15 Roman Catholic dioceses of the State of Texas, and is the Official Public Policy Voice of the Catholic Bishops of Texas.

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Access to Ultrasound Images

Ultrasound images provide information that cannot be replaced via brochures or a discussion with a health care worker. These images provide sound evidence that an embryo or fetus is a child and not simply a mass of cells or tissue. Requiring abortion providers to allow women to view their ultrasound prior to an abortion is a gradualistic approach to decreasing the number of abortions in Texas.

Development of the Unborn Child

At fertilization (when the male sperm enters the female egg), the unborn child has his or her own unique set of DNA material — or genes — half are from the mother and half from the father.

Gestation (Weeks)	Growth & Development of Unborn Childⁱ	Occurrence of Abortion in Texas^{ii,iii}
2-4	The cardio-vascular system is the first major system to function in the human embryo. Blood is circulating and the heart begins to beat at 21 or 22 days, and can be detected on ultrasound. The first rudiments of the nervous system appear in the third week; in week four main divisions of the central nervous system are established: forebrain, midbrain, hindbrain and spinal cord. Upper limb buds appear in days 24-26 (lower limb buds follow a few days later), and the primordia of the lungs, liver, stomach, pancreas and thyroid are evident.	56,423 Texans are aborted during this time, approx. the population of Anderson County.
5-8	The embryo measures about one inch in length; trunk is beginning to straighten. At 40 days, brain waves are recordable. By day 51-52 upper limbs bend at the elbow, by day 54, toes have formed. Using ultrasound early movements are apparent. The embryo bears the familiar external features and all internal organs of an adult.	
9-12	Fingernails develop. ¹³ Eyelids fuse and will remain closed until about the 25th week. The sex of the fetus is distinguishable externally.	15,681 Texans are aborted, approx. the population of Gaines County.
13-16	The fetus is about 3 inches in length. It is able to hear and pain sensors are operative. Limb movement, which began at the end of the embryonic period, becomes more coordinated by the 14th week, but the mother is not aware of movement. The fetus can suck its thumb from 13 weeks on. Skin remains thin and blood vessels are clearly visible through the skin. By the 14th week, fingernails are well formed, and hairs on the head are present. Lower limbs are well developed; early toe nail development takes place. By the beginning of the sixteenth week, bones are clearly visible on ultrasound.	4,776 Texans are aborted, approx. the population of Kimble County.
17-25	Rapid growth rate subsides; the mother becomes aware of fetal movements (quickening). If born at five months' gestation, chances of surviving with medical intervention are approximately 50 percent. Rapid eye movements begin at 21 weeks; by week 25 fingernails, eyelids and eyebrows are well developed. If born at 22-25 weeks, the fetus usually survives.	1,443 Texans are aborted, approx. the population of Foard County.

(Last updated July 9, 2010, 82nd Legislative Session)

ⁱ "The Second Look Project Fetal Development." *The Second Look Project*. Web. 04 Aug. 2010. <www.secondlookproject.org/tslp_fetal.html>.

ⁱⁱ "Texas Department of State Health Services, **Preliminary** Vital Statistics 2008 Annual Report, Table 33." Texas Department of State Health Services. 27 Aug. 2009. Web. 04 Aug. 2010. <www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/vstat/vs08/t33.shtm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hoque, Dr. Nazrul, and Dr. Karl Eschbach. "2008 Methodology for Total Population Estimates." *Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer Website*. 22 Jan. 2010. Web. 04 Aug. 2010. <txsdc.utsa.edu/tpepp/2008_txpopest_method.php>.