

# Access to Ultrasound

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2270*)

## Church teaching

- ★ A Christian's outlook cannot be limited to the horizon of life in this world. He knows that during the present life another one is being prepared, one of such importance that it is in its light that judgments must be made.[26] From this viewpoint there is no absolute misfortune here below, not even the terrible sorrow of bringing up a handicapped child. This is the contradiction proclaimed by the Lord: "Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted" (*Mt. 5:5*). To measure happiness by the absence of sorrow and misery in this world is to turn one's back on the Gospel. (*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on Procured Abortion*)
- ★ 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, The Gift of Life*)
- ★ When it is not possible to overturn or completely abrogate a pro-abortion law, an elected official, whose absolute personal opposition to procured abortion was well known, could licitly support proposals aimed at limiting the harm done by such a law and at lessening its negative consequences at the level of general opinion and public morality. This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects. (*Pope John Paul II, The Gospel of Life*)

## Resources

- ★ **Texas Catholic Conference** Abortion page ([www.TXcatholic.org/abortion.asp](http://www.TXcatholic.org/abortion.asp))
- ★ **US Conference of Catholic Bishops** Abortion page ([www.USCCB.org/prolife/issues/abortion/](http://www.USCCB.org/prolife/issues/abortion/))
- ★ **Second Look Project** ([www.SecondLookProject.org](http://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](http://www.NCBCenter.org))
- ★ **Pontifical Academy for Life** The Pontifical Academy for Life was established to study and to provide information and training about the principal problems of law and biomedicine pertaining to the promotion and protection of life, especially in the direct relationship they have with Christian morality and the directives of the Church's Magisterium ([www.AcademiaVita.org](http://www.AcademiaVita.org))

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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.

# Access to Ultrasound

Ultrasound images provide women seeking an abortion with information that cannot be replaced via brochures or a discussion with a healthcare worker. Ultrasound images may show a woman her unborn child smiling, sucking a thumb, or even stretching or kicking. These images provide sound evidence that the unborn in the womb 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.

## Characteristics 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 from the mother and half from the father. The DNA is the blueprint for growth and development of all cells throughout life. DNA determines all of the baby's physical characteristics such as gender; the shape of the nose and ears; and the color of the hair, eyes, and skin.

<b>Weeks Gestation</b>	<b>Growth &amp; Development of Unborn Child</b>	<b>Occurrence of Abortion<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>4 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The brain and the spinal cord begin to form.</li> <li>The heart begins to form.</li> </ul>	
<b>6 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lungs are beginning to form.</li> <li>Brain activity can be recorded.</li> <li>The hands and feet have fingers and toes, but may still be webbed.</li> </ul>	<p>23% in the first 6 weeks - 301,300 annually</p> <p>34.5% in the seventh or eighth week - 451,950 annually</p>
<b>10 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The hands can make a fist with fingers.</li> </ul>	<p>19.5% in the ninth or tenth week - 255,450 annually, 10% in the eleventh or twelfth week - 131,000 annually</p>
<b>12 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The neck is present and the face well formed and the arms and legs move.</li> <li>All body parts and organs are present.</li> <li>The fibers that carry pain to the brain are developed.</li> </ul>	<p>6.0% in the thirteenth through fifteenth weeks - 78,600 annually</p>
<b>18 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The arms and legs begin to punch and kick.</li> <li>The fingernails are well formed and The unborn child can suck its thumb.</li> </ul>	<p>4.5% in the sixteenth through twentieth weeks - 58,950 annually</p>
<b>20 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some experts have concluded that the unborn child is probably able to feel pain.</li> <li>Eyebrows and lashes appear.</li> </ul>	<p>1.5% at twenty-one weeks or more - 19,650 annually</p>
<b>24 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unique footprints and fingerprints are present and outside sounds can be heard.</li> <li>Actions such as hiccuping, squinting, smiling, and frowning may be seen through ultrasound.</li> </ul>	
<b>34 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ears have begun to hold shape.</li> <li>The eyes open during alert times and close during sleep.</li> </ul>	
<b>38 Weeks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A newborn is considered full-term at 38 weeks.</li> <li>The unborn child can grasp firmly and turns toward a light source.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> "The Second Look Project." Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, USCCB. <<http://www.secondlookproject.org/>>.