

*The  
CIRCLE of LIFE  
JOURNEY  
SESSION 2  
Respect for  
Unborn Life*

As we continue our  
CIRCLE OF LIFE JOURNEY  
let us next reflect  
on the mystery of . . .



*Mary*

What can  
she teach us  
about the  
Seamless  
Garment of Life?



Legend has it that  
it was Mary who  
"knitted together"  
the Seamless  
Garment  
of her son,  
JESUS.



*The Madonna Knitting  
Christ's Seamless Garment*  
by Meister Bertram von Minden



*Mary's visitation to Elizabeth revealed  
the beauty of two wombs  
bursting with Life and Joy.*



When Elizabeth  
heard Mary's greeting,  
the infant  
leaped in her womb,

And Elizabeth,  
filled with  
the Holy Spirit,  
cried out  
in a loud voice  
and said . . .



"Most blessed are you  
among women, and blessed  
is the fruit of your womb. . . .

For at the moment  
the sound of your greeting  
reached my ears,

the infant in my womb  
leaped for joy."

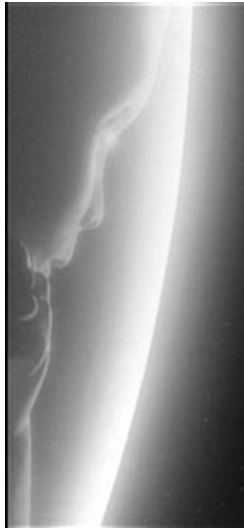
And Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit,  
responded with her profound  
MAGNIFICAT . . .

"My soul proclaims  
the greatness of  
the Lord;

my spirit rejoices  
in God my savior."

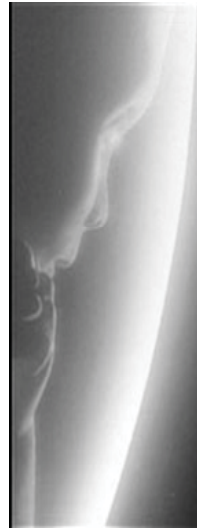


Scripture tells us  
that we, too, have been  
"knitted together"  
in our mother's  
womb . . .



You formed my  
inmost being;  
you knit me in  
my mother's womb.

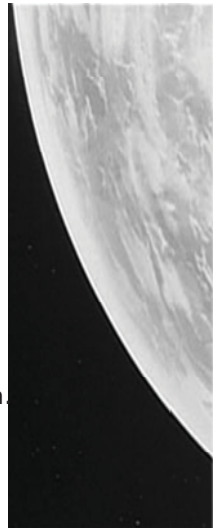
I praise you,  
so wonderfully  
you made me;  
wonderful are your works!



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.

Psalm 139



"All human beings,  
from their mother's womb,  
belong to God  
who searches them and knows them,  
who forms them  
and knits them together  
with his own hands,  
who gazes on them  
when they are tiny  
shapeless embryos  
and already sees in them  
the adults of tomorrow..."



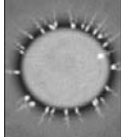
*The Gospel of Life*

*Respect for  
UNBORN LIFE:*

**STEM CELL  
RESEARCH**

The Church recognizes  
the dignity of  
HUMAN LIFE  
from its earliest  
beginnings . . .





"From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way..."

*(Donum Vitae)*

## How does STEM CELL RESEARCH relate to the Consistent Ethic of Life?

STEM CELLS are used in medical research because . . .



- They have the ability to develop into one of many different kinds of cells
- They can be manipulated to replace, repair or enhance damaged or diseased cells
- They have the potential to treat or cure many diseases

### Ethical concerns involve the SOURCE of stem cells for research:

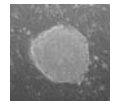
Some sources of stem cells DESTROY Embryonic Life:

- \* Stem cells extracted from a Human embryo obtained through abortion or in vitro fertilization

Other sources of stem cells DO NOT DESTROY Embryonic Life:

- \* Stem cells extracted from the Placenta or Umbilical cord
- \* Adult Stem cells extracted from brain, bone marrow, blood, muscle, skin

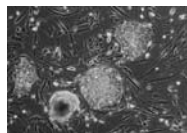
### What the Church teaches on STEM CELLS:



The Church . . .

- Encourages medical progress which respects the dignity of human life.
- Supports non-embryonic stem cell research (e.g., adult, umbilical cord)
- Considers embryonic stem cell research to be morally unacceptable

The basis for rejecting such procedures is the recognition of the human embryo's being accepted as



A full human person from the moment of conception

and, therefore, having an intrinsic dignity and value that cannot be compromised in the name of other values.

In evaluating how to move ahead, whether it is in the laboratory or in society at large,

always we are to remember an underlying principle:



to value the dignity of human life.

The word of the LORD  
 came to me thus:  
 Before I formed you  
 in the womb  
 I knew you,  
 before you were born  
 I dedicated you,  
 a prophet to the nations  
 I appointed you.



Jeremiah 1:4-5

*Respect for  
 UNBORN  
 LIFE*

**ABORTION**

. . . the Church  
 calls for an end  
 to ABORTIONS



The LORD  
 called me  
 from birth,  
 from my mother's womb  
 he gave me  
 my name.

Isaiah 49:1

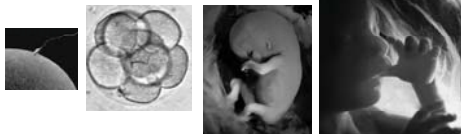
. . . there is no freedom  
 in running away from  
 responsibility for others,  
 but only in accepting  
 a special obligation  
 to care for the weakest



The unborn—  
 unseen, unheard,  
 physically and legally powerless  
 —are among these.

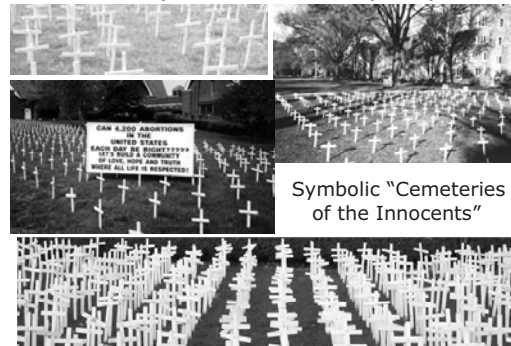
### THE CHURCH'S TEACHING on ABORTION . . .

- The Church considers the  
 fertilized egg, embryo and  
 fetus as full human beings



- There are no cases in which  
 the Church condones abortion.

It is estimated that between  
 3700 and 4400 American babies  
 die by abortion every day.



Symbolic "Cemeteries  
 of the Innocents"



To the woman who  
has had an abortion  
the Church says . . .

"How can we  
reconcile you?"

How can we help you,  
to face honestly what happened,  
repent,  
and be reconciled to the child,  
to yourself, to your family  
and to God?"

Thus says the Lord:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
lamentation and bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children,



Refusing to be comforted  
for her children,  
because they are  
no more."

Jeremiah 31:15

### PRAYER TO CHRIST UNBORN

Dear Lord Jesus  
in the womb  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

Before your birth  
You filled the unborn Baptist  
with the joy of the holy Spirit.

Inspire us to see You  
in every unborn child.

Grant us the perseverance  
to defend vulnerable human life  
from abortion,  
abandonment,  
experimentation,  
and all violations.

Fill us with reverence for  
the moment of your  
Incarnation in Nazareth  
when  
The WORD  
became Flesh.

And just as your Mother  
kept all these things,  
and pondered them  
in her heart,



May we  
always remember that . . .

. . . whoever receives one child  
such as this  
in your name  
receives You.



Matthew 18:5

*Amen*

Credits

*Catholic Update:* "Stem-Cell Research,  
How Catholic Ethics Guides Us"

*Catholic Update:*  
"Abortion, What the Church Teaches"

[www.unewman.org/info/fastfacts.cfm](http://www.unewman.org/info/fastfacts.cfm)

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Presentation prepared by K.K. Hirschboeck  
Our Mother of Sorrows Parish  
Christian Life Commission – Consistent Ethic of Life Committee

*For more information:*

Do No Harm:  
The Coalition of Americans for Research Ethics  
<http://www.stemcellresearch.org/>

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Respect Life Program  
<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/index.shtml>

Reachout Pregnancy Center in Tucson  
<http://reachoutforlife.org/Home.htm>