

## Choose Life: Prayer for the Child in the Womb

Lord Jesus, you are the source and lover of life.  
Reawaken in us respect for every human life.

Help us to see in each child the marvellous  
work of our Creator.

Open our hearts to welcome every child as a  
unique and wonderful gift.

Guide the work of doctors, nurses and  
midwives.

May the life of a mother and her baby in the  
womb be equally cherished and respected.

Help those who make our laws to uphold the  
uniqueness and sacredness of every human life,  
from the first moment of conception to natural  
death.

Give us wisdom and generosity to build a  
society that cares for all.

Together with Mary, your Mother,  
in whose womb you took on our human  
nature,

Help us to choose life in every decision we  
take.

We ask this in the joyful hope of eternal life  
with you, and in the communion of the  
Blessed Trinity.

Amen.

Our Lady of Knock, *pray for us.*  
All the Saints of Ireland, *pray for us.*



# The Precious Life of the Unborn Child

*The baby's life in the womb is an astonishing odyssey of growth and development. As science makes clear, it is at fertilisation that a new, unique and genetically complete human being comes into existence.*

*From that moment onwards each of us did not grow and develop into a human being.*

*We grew and developed as a human being.*

- **18–21 days** after conception, before many women will even realise they are pregnant, the baby's heart is beating.
- At **8 weeks** every organ to be found in a fully grown adult person is already formed.
- At **11 weeks** fingerprints and fingernails can be clearly seen.
- At **12 weeks** the baby's lips open and close. The baby can turn her or his head and move around the womb.
- At **16 weeks** the baby reacts to sound, sucks, swallows and yawns.
- At **18 weeks** most mothers feel the baby moving. The baby exercises her or his developing muscles by pushing with the feet and head. The baby now sucks her or his thumb.
- At **24 weeks** the baby continues moving, hearing and perhaps even dreaming.
- At **30–40 weeks** the baby, if protected from harm, will continue to grow bigger and stronger until it is time to be born.



At 24 weeks

In England and Wales abortion is lawful up to 24 weeks and sometimes later. In 2011 there were 196,082 abortions in England and Wales.