

Prelate Encourages Umbilical Cord Blood Donations

CARDIFF, Wales, JUNE 12, 2009 (Zenit.org).- The archbishop of Cardiff is encouraging people to donate the singularly useful umbilical cord blood after giving birth.

Archbishop Peter Smith is issuing this appeal on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, celebrated on Sunday, the bishops' conference of England and Wales reported.

The press release noted that "cord blood is rich in stem cells and is already being used to treat many different diseases including leukemia, sickle cell anemia and thalassemia."

Researchers are "now finding more uses for blood donations taken from the umbilical cord at birth," it added.

"Valuable cord blood can be extracted in a simple, safe procedure from the umbilical cord after birth, but currently most of this precious resource is discarded," the statement affirmed.

The archbishop stated, "I encourage people to learn more about cord blood donation and for expectant mothers to consider donating umbilical cord blood after the birth of their child."

He continued, "The birth of a child is a wonderful gift, and a donation of cord blood could help transform the lives of those who could benefit from the extracted stem cells."

The statement explained that the "therapeutic use of cord blood stem cells raises no ethical problems, unlike the use of embryonic stem cells derived from human embryos."

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