

*take my hand...*



*...not my life*

# KEEP IRELAND ABORTION FREE

A photo snapped during a risky surgery on a 21-week-old foetus. His mother, Julie Armas started to pray for a miracle as soon as the ultrasound technician told her he had spotted the telltale anomaly in her baby's brain. Her prayers led the 28-year-old Mrs. Armas and her husband, Alex, to Nashville, USA, for experimental surgery on their 21-week-old foetus.

Baby Samuel had been diagnosed with spina bifida, a devastating defect in which the developing foetus' backbone and spinal canal fail to close. The defect causes disabilities including paralysis of the legs, incontinence, learning problems and hydrocephalus, the accumulation of water on the brain. Still too small and fragile to survive outside his mother's womb, Samuel underwent a risky and unproven procedure on Aug. 19 that his parents hope will limit the effects of his spina bifida. He was born Dec. 2, weighing 5 pounds, 11 ounces.

But his operation has had at least one lasting effect. When his tiny hand slipped out of the incision in his mother's womb, Dr. Joseph Bruner, Samuel's surgeon, slipped his finger into the baby's fist. In the picture, Samuel's hand looked like that of any newborn baby -- "except it was a much smaller baby."

**Youth Defence, 60a Capel Street, Dublin 1**

**T 01 873 0463 F 01 873 0464 E [info@youthdefence.ie](mailto:info@youthdefence.ie) W [www.youthdefence.ie](http://www.youthdefence.ie)**