



## **The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture and the Stem for Life Foundation Announce Third International Regenerative Medicine Conference to be Held at The Vatican in 2016**

### **The Holy Father, Pope Francis Scheduled to Receive Participants During Three-Day Event**

VATICAN CITY, Rome and NEW YORK, Sept. 23, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture, The Stem for Life Foundation, and STOQ, today announced *The Third International Conference on the Progress of Regenerative Medicine and its Cultural Impact*, which will be held within The Vatican, April 28-30, 2016.

*"All of society can be enriched thanks to this dialogue, which opens up new horizons for thought and expands the possibilities of reason. (...) The Church has no wish to hold back the marvelous progress of science."* (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 242-243)

Created by The Stem For Life Foundation, STOQ and the Vatican's Pontifical Council For Culture, this exceptional, international event will gather the world's leading cellular researchers, physicians, ethicists, philanthropists, business leaders, patients, political and regulatory figures, as well as Ambassadors to the Holy See, to engage in powerful conversations about the potential for adult stem cells, and other ethical cellular therapies, to treat cancer, diabetes and a broad spectrum of debilitating medical conditions and diseases. This multi-dimensional initiative was presented to Pope Francis, who strongly believes in dialogue between faith and science. His Holiness stressed the importance and the need to raise awareness about the conditions of all who are suffering, especially those affected by cancer and rare diseases, and support advancement of regenerative medicine and cell therapies. As He has stated, "service to the sick might always be better accomplished". (*Angelus*, 8 Febr. 2015).

Moderated by renowned journalists and broadcast around the world, the 2016 event will have a unique focus on pediatric cancers and rare genetic diseases, as well as diseases that occur with aging. Conversations will examine how science, technology, information and communication impact society. In addition to its focus on therapies and treatment, the event will explore the cellular future and seek to better understand the interconnections between science, technology, culture, faith and ethics. Throughout the conference, patients will share their own stories of the treatments that have helped address their disease and reduce suffering.

The President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, His Eminence Cardinal Ravasi, said:

*"Scientific research has increased the possibilities for maintaining health, preventing illness, and treating the sick. The new field of regenerative medicine holds great promise to alleviate the pain and suffering for hundreds of millions of people around the world. We must unite to discover and advance such new therapies, and find ways to bring them to all those in need."*



The third event of its kind, the conference is a continuation of a seven-year collaboration between The Stem for Life Foundation, a not-for-profit organization devoted to raising global awareness of the therapeutic potential of cell therapies, The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture and its Science and Faith Foundation, STOQ (Science, Theology and the Ontological Quest).

"We will unite people of all races, religious beliefs, cultural and economic backgrounds in a global conversation about the potential of cell therapy to treat a broad range of diseases, spanning all ages and geographies," said Dr. Robin Smith, President of The Stem for Life Foundation. "Regenerative medicine and immunotherapy will revolutionize medicine by finding new ways to utilize the cells of the body to heal itself and destroy cancer cells and other dangerous pathogens. And this day isn't far off - it's happening right now, in leading hospitals and cell therapy clinics around the world."

"We want to generate an international dialogue about the implications of advancing cell therapy development and understand how these scientific advancements impact culture, society, anthropology and eventually on the role of the religious institutions in advancing research that will benefit humanity," said Monsignor Tomasz Trafny, Head of Science and Faith Department, The Pontifical Council for Culture.

The mission of the 2016 Third International Regenerative Medicine Conference is to:

- Discuss and understand the importance of scientific advancements, technology and data in the paradigm shift toward regenerative medicine, with a particular focus on cellular therapies.
- Unite people, without prejudice, creating an open dialogue about the interconnections between cellular research, technology, faith and culture.
- Foster an international conversation amongst researchers, physicians, philanthropists, faith leaders and policy-makers in order to help identify a pathway to bring cellular cures to those in medical need throughout the world to reduce human suffering.
- Create global awareness and inspire the next generation about the vital linkages between cellular sciences, technological innovation and personalized treatment delivery.
- Catalyze the necessary funding to support the development of cell therapies that will cure and treat a broad range of debilitating diseases and medical conditions.
- Establish a global movement of cellular researchers, medical practitioners, technological innovators and cultural and religious thought leaders throughout the world devoted to advancing the paradigm shift toward regenerative medicine.



To learn more about The Third International Conference on the Progress of Regenerative Medicine and Its Cultural Impact, please visit: <http://www.celltherapyconference2016.com>

**The Stem for Life Foundation ("SFLF" or the "Foundation")** is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c3) of the Internal Revenue Code focused on creating a movement to accelerate development of cell therapies. We believe cell therapy holds the promise to cure many of the world's most debilitating illnesses as opposed to merely treating their symptoms. It represents a fundamental shift away from traditional drug treatment in favor of looking inside ourselves to understand and then amplify our bodies' natural repair mechanisms. SFLF is firmly committed to advancing cell therapy research and development and its applications to improve the everyday lives of everyday people. To further this end, SFLF raises awareness and supports research and development efforts. SFLF was established in 2007. Expanding the foundation's original focus on adult stem cell therapy alone, the foundation's board of trustees and staff are deeply committed to the considerable promise to improve human health, increase quality of life and enhance patient care offered by the broader field of cell therapy.

For more information on the Stem for Life Foundation, please visit <http://www.stemforlife.org>

**The Science and Faith Foundation – "STOQ"** is a Foundation under Vatican law promoted by the Pontifical Council for Culture. The identity and mission of the Foundation have their main Magisterial references in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, in the talks of St John Paul II and Benedict XVI on the relations between science and faith, particularly in the Encyclical *Fides et ratio*. The Foundation aims to give continuity to the activities of Project STOQ, which emerged from the collaboration between the Pontifical Council for Culture and Pontifical Roman Universities following the Galileo Commission and the Jubilee of Scientists in the year 2000. Among the aims of the Foundation are research and study of the themes of dialogue between science, philosophy and theology; realisation of conferences and other activities of high cultural and scientific value, even at the popular level; publication of works of merit on the main arguments of the science-faith dialogue.

**The Pontifical Council for Culture** traces its origins to the Second Vatican Council and its opening up to that great, dynamic, worried and multiform world of contemporary culture. In its Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, the Council Fathers expressed the need for the Church to continually place itself before the needs of the cultures of the world. It was a new period of history where a new humanism was arising, and the Church, faithful to its own traditions, was aware of the universality of its mission, entering into communion with the different forms of culture, a communion that would enrich the Church as much as the cultures. The Pontifical Council for Culture is committed to the dialogue with many realities in their relation to culture and faith such Art, Music, Cultural Goods, Cultures in the World, Mysticism, Atheism, Economics, Language & Communication, International Cultural Bodies, Sport and Science.



***The Science and Faith Department*** is the vehicle of the Pontifical Council for Culture's engagement with contemporary science. This commitment is based on the firm belief that between science and faith not only is there no opposition, but there should also be beneficial serene dialogue. The Christian faith when properly understood is a creator of culture and an inspiring source of science. For this reason, the Department of Science and Faith seeks further understanding of the phenomena of scientific and technological development and their possible influence on theological and philosophical thought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Elaborate a cultural analysis of the development of natural sciences, enquiring after its impact on theological and philosophical reflection, and on the cultural and social dynamics over the short and long term;
2. Promote reciprocal cooperation in the sphere of the dialogue of science and faith with the various institutions beginning with other Dicasteries and bodies of the Holy See, also international Catholic organizations, ecclesial and secular institutions, universities and research institutes throughout the world, making common projects and sustaining initiatives of scientific research and cultural discovery;
3. Encourage a greater commitment for the ideal of dialogue between science and faith, and promote critical reflection on the frontier themes in the area of interdisciplinary research for a renewed anthropology, and for ethics, theology and philosophy of nature;
4. Offer collaboration as a service to Episcopal Conferences and their bodies on themes relating to science and faith; and
5. Promote initiatives to spread awareness through public conferences, congresses and study days, as well as publishing books and educational volumes to support the Church in its pastoral and educational tasks.

For more information on The Pontifical Council for Culture, please visit <http://www.cultura.va>

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