

“In my 40 years of practice I’ve seen many difficult cases but I’ve never felt the Eighth Amendment had a negative impact on the safe practice of medicine.”

Dr John Monaghan is a retired obstetrician and gynaecologist >



Dr Monaghan’s Story “Doctors have always been faced with the care and management of a woman who develops serious illness when she is pregnant. Unfortunately, in these cases, because delivery has to be brought forward, the baby may lose his or her life.

“No doctor in Ireland has ever been accused of wrong doing for intervening in this way to save a mother’s life. This intervention is not the same as performing an abortion which deliberately ends the life of the unborn child.

“There has been a lot of debate about the need to remove the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution in the interest of women’s health. The amendment does not restrict doctors from acting to save a woman’s life when a serious complication arises in pregnancy.

“The number of mothers who lose their life during pregnancy in Ireland is lower than it is in the UK and considerably lower than in the United States. People can be assured that Ireland is a very safe country to have a baby.

“The reasons for repealing the Eighth Amendment are not about healthcare, despite what is being claimed. Doctors are being asked to end pregnancies where both the mother and baby are healthy. This goes against the clear duty of a medical doctor to ‘first do no harm’ and a fundamental call to preserve life, not to end it. The health issue in this debate is being used as a lever to broaden the grounds for abortions which are not related to health.

“In my 40 years of practice in obstetrics and gynaecology I have seen many difficult cases but I have never felt that the Eighth Amendment had a negative effect on the safe practice of medicine.”

What can I do?

Why not follow Choose Life 2018 on Facebook and @ChooseLife2018 on Twitter and share our posts to help promote a culture of life online?

Your Questions

What will happen if the Eighth Amendment is repealed?

The Eighth Amendment protects the right to life of pregnant women and unborn babies *equally*. Without it, Ireland’s abortion rate will rise dramatically. Statistics from the Department of Health UK reveal over 185,000 abortions were performed in 2016. When abortion was legalised in the UK in 1967, no one could have predicted that in just 50 years 1 in 5 British babies’ lives would end in abortion every year. Similar rates are seen in Sweden (1 in 4), France and Spain (1 in 5), Italy and Portugal (1 in 6).

Why do abortions take place?

The UK statistics also show in 2016, 97% of abortions were performed in England and Wales for social reasons. Some 38% of the total number of abortions were performed on women who had at least one previous abortion. The rate of abortion was highest among women aged 22.

Week 8

Hi Mammy!

Guess what is happening this week. I'm the size of a raspberry but everything in a grown up is forming in my little body. My facial features are now becoming even more defined as my lips, nostrils, nose and my tongue all take shape. I'm sorry you have been sick in the mornings. You should feel better soon!



Over the coming weeks we will be following the development of Baby Bump based on pregnancy milestones from conception to 12 weeks.

Church teaching

The unborn child is a person

There is no moment as significant as the moment of conception in terms of defining the beginning of personal existence. Everything else is simply the process of growth and development of a baby who has already embarked on the wonderful journey of life.

It is illogical to consider a newborn child to be a person deserving human rights and, on the other hand, an unborn child to be a non-person undeserving of human rights.

For Christians, there is no conflict between faith and reason. Reason leads us to recognise the continuity of human life, from conception to natural death, and faith allows us to see each person as having their origin in God and their fulfilment in eternal life.

Human Rights Law

The right to life is shared internationally

"As long ago as 1924, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child stated that 'the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth'.

"This statement was repeated in the 1959 UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child and in the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"The view that an unborn child has the right to life is a view which is shared by millions across the world" – Baroness Nuala O'Loan.

"YOU AND I HAVE A RIGHT TO OUR life. It is not given to us by the Irish Constitution or by any law. We have it 'as of right' whether we are wealthy or poor, healthy or sick. All human beings have it. For us



as a society to now declare that any category of human beings should have that right taken from them is a seriously backward step. It effectively says they don't exist or, if they do, they do not count. That is a manifest injustice. From conception on, a baby has within him or herself the full potential to be whatever destiny might allow."

Excerpt from the pastoral message of Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ of Raphoe. Read it in full on www.chooselife2018.ie

Family Prayer

Thank you Lord for all mothers
On this day let us think of them
Whether they are with us or gone
to their heavenly reward.
We think of their kindness
their compassion, their care for
us and all their unconditional love.
We pray that you will watch over
them and support them in the joys
and struggles of their daily lives.
We ask this through Christ our
Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Mother's Day from
The Family Book of Prayers



"After I had my baby, my friends were all in college or working. It was like we had nothing in common anymore. I emailed Cura and they put me in contact with my local centre. I went to see a counsellor a few times. She was brilliant." Jenny, 22.

Cura is an agency of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference which supports women experiencing unplanned pregnancies. If you need Cura's help call **1850 622 626** or visit **Cura.ie**

To access videos, testimonies and frequently asked questions visit www.chooselife2018.ie