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Catherine Wiley, from Mayo, is founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association >



Catherine’s Story “As Catholic grandparents we love our grandchildren – those who are born and those waiting to be born. We believe it is only fair that they, like us, should be given their chance at life, however short or fragile it may be.

“We instinctively understand the challenges that face our daughters and our sons as parents because we have lived similar challenges in our own lives. The lasting happiness of our own children is of the utmost importance to us and we will do all that we can to support them in their own role as parents. There is no sacrifice that a loving grandparent will not make for their child or their grandchild. Family always comes first.

“We appreciate that abortion may sometimes seem to offer an immediate solution to a difficult situation. Quite apart from what it would do to our grandchildren, however, we cannot see how it could ever serve the lasting happiness of our children.

“We’re living in unprecedented times with constantly changing social and moral values. Our contribution to the family, the Church and society was never as important. Sometimes we feel like we are failing. We can never fail if we keep praying, showing the way and passing on our faith.

“This is probably the most important job we will ever have and, for many of us, it may be our last. It is one from which we can never retire, so let us do our best. We owe it to our grandchildren. We simply want the best for them. We want them to be good people who make the world a better place, to know the difference between right and wrong and to be able to make informed moral decisions.

“I encourage all grandparents to turn to God’s spirit of wisdom and courage and protect Ireland’s culture of life for future generations.”

What can I do?

Why not pray for expectant mothers and unborn children at 8am and/or 8pm every day? Prayer resources are available on www.chooselife2018.ie

Your Questions

What if my baby won’t survive?

Many parents who received this news and continued their pregnancy to term say the chance to hold and care for their child, even if just for a few moments, helped them to grieve and heal after their child passed away. They have memories that they cherish and are consoled knowing they did all they could to care for and love their sick baby. As a society, we should strive to increase and improve perinatal hospice care and support for these babies and their families.

As well as medical assistance what support is available?

One Day More and *Every Life Counts* are Irish charities which offer support to mothers and fathers of babies with life-limiting conditions. They enable families to make meaningful plans for their child’s life, birth, and death, in a dignified way that honours the baby as well as the baby’s family.

Week 10

Hi Mammy!

In seven days, I doubled in size *again*! My fingers are now completely separated and my tiny fingernails are starting to appear. Taste buds are now starting to form on my tongue. My neck muscles are now developed and I can move my head back and forth. I'm extremely active at this stage. I can wave my arms, kick my legs and roll over now. Your womb is now a big playground for me to explore!



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

Church teaching

Irish Bishops' pastoral message: *Our Common Humanity*

"Every one of us has a right to our life. It is not given to us by the *Constitution of Ireland* 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 would be a shocking step. It effectively says that unborn children do not exist or, if they do, they do not count. That is a manifest injustice".

Reasons to cherish a culture of life

Life before birth

At the moment of conception, 23 chromosomes from the mother and 23 chromosomes from the father combine to create a new, unique human life. The combined 46 chromosomes contain the entire genetic blueprint of a new human life including gender, fingerprints, freckles, eye colour and blood type.

By day 21, a baby's heart is beating. Facial features are forming from week four. At just six weeks, the baby's eyes and eyelids, nose, mouth and internal organs have developed in their basic form.

The first movements occur at seven weeks. From week eight the nervous system is beginning to respond. From week nine the baby can yawn. From week 12 the baby can suck its thumb.

A stunning slideshow highlighting the development of life in the womb up to 12 weeks is available to view on our website www.chooselife2018.ie.



"I will never forget the effort my counsellor made with me when I experienced a crisis pregnancy. She helped me through some of the worst times of my life and I've come out the other side. I'm feeling stronger and better every day" Tara, 27.

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**

"DRAWING ON CHURCH TEACHING from the earliest times, the Church states: 'Human life is sacred because

from its beginning, it involves the creative action of God and it

remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, under any circumstance, claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being'. I ask you today to remember that no referendum can change moral truth. None of us should ever have the power to decide the death of another."



Excerpt from the pastoral message of Bishop Denis Brennan of Ferns. Read it in full on www.chooselife2018.ie

Family Prayer

O Mary, Mother of the Life Within,
All life we entrust to you.

The life of every expectant mother
and the child within her womb.

the life of every human body

the life of every human soul

the life of every newborn child

and the life of all grown old.

You held the Lord to your own heart
and drew Him so close in.

So draw us now in all our needs

O Mother of the Life Within. Amen.

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