

“Defending the right to life of the unborn is the most important social justice issue of our time. It will shape the kind of Ireland we live in for years to come.”

Finola Bruton is chair of the Parish Pastoral Council of Dunboyne & Kilbride >



Finola's Story “This referendum on the right to life of the unborn child will challenge us as a society to look at our basic moral vision and to examine our attitude towards the value of every human life. Defending the right to life of the unborn child in the womb is the most important social justice issue of our time. The coming weeks will shape the kind of Ireland we live in for years to come.

“As a society, we proclaim our belief in equality as one of our fundamental values. So how can we reconcile that value with removing the equal right to life of the unborn child from our Constitution?

“Advances in science have made it clear to us for some time now that the unborn child is undeniably one of us. Unborn children are not potential human beings but are human beings with potential. We can no longer talk about the unborn child as a ‘bunch of cells’. Often, before a woman even knows that she is pregnant there is a beating heart and a rapidly developing baby, a little boy or a little girl.

“The right to life is the first and most fundamental of all human rights, without which there can be no others. We cannot exercise any other human right if we are not allowed to exercise the right to live. We cannot say this often enough. Without being allowed to be born, one can have no civil rights, no free speech, no right to bodily integrity.

“Removing this constitutional protection will result in a very inconsistent version of equality is being granted to those who can make their voices heard – but denied to those who cannot. This is the first time in Irish history that a constitutional right may be taken away.

“At every stage of development, life is sacred. Commitment to our beliefs takes remarkable courage, no more so than at this time.”

What can I do?

Have a conversation with a friend or family member about the fact that at least 100,000 Irish lives have been saved by the Eighth Amendment.

Your Questions

Does life begin at conception?

Yes. But this is not just a question of belief – it’s a scientific fact. At the moment of conception a new, unique human being with his or her own DNA comes into existence. In recent years, amazing advances in ultrasound technology provide us with a window into the womb and reveal the truth that the unborn child is undeniably one of us – a human being and much more than ‘a clump of cells’. In the past, some people may have pleaded ignorance to the humanity of life in the womb but today we no longer have this excuse.

When does a baby's heart start to beat?

The first few weeks are the most rapid time of development for a new human life. The baby's beating heart has been recorded as early as 21 days after conception – this is sometimes before a mum even discovers that she is pregnant!

Week 11

Hi Mammy!
Great news – all my major organs are now fully formed! My fingers and toes have separated and I'm kicking and leaping about in the womb but you can't feel me just yet. My fingernails are growing and inside my gums there are 20 tiny teeth buds. My ribcage and bones are beginning to harden and my ears will soon be able to hear your lovely voice!



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

Church teaching

Life is sacred, *Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 2258*

"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."

Reasons to cherish a culture of life

Lives saved by the Eighth Amendment

It's easy to overlook the positive effects of the Eighth Amendment.

An independent report in 2016, *The 8th Amendment: Ireland's Life-Saving Provision* by actuary Brendan Lynch, estimates that at least 100,000 people are alive in Ireland today thanks to this constitutional provision. It gives people time to think the decision through and choose life for their daughter or son.

Ireland's safety record for pregnant women

A report published by World Health Organisation, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015*, ranks Ireland as a world leader when it comes to safety for pregnant women. Globally, we have one of the lowest maternal mortality rates. Ireland's culture of life has served us well and is an inspiration to many other countries.

We have shown it is possible to uphold the equal right to life of pregnant women and unborn babies and still be a world leader in maternal healthcare.

"SOME PEOPLE ARGUE FOR REPEAL of the Eighth Amendment on the grounds of developing a modern and compassionate Ireland but there is nothing 'modern' in taking the life of a baby.



It goes without saying that compassion for the mother is vital, but we must also extend our compassion to the child in the womb. Essentially, if the Eighth Amendment is repealed, the baby's mother will have a choice, but the baby will have no choice or anyone to vindicate her or his rights. Life is both sacred and a human right."

Excerpt from the Pastoral Message of Bishop John Kirby of Clonfert

Family Prayer

Mary, we pray today for all mothers who are afraid to be mothers. We pray for those who feel threatened and overwhelmed by their pregnancy. Intercede for them, that God may give them the grace to say yes and the courage to go on. May they have the grace to reject the false solution of abortion. May they say with you: "Be it done unto me according to your word". May they experience the help of Christian people and know the peace that comes from doing God's will. Amen.



"I was worried Cura would judge me and not understand my point of view because I'm a man but the counsellor was great. I would say get in contact. It makes sense to talk about stuff that's stressing you out. It definitely helped me" Jack, 26.

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