

thousands of lives. The absence of legal abortion in Ireland has ensured, in countless cases, that time is taken to think, plan, get good advice and seek out other options when unplanned pregnancies arise. The resulting pro-life culture has been a great help in saving countless lives in this country. The mystery of suffering is profound and its meaning has mystified the human race for generations. Our faith offers a unique perspective and meaning to the mystery of suffering in the Cross of Jesus Christ. In the Christian view, whether it is in the case of an unborn child or an elderly or terminally ill person, it is not up to human beings to decide who should live or die.

### **Choose Life!**

The simple message to “Choose life” is a good one. It is taken from the name of the website [www.chooselife2018.ie](http://www.chooselife2018.ie) on which there are resources available to inform people of the pro-life message. The choice is ours. My invitation is to “Choose life” and for us as Christians to stand up for what we believe in and “Be missionaries for Life”! In choosing life I will be voting ‘No’ in the upcoming referendum and would encourage others to do so also.

### ***Choose Life: Prayer for the Child in the Womb***

Lord Jesus, you are the source and lover of life.

Reawaken in us respect for every human life.

Help us to see in each child the marvellous work of our Creator.

Open our hearts to welcome every child as a unique and wonderful gift.

Guide the work of doctors, nurses and midwives.

May the life of a mother and her baby in the womb be equally cherished and respected.

Help those who make our laws to uphold the uniqueness and sacredness of every human life, from the first moment of conception to natural death.

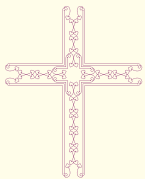
Give us wisdom and generosity to build a society that cares for all.

Together with Mary, your Mother, in whose womb you took on our human nature, Help us to choose life in every decision we take.

We ask this in the joyful hope of eternal life with you, and in the communion of the

Blessed Trinity.

Amen.



# PASTORAL LETTER

*from*

**Bishop Fintan Monahan**



## - Invitation to Choose Life!

On May 25th we will be asked to express our opinion on a vital issue of life or death in relation to the eighth amendment of our Constitution. It is a question that has profound moral and religious implications for us all and specifically for the right to life of the unborn child. The choice we make will shape our society for generations to come.



KILLALOE DIOCESE - MAY 2018

## Cherishing Life

Christians believe that all life is sacred and is a gift from God. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says ‘The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.’ To destroy the body is to deny the human soul its right to full development. Modern medicine and science has done so much to help us appreciate the wonder of human life from the moment of conception. Moments that remain forever embedded in the hearts of parents are when they first see a scan of their unborn child and marvel at the wonder of new life or when the tiny fingers of their new-born first cling onto their own fingers.



## One Love, two lives. Love both!

The medical care offered to both mothers and babies in Ireland is among the best in the world in terms of safety and excellence. The Irish constitution as it stands offers protection and care in equal measure to both women and unborn babies. Why would we want to alter this carefully worked balance to the detriment of either mother or baby?

What is being proposed is the abolition of the right to life of the unborn baby. Women who are in heart-breaking situations need and deserve the very best of medical care, support and love. The Christian message is one of love and care for both mother and baby. Thank God that modern medicine allows us to love, cherish and care for both mother and baby. I, along with many others find it almost beyond belief and profoundly sad that we are being asked to abolish the basic right to life of the unborn child from our constitution, a most fundamental and basic right.

## Protecting the Vulnerable

We greatly value equality. What is being proposed will create a shocking and blatant inequality. We will have a two-tier value system where we regard the life of some people as valued and welcome but another is not allowed even to be born.

A measure of a truly civilised society is how the most vulnerable and defenceless are treated. The unborn child in the womb is among the most vulnerable and defenceless of all. Alone she/he cannot survive or grow. The proposed referendum will also



have alarming and far reaching consequences for other categories of people with vulnerabilities.

## A Mother's view

Some claim that this issue is a women's health or a women's rights issue and it is not the business of anyone else. Cherishing human life concerns us all. The love of a mother for her baby in her womb or embraced in her arms, is the most powerful expression of love in our world. When the Bible seeks to convey how much God loves us, his people, it uses the image of a mother's love for her child. The mother together with the father and helped by the wider family loves, cares for and nourishes the unborn child. The broader community, especially health care professionals, legislators, schools, community, Churches and parishes all play their part in forming a circle of love and care to embrace the mother and her unborn child.

## A Father's View

The role played by fathers is vital. Thankfully, the vast majority of fathers are caring and loving towards mother and baby alike. However, there can sometimes be an abdication of paternal responsibilities. On other occasions fathers can be left out of decision making. This is an important area that warrants attention, debate and also education in responsibility.

## Abortion without restriction

If the eighth amendment is repealed, the proposed follow-up legislation allows for abortion without any reason for up to twelve weeks. This unrestricted access to abortion would make the regime in Ireland one of the most liberal in the world. Many people are astonished and outraged by this proposal. The suggested law would also make abortion available on unspecified health grounds for up to six months. Our constitution is the people's law – only the people can change it. If we remove the constitutional protection for the unborn, we are giving permission to a future Dáil to introduce an even more liberal law.

## The Heart of the Matter

We must clearly state what abortion is – it is the direct killing of an innocent human being. This is simply not right. Children with disabilities or genetic disorders are disproportionately affected. In Britain 9 out of 10 babies who have been diagnosed in the womb with Down Syndrome are aborted. Many crimes and evil deeds happen in Ireland on a daily basis. The fact that they happen does not mean that they should be made legal. Rather the State needs to use all the legitimate means it has, so as to protect its people.

The eighth amendment to our constitution has saved

