

“If the Eighth Amendment is repealed it will have an impact, not only on the general public, but those of us working in the health sector whose duty is always to save lives.”

*Eilish Butler, 27, is a nurse from Innishannon, Co. Cork >*



**Eilish's Story** “The possibility of unrestricted abortion access up to 12 weeks is a major concern for me and many other nurses on the wards. We are shocked, and nervous, that abortion could be available in Ireland up to full term of pregnancy in some instances.

“Science shows us the humanity of the unborn child. A unique human life begins at conception. Our gender, fingerprints, freckles, eye colour and blood type are determined at that moment.

“The heartbeat is detectable just 21 days after conception. At five weeks, a baby's eyes, ears and nose are forming. The brain is dividing into distinct segments and the buds that will become the legs and arms are growing. At seven weeks the baby moves for the first time. Fingers, toes and eyelids are almost completely formed. By week 12, all vital organs are formed and the baby can clearly be seen kicking and leaping about on 12-week ultrasound scans.

“On April 27, it will be 51 years since the 1967 UK Abortion Act was introduced. Today, in England and Wales 185,000 abortions happen every year, with one in five pregnancies now ending in abortion. If the Eighth Amendment is repealed, Ireland will go from a country that cherishes and protects the lives of mothers and babies *equally* in pregnancy, to a country where unborn babies have no legal protection at all.

“At present doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals work to protect the lives and health of their two patients, mother and baby. If the Eighth Amendment is repealed it will have an impact on both the general public and those of us working in the health sector.”

## What can I do?

Why not express your views on Ireland's culture of life on social media in a compassionate way? Don't forget to use #ChooseLife as the hashtag!

## Your Questions

### What happens if a pregnant woman's life is at risk?

If a seriously ill pregnant woman needs life-saving medical treatment which may, as a secondary effect, put the life of her baby at risk, such treatments are always ethically permissible provided every effort has been made to save the life of both mother and baby. Abortion is the *direct* and *intentional* ending of the life of an unborn baby. The Catholic Church upholds that necessary medical intervention to save the life of a pregnant woman, which results in the unintended death of her unborn baby, is never considered an abortion.

### What if the baby dies?

If a baby dies as a result of life-saving medical treatment to save the life of a pregnant woman, it is extremely sad and a tragic outcome. If the intention of the doctor is not to directly and intentionally end the baby's life, then this is not an abortion.

# Day 1

Hi Mammy!  
Congratulations, you're pregnant with me! You don't know it yet but you will find out soon. Everything about me – my eye and hair colour, my gender and my fingerprints – was decided at the moment of my conception. I am very unique and I love you!



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

## Modern science

### A window into the womb

Amazing advances in ultrasound technology reveal the humanity of the unborn child. By day 21, a baby's heart is beating. At just six weeks, the baby's eyes and eyelids, nose, mouth and tongue have formed.

By week 8, everything found in a fully grown person is developing. By week 12, fingerprints and fingernails appear. The baby's lips can open and close. Babies can yawn, swallow and suck. They have 20 tiny teeth buds in their gums and can be seen kicking and leaping about in the womb.

All of this is happening even before the mother's bump starts to show.

"HUMAN LIFE IS SACRED and begins at the moment of conception. Once it begins life should be allowed to flourish and to continue until its natural end.



This is the view of the Catholic Church, of people of different faiths and by those who consider the protection of life as an issue of fundamental human rights. The Eighth Amendment of the Constitution upholds the equal right to life of both mother and her unborn baby; and its removal would mean that some lives will become less valuable than others.

*Excerpt from the Pastoral Message of Bishop Francis Duffy of Ardagh and Clonmacnois*

## Family Prayer

*We pray for our children wherever they may be asking Jesus, Mary and Joseph to watch over and guard them throughout their lives and that the faith we have passed on to them may sustain them through all that life will put before them. Amen.*

*A Prayer for Children from The Family Book of Prayers*



*"I wasn't with my girlfriend long when she got pregnant. I was so stressed out. A friend recommended Cura. It really helped to talk to someone who didn't know me personally. I'm working through things now with my girlfriend" Michael, 35.*

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](http://www.chooselife2018.ie)