

“It is not easy to be pro-life as a medical student. Some may criticise my stance, others may support me, but I chose a career in medicine to save lives.”

Clare Crowley, 27, is a final year medical student at the University of Limerick >



Clare's Story “For as long as I can remember abortion has been a divisive issue in Ireland. At times, it is not easy to hold pro-life views as a medical student. I, like many other medical students, decided to pursue a career in medicine to help people and save lives. It is very easy to claim to be pro-choice, but committing the act is starkly different.

“I have read and heard the testimonies of doctors in other countries who have, and who continue to conduct abortions. It makes for very bleak reading. Initially an emotional conflict often exists, a tug of war between the woman's right to choose versus the humanity of the unborn baby. In time this conflict of conscience is slowly eroded and one becomes completely desensitised to the unborn baby, irrespective of the stage of pregnancy.

“Ireland has an excellent maternal care record. Despite the many faults of our broken healthcare system, this is a fact we should be very proud of. During my training, I have witnessed the amazing work of all those who are involved in caring for pregnant women from GPs to midwives and obstetricians. All deserve great credit for their unwavering work and dedication.

“Best obstetric care advocates caring for two patients – the pregnant woman and her unborn baby. Irrespective of the circumstances of pregnancy, a doctor has a duty to care for the health and wellbeing of both.

“Some pregnancies are planned, some unplanned and some even unwanted. In such instances, a woman needs compassionate care and support. The Eighth Amendment gives women in unplanned pregnancies time, instead of hastening into a rash decision they may later regret.”

What can I do?

Be informed and prepared to have conversations with others about Ireland's culture of life. Visit www.chooselife2018.ie for ideas to start conversations!

Your Questions

What is the Eighth Amendment?

The wording of the Eighth Amendment reads as follows:
“The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right”.

This is a declaration to respect, defend and vindicate the equal right to life of a mother and her unborn child. It enshrines in Irish law a deep conviction that every human life is precious, equal and worth cherishing.

What will happen if the Eighth Amendment is repealed?

If the Eighth Amendment is repealed the right to life for unborn children in Ireland will be without any constitutional protection. This would radically change the law, for all unborn children and indeed for all of us, that the right to life is a fundamental human right.

Week 5!

Hi Mammy!

We're now connected by our umbilical cord. There is a lot going on inside and outside my tiny body. My brain has divided into distinct segments and my nervous system, spine, lungs and liver have started to form. I have tiny buds that will one day be my arms and legs. If you could see me you'd see the beginnings of my nose, eyes and ears. I hope I get your good looks!



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 Power of Language from *Two Lives, One Love*

Words like 'foetus', 'embryo' and 'zygote' are scientific terms but are used in debates to dehumanise unborn children in a way which seeks to normalise abortion. These terms are misleading when they are used to suggest the unborn child is not a human being from the moment of conception.

Reasons to cherish a culture of life

The unborn child is one of us

Advances in 4D ultrasound technology are a real window into the womb.

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

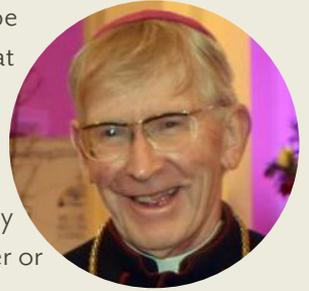
From week eight the nervous system is beginning to respond. From week nine the baby can yawn and swallow and from week 12 the baby can suck its thumb. This is all happening before the mother's bump is showing.

Abortion rates in other countries

When abortion becomes legal in a country, it becomes more acceptable.

In England and Wales, 1 in 5 pregnancies end in abortion every year. Over 185,000 abortions were carried out in 2016 according to the *Department of Health UK*. France and Spain also have an abortion rate of 1 in 5. Italian and Portuguese *Ministry of Health* figures reveal a rate of 1 in 6. Sweden's abortion rate is 1 in 4. There is every reason to believe that, if legalised, Irish abortion rates would rapidly rise as they have in other countries.

"THE CATHOLIC CHURCH has never taught that the life of the child in the womb should be preferred to that of the mother. A doctor may give treatment that is necessary to either mother or child without deliberately intending harm to the other. Abortion is the *deliberate* medical intervention to end the life of an unborn child. There is a danger that people may confuse abortion with necessary medical intervention. Under the Eighth Amendment, no life-saving treatment is ever, or legally can ever, be denied to an expectant mother."



Excerpt from the Pastoral Message of Bishop John Buckley of Cork and Ross

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



"When I thought I might be pregnant I did the test in my local Cura centre. My counsellor sat and talked with me about the results. I went back a few times and I brought my mam. It was a really tough time but going to Cura definitely helped" Emma, 21.

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