

Care for Life: It's Worth It

This year has seen a dramatic development in Irish society. For the first time ever legislation permitting the direct intentional taking of innocent life has been enacted. In the months leading up to this step, up to 50-60,000 people took to the streets to voice their objection. People who had never previously gone out to march turned up. They needed to express their conviction and passion for life because what might appear as a limited step, restricted abortion, is far from limited in potential.

The practice of medicine has been changed considerably by this legislation. And it has an impact on obstetricians and psychiatrists, the nursing and other supporting

June statement on the right to life, the Bishops of Ireland reminded us that, 'the Gospel of life is at the heart of the message of Jesus. He came that we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10). The Gospel challenges us to work for a world in which the dignity and beauty of every human life are respected.'

Clearly, the challenge to care for life is not limited to the impact of this or that political move or piece of legislation. The call to care for life continues to be heard. It comes from the Gospel's logic of love, the

love that is mutual. As Pope Francis puts it, 'caring for life from the beginning to the end. What a simple thing, what a beautiful thing ... So, go forth and don't be discouraged. Care for

life. It's worth it!' The 'Day for Life' is celebrated yearly by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland and England and Wales. It is a day dedicated

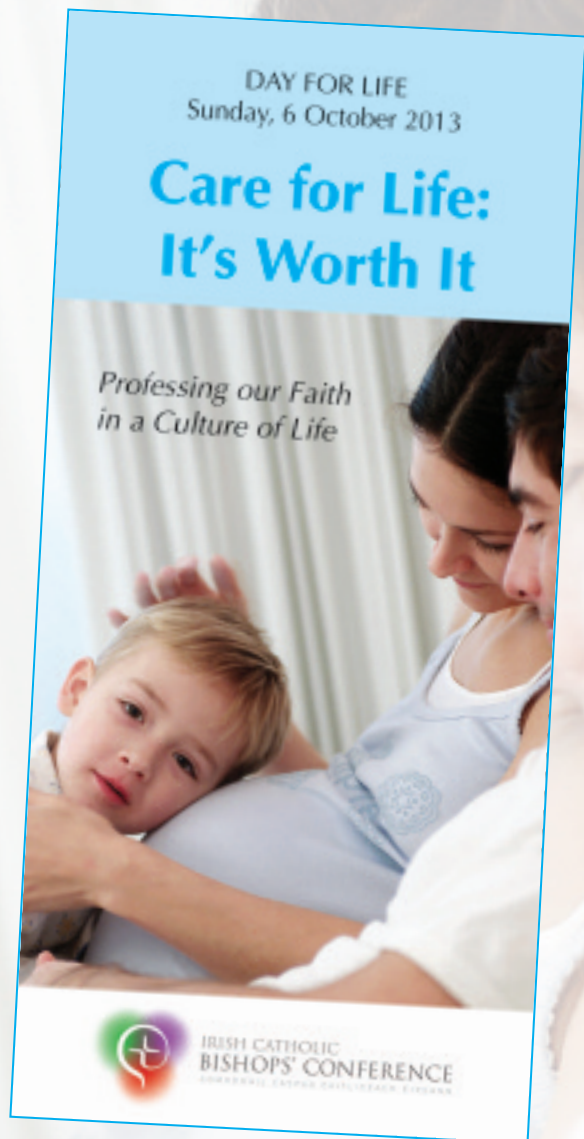
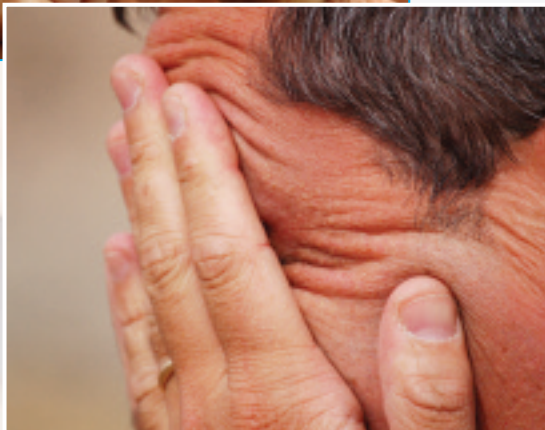
to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. It will be celebrated this year in Ireland



professional staff in hospitals, social services and other agencies where questions such as the right of conscience not to be involved in the

provision of abortion services arises.

What are we to make of the situation now that the abortion legislation has been passed? In their



on 6 October. For materials, including information on the European Citizens initiative 'One of Us' see www.dayforlife.org.

This year's message is entitled: 'Professing our Faith in a Culture of Life'. It encourages us to keep up our commitment to caring for life: 'We can build a culture of life by our compassion and care for others, especially those who are vulnerable, and by speaking of the need to care for life. It means seeing life as a whole, caring for it as a "seamless garment", stretching from natural birth to natural death.' This year's message prompts us to focus our efforts on care for the unborn, the elderly and those who are suicidal and their families.

✠ Brendan Leahy
Bishop of Limerick