

“As a society we need to ensure that every human life is loved and protected, especially at its most vulnerable and defenceless stage”

Luke Silke, 19, is a writer and historian from Co Galway >



Luke's Story “As a man I am often told my opinion is not welcome in this debate. An experience I had as a child shaped my views on the abortion issue and I don't think it is fair when people attempt to silence my voice, and the voices of other men. It is important that nobody is denied the right to speak on this issue in the weeks ahead.

“When I was nine years old my mother had a miscarriage. I remember a little coffin, I remember flowers, I remember a ceremony, I remember a grave. I remember visitors calling to the house to comfort my mother during that time.

“When I later became aware of the reality of abortion, I began to ask questions. The loss and grief I felt for my unborn sibling proved to me that the child in the womb is undeniably a human being. I learned at a young age that a tiny unborn life can make a big impact.

“As a society we need to ensure that every human life is loved and protected, especially at its most vulnerable and defenceless stage. Some babies are unplanned. Some babies are ill. Are these justifiable grounds to end a child's life?

“The Eighth Amendment is a very important piece of legislation. It was passed by referendum in 1983 by a two-thirds majority. It is a unique constitutional provision that grants equal legal protection to the lives of pregnant women and unborn babies.

“The Irish Constitution, with the Eighth Amendment, recognises the universal human right to life. Without it, all of our other rights are baseless. It is the reason there are tens of thousands of people alive and in our country today. Perhaps some of those reading this are alive today thanks to the Eighth Amendment.”

What can I do?

Public discussion about the unborn child is increasing. Be informed and prepared to have conversations with others about the Eighth Amendment.

Your Questions

Should abortion be a choice?

When it comes to the right to choose, there is a tendency to forget that there is another person involved, an innocent person who has no choice and who depends entirely on others for protection. Abortion is the *direct* and *intentional* ending of the life of an unborn baby. It deceives women, and men, by creating a culture where the decision to end the life of an unborn child is portrayed as simply a matter of individual “choice”.

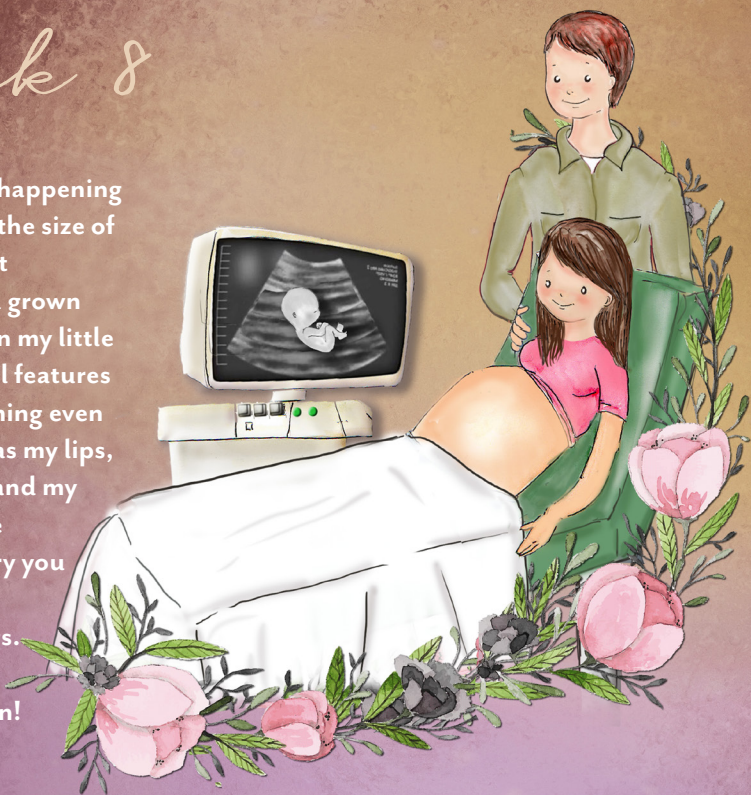
What if I've had an abortion?

There is no sin that God's mercy cannot reach. The forgiveness of God cannot be denied to anyone who approaches the Sacrament of Confession with a sincere heart in order to obtain reconciliation with the Father. At the close of the Year of Mercy in 2016, Pope Francis granted to all priests the faculty to absolve those who have committed the sin of procuring an abortion.

Week 8

Hi Mammy!

Guess what is happening this week! I'm the size of a raspberry but everything in a grown up is forming in my little body. My facial features are now becoming even more defined as my lips, nostrils, nose and my tongue all take shape. I'm sorry you have been sick in the mornings. You should feel better soon!



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

Church teaching

The Power of Language from *Two Lives, One Love*

Words like 'foetus', 'embryo' and 'zygote' are scientific terms which are often used 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 protect the Eighth Amendment

The unborn child is one of us

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

By Day 21, 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 slowly becomes 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 EIGHTH AMENDMENT has preserved and fostered a culture of life that we can be proud of.

The resources of modern medicine have been used very successfully to care for the lives of women and unborn children. We know that thousands of children's lives have been saved in Ireland by the Eighth Amendment over the past 30 years. The older I get the more I appreciate the most precious gift of all, the gift of life, and the more I realise it is a gift. I didn't give it to myself. I received it from my parents and ultimately from God."



Excerpt from the Pastoral Message of Bishop Leo O'Reilly of Kilmore

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**