

"I'm challenged on my views a lot because I'm a man. There are some who feel I shouldn't have an opinion. As a father, I say we should all have a voice in this debate. It's a family issue at heart"

Séan Feeney with his son Aaron from Castleknock, Dublin 15 >



Seán's Story "The up and coming referendum on the Eighth Amendment essentially provides for the removal of the most fundamental human right – the right to life of a little baby.

"Repealing the Eighth Amendment will have a significant impact on the unborn, on mothers, on families and on society as a whole. Protecting the Eighth Amendment is a positive thing for Irish society because it protects the lives of both mother and baby equally.

"It is a scientific fact that the life of a little baby begins at the moment of conception. The heart starts beating at 21 days. By week 8, everything found in a fully grown person is formed. All that is needed is time to grow and develop. The biggest growth spurt in our lives takes place during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and we will never grow at that rate again.

"These gestational milestones are something that pro-choice advocates deny when they refer to the baby as a 'foetus' and a 'blob of tissue'. Without the Eighth Amendment an entire group of human beings will be denied their right to life. This is also a threat to the hope of society, as who knows the potential an unborn child could have when they are born?

"I am challenged on my views a lot because I am a man. I like to engage with my friends and encourage them to take part in this important debate. Some people feel I shouldn't have an opinion. As a father, I say, we should all have a voice in this debate. It's a family issue at heart.

"The existence of the Eighth Amendment has had a positive impact not only on women but also on men. I would encourage all men to speak out and express their views on this fundamental social topic."

What can I do?

Have a conversation with a friend or family member about the fact that at least 100,000 Irish lives have been saved by the Eighth Amendment.

Your Questions

Does life begin at conception?

Yes. But this is not just a question of belief – it's a scientific fact. At the moment of conception a new, unique human being with his or her own DNA comes into existence. In recent years, amazing advances in ultrasound technology provide us with a window into the womb and reveal the truth that the unborn child is undeniably one of us – a human being and much more than 'a clump of cells'. In the past, some people may have pleaded ignorance to the humanity of life in the womb but today we no longer have this excuse.

When does a baby's heart start to beat?

The first few weeks are the most rapid time of development for a new human life. The baby's beating heart has been recorded as early as 21 days after conception – this is sometimes before a mum even discovers that she is pregnant!

Week 11

Hi Mammy!

Great news – all major my organs are now fully formed! My fingers and toes have separated and I'm kicking and leaping about in the womb but you can't feel me just yet. My fingernails are growing and inside my gums there are 20 tiny teeth buds. My ribcage and bones are beginning to harden and my ears will soon be able to hear your lovely voice!



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

Church teaching

A culture of life, Our Common Humanity

Making abortion freely available desensitises people to the value of every human life, especially lives that are vulnerable. The scientific evidence about the beginning of human life has never been clearer.

It is a great irony that we in Ireland are for the first time in our history losing our clarity about the right to life of the unborn. Knowledge about the mysterious workings of DNA and the stunningly vivid evidence of ultrasound images of little persons in the earliest weeks in the womb should be making us more committed than ever to the protection of unborn life.

Supporting and sustaining a culture of life in Ireland is in the interests of every generation and it defines us as a society.

Human Rights Law

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person".

Every one of us has a right to our life. It is not given to us by the *Constitution of Ireland* or by any law. We have it 'as of right', whether we are wealthy or poor, healthy or sick. All human beings have it.

For us as a society to now declare that any category of human being should have that right taken from them would be a shocking step.

It effectively says that unborn children do not exist or, if they do, they do not count. That is a manifest injustice.



"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**

"WHAT ASTOUNDS US IS THE VERY rapid rush to effectively obliterate the right to life of the unborn from our Constitution.

Far from *na*

beo gan

breith as the

Irish version of

our Constitution puts

it, living beings just waiting to be born,

essentially the State has been arguing,

in the Supreme Court case for example,

that this is a non-citizen, a non-person,

a non-child, effectively removing every

vestige of the right to live from the baby

in the womb."



Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, speaking to RTÉ's main evening news on March 6, 2018.

Family Prayer

Mary, we pray today for all mothers who are afraid to be mothers.

We pray for those who feel threatened and overwhelmed by their pregnancy.

Intercede for them, that God may give them the grace to say yes and the courage to go on.

May they have the grace to reject the false solution of abortion. May they

say with you: "Be it done unto me according to your word". May they

experience the help of Christian people and know the peace that comes from doing God's will. Amen.

To access videos, testimonies and frequently asked questions visit **www.chooselife2018.ie**