

“Some people say you can’t be a feminist unless you support abortion. Yet there are many women like me who consider ourselves feminists but also respect life from conception.”

*Emma Sisk, from Co. Tipperary, is a communications officer for the Irish Bishops’ Conference >*



**Emma’s Story** “I believe every woman should be respected, empowered and treated equally. This is why I am pro-life.

“I see abortion as incompatible with feminism because it doesn’t recognise the strength we have as women. It deceives us into thinking we are not strong enough to be mothers. The founders of the early feminist movement were strong pro-life advocates. For me, being a feminist and pro-life are inseparable. True feminism cares about the rights of all women, born and unborn.

“Irish women deserve better than abortion. We deserve better supports and practical resources in pregnancy and motherhood. Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women in pregnancy. I was born seven years after the Eighth Amendment was introduced. I don’t feel the law introduced in 1983 violates my rights as a woman.

“I’m proud and thankful I was born in a country where every person is welcomed in life and protected in law – especially the youngest members of our society, unborn babies.

“The reality of our pro-life laws is that we all have someone in our life – an aunt, uncle, friend, brother, sister, cousin, nephew, niece, son or daughter – who is in our life today because we don’t have local access to abortion in Ireland. We might not even know it. In Britain, 1 in 5 babies lives end in abortion every year and 185,000 abortions were performed in 2016. Without the Eighth Amendment, it will only be matter of time until we have a similar rate of abortion in Ireland.

“Some people say you can’t be a feminist unless you support abortion. Yet there are women like me – and there are many of us – who consider ourselves feminists and also respect life from the moment of conception.”

## What can I do?

Why not volunteer to hand out the Choose Life 2018 newsletter after Mass in your local parish over the coming weeks?

## 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, a vulnerable 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”.

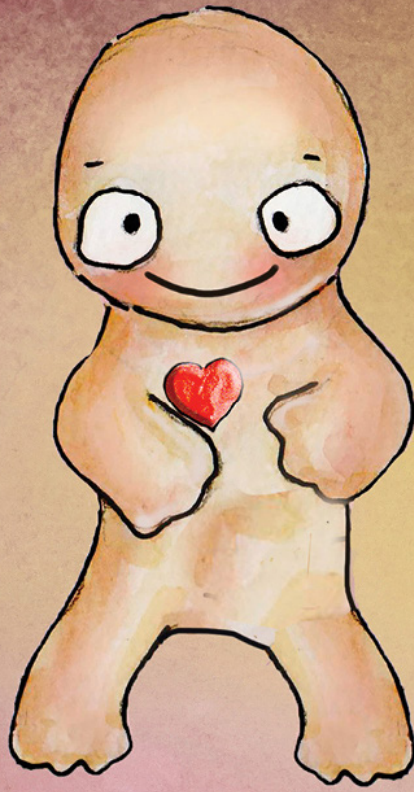
### What if I’ve had an abortion?

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 the sin of procuring or assisting in an abortion.

# Day 21

Hi Mammy!

Today my heart started to beat for the first time and I'm only three weeks old. I'm really tiny and the sound of my little heart is too soft to detect yet but it's there! You and Daddy will be able to hear it in just a few short weeks. I love you both!



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

## Church teaching

### Life is sacred, *Catechism of the Catholic Church n.2258*

“Human life is sacred because, from its beginning, it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end. No one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being.”

## Reasons to promote a culture of life

### Lives saved by the Eighth Amendment

It's easy to overlook the positive effect of the Eighth Amendment.

An independent report in 2016, *The 8th Amendment: Ireland's Life-Saving Provision* by actuary Brendan Lynch, estimates that at least 100,000 people are alive in Ireland today thanks to this constitutional provision. It gives people time to think the decision through and choose life for their daughter or son.

### Ireland's safety record for pregnant women

A report published by World Health Organisation, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015*, ranks Ireland as a world leader when it comes to safety for pregnant women. Globally, we have one of the lowest maternal mortality rates. Ireland's culture of life has served us well and is an inspiration to many other countries.

We have shown it is possible to uphold the equal right to life of pregnant women and unborn babies and still be a world leader in maternal healthcare.



“After I had my baby, my friends were all in college or working. It was like we had nothing in common anymore. I emailed Cura and they put me in contact with my local centre. I went to see a counsellor a few times. She was brilliant.” Jenny, 22.

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**

“THERE IS NOTHING TO BE GAINED by denying the truth that our lives begin at conception.

What we have learned

about our development in the womb will only be added to in the years ahead, but we already know enough. However, regrettably, the abortion debate is not really about biology. Everyone knows that a life has begun. The question is whether it is right to deliberately stop that life being born. Once we deny the right to life of the unborn, we can no longer defend ourselves from what flows from an abortion culture.”



*Excerpt from the pastoral message of Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare and Leighlin*

## Family Prayer

Guide the work of doctors, nurses and midwives.

May the life of a mother and her baby in the womb be equally cherished and respected.

Help those who make our laws to uphold the uniqueness of every human life from conception to natural death. Amen.

*Choose Life: Prayer for the Child in the Womb, Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference*

To access videos, testimonies and frequently asked questions visit [www.chooselife2018.ie](http://www.chooselife2018.ie)