



choose life



'Hope in Him, hold firm
and take heart.'

Psalm 27

There were 6,666 abortions in the Republic of Ireland in 2019 and over 200,000 in Great Britain, including significant numbers from the island of Ireland. We, the Catholic Church, have a message of hope and a story of love; together, we can promote a culture of life.

We grieve the loss of life due to abortion. We seek a change of minds and hearts about the innate dignity of the child in the womb and the care of pregnant women. Pope Francis writes, 'The gift of a new child, entrusted by the Lord to a father and a mother, begins with acceptance, continues with lifelong protection and has as its final goal the joy of eternal life ... For God allows parents to choose the name by which He himself will call their child for all eternity.' (*Amoris Laetitia - The Joy of Love*, 166)

How can Catholic parishes and communities be places of welcome, assistance and support?

On this 25th anniversary of St John Paul II's letter *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, we renew the call for respect and celebration of all life.

The parish is a 'family of families,' (*Amoris Laetitia*, 87). We ask our parishes to be places of welcome, where we can support pregnant women and celebrate the precious gift entrusted to them. We recognise that family is often 'a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems.' (*Amoris Laetitia*, 57).

We want to provide support for women and men who face difficult circumstances, as well as those who have experienced abortion and seek comfort in the Lord and their community.

Our pledge

'As a Catholic, I promise to foster a culture of welcome and acceptance of new life. I will

pray and work for better legal protections for pregnant women and the child in the womb.'

Hope and Healing after Abortion

God does not withhold his forgiveness from those who seek it with a sincere heart. But, even when we confess our sins and receive absolution, we are not always ready to forgive ourselves. There are many women and men still living, years later, with the emotional and spiritual scars of abortion. Our mission to promote a culture of life must include helping these women and men to be reconciled with themselves, with their lost child, and with the God who has never stopped loving them.

In the Lord we can find peace: 'Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.' (*Romans 5:5*)

'My name is Caitlin* and I am 28 years old. When I became pregnant for the first time five years ago, I had an abortion. I have carried the pain from this experience, as well as feelings of loss, confusion and loneliness. When attending a Rachel's Vineyard retreat, I was given the time and space to name the child that I lost and to find healing and forgiveness in the Lord.'

*The name has been changed to protect the identity of the mother.

To learn more about Rachel's Vineyard go to www.rachelsvineyard.ie/
If you are concerned about an unborn child with a life-limiting condition, go to:
www.everylifecounts.ie OR
www.onedaymore.ie

Access the Day for Life Resources on:
www.councilforlife.ie

About Day For Life

Day for Life is celebrated yearly by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, 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.

The Council for Life, Irish Catholic Bishops Conference, Columba Centre, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.