

‘Offering Hope in Crisis’

Irish Bishops’ statement affirming human life

Times of crisis are often times of growth; times when we deepen relationships. We saw this six years ago when COVID-19 came to Ireland. It was a horrible time, which left deep emotional scars. It was also a time when, all across this country, in every community, people stepped up to serve. We went to great lengths to protect one another and to save lives.

It seems quite tragic that at that same time, when we were so focussed on saving life, protecting the vulnerable, and making sure that people were not forgotten, our society also began the wholesale destruction of human life through abortion. While COVID-19 cost almost 10,000 lives in Ireland, there have been well over 50,000 deaths from abortion since 2019 (equivalent to nearly 2,000 classrooms of children).

We need to ask ourselves: why has this not provoked anything like the same kind of crisis response in the form of solidarity or outreach?

One reason seems to be that the crisis of “crisis pregnancy” takes place, for the most part, in private. Unless we are directly involved, we can only imagine the loneliness, the emotional turmoil, the economic difficulties, the domestic violence or the addiction that may lie behind the choice of abortion. The most natural thing in the world is for a mother to protect her child. The sadness and regret that so often follow abortion can last for years.

Over 90% of abortions in Ireland take place in the first twelve weeks but, in a society that is otherwise collapsing under the weight of research statistics, there is no attempt to even find out why. Neither the State, nor the mainstream media, seem to have any interest in exploring what leads women to choose abortion or what happens to them afterwards.

We can be thankful that there are still a few voluntary agencies which offer support and accompaniment to women in crisis pregnancy, in an environment of respect both for the parents and for the life of their unborn child. Rachel’s Vineyard offers a valuable spiritual support to women and men who have experienced abortion and who, often many years later, seek healing. All of these things depend on the hard work of a relatively small number of people. We encourage Catholics who believe in the dignity of every human life to consider devoting time and energy as well as financial support to this kind of work, which is more necessary now than ever.

We acknowledge with gratitude those public representatives who have courageously affirmed the right to life of the unborn. Unfortunately, there some who seem determined at all costs to widen the scope of the present law. In his address to members of the Spanish Parliament (8 June 2026), Pope Leo XIV said:

“The defence of human life is neither a partisan issue nor a confessional interest: it is a goal of civilization. Every human life must be recognized and safeguarded from conception to its natural end, in every circumstance of its existence. When this certainty is obscured, the most vulnerable are the first victims, and the law loses its deepest meaning: to serve and protect every person. For this reason, the moral greatness of a nation is manifested, above all, in its capacity to accompany, protect and love those lives that are most fragile.”

As the Catholic Church prepares to mark the annual ‘Day for Life’ today Sunday, 21 June, we encourage Irish people once again to choose life.