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Bernadette Goulding from Co. Cork is the director of Rachel's Vineyard Ireland >



Bernadette's Story “When I was 19 years old I emigrated to London. The new-found freedom was overwhelming. I started to experiment with alcohol, go out with guys and eventually I ended up pregnant. The main motivation for my abortion was fear. The decision, made in haste, triggered many years of deep personal suffering.

“I had the false expectation that an abortion would turn back the clock on my life, and everything would be just fine again. I was so naive. I had no idea what abortion really was. The doctor who introduced the idea to me did not enlighten me about the humanity of my unborn child. The word ‘baby’ was never mentioned.

“Initially after the abortion there was relief. The pregnancy was over. I thought that I would be fine and was relieved my parents would not find out. However the relief was short-lived. As time went on the experience became more difficult, more painful, more isolating, more lonely.

“If someone had explained to me the reality of my pregnancy, that in fact there was a life there, and there was a little heart beating under my heart at that time I am sure I would not have gone down that road. Nobody took the time to do that, to sit down and explain things to me or offer me any other alternative.

“Women in an unplanned pregnancy are in a huge crisis and their big regret is that no one was there to sit down with them and talk to them and offer them an alternative to abortion.

“For anyone out there who is hurting after an abortion, know that you're not alone. There is hope and healing and I am living proof of that.”

For information about post-abortion healing visit www.rachelsvineyard.ie

What can I do?

Pray for the protection of the Eighth Amendment and the unborn at 8am and 8pm every day. Prayer resources are available on www.chooselife2018.ie.

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 wrongdoing 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 had an abortion.

Week 12

Hi Mammy!

Congratulations! The first trimester is officially over.

Your morning sickness should stop now though you might experience some unusual cravings. I am now able to suck my thumb and curl my fingers and toes. I am three inches long. Big news!

From now on people will start to notice your baby bump. You'll have to tell everyone soon. I can't wait to meet you all when I'm born.



Our 'Choose Life' newsletter has been following the development of Baby Bump based on pregnancy milestones from conception to 12 weeks. Previous issues are available on www.chooselife2018.ie

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 cherish a culture of life

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.

"IN OUR NATIVE LANGUAGE THE word 'unborn' is translated as 'beo gan breith', which literally means "alive but not born". The genius of our own native tongue sums it up: alive but not yet born. The baby in the womb is alive and no one has the right, and can never have the right, to end this little human life. It is always wrong to intentionally do so. The command of God is crystal clear, 'You shall not kill'. Nor do we have the right to vote to take a life. It is undemocratic. It is not fair."



Excerpt from the Pastoral Message of Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan of Waterford & Lismore

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**