

*Pro-life section from the statement of the Winter General Meeting of the Bishops' Conference which was published 5th December 2018.*

### **Abortion cannot be supported**

Reflecting on the current Dáil debate on the abortion bill bishops said, “We are dismayed that, for the most part, the voices of those who voted against abortion in May’s referendum have been ignored. Even what many people would have deemed to have been very reasonable legislative amendments seeking to provide women with information and to prohibit abortion on the grounds of sex, race or disability, have been rejected.

“As we stated after our Autumn Meeting, Irish society must have respect for the right of conscientious objection for all healthcare professionals and pharmacists. They cannot be forced either to participate in abortion or to refer patients to others for abortion.

“Every one of us has a right to 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. The direct and intentional taking of human life at any stage is gravely wrong and can never be justified.

“Women’s lives, and the lives of their unborn children, are precious, valued and always deserving of protection. Any law which suggests otherwise would have no moral force. In good conscience it cannot be supported and would have to be resisted.

“We offer our prayerful solidarity with everyone dedicated to the sanctity and protection of human life at all stages. We ask everyone of goodwill - whether at home, in parish, in school or at work - to continue to choose and to celebrate the preciousness of life.”

During their meeting a delegation of bishops met with individuals representing various pro-life groups from across Ireland, north and south. The aim of the gathering was to acknowledge their on-going commitment to upholding the dignity of unborn human life and to consult on the setting up of a new Council for Life under the aegis of the Bishops’ Conference which will operate from March 2019.