

25th April 2018

TO ALL ACTIVE MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Dear Colleagues,

In January, representatives of our Church wrote to members of the Oireachtas, affirming the value of every human life, emphasising the importance of care for women, children and families in times of crisis, and urging all to work for a truly progressive Ireland where the weak and vulnerable, including children in the womb, are cherished and protected.

Since then the Government has pressed ahead with proposals to introduce unrestricted access to abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, should Article 40.3.3 of the Constitution, the Eighth Amendment, be repealed.

As Christians, we see the scriptures speaking consistently of the importance and value of human life, including that of the unborn. On that basis, we are responsible before God to honour the sanctity of human life.

While recognising that there are mixed views within our Church about the adequacy of the current Constitutional provision, particularly around those exceptional circumstances in which the termination of pregnancy may be necessary, we consider the proposals for unrestricted access to abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy to be regressive, incompatible with human dignity and morally unacceptable.

Having monitored the developments of recent months closely, the General Council of our Church, acting with the authority of the General Assembly, has concluded that meaningful protection for the unborn can only be secured if the Eighth Amendment is retained in the forthcoming referendum.

We therefore encourage Church members to consider these matters prayerfully and with great care over the coming weeks and to vote in accordance with their conscience.

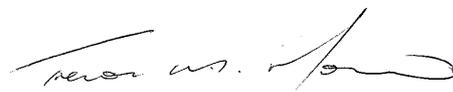
Yours in Christ



Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely
Moderator of the General
Assembly



Rev. Trevor Gribben
Clerk of the General
Assembly



Very Rev. Dr Trevor Morrow
Convener of the Republic of Ireland
Panel, Council for Public Affairs