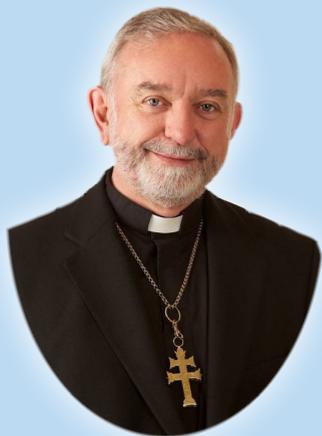
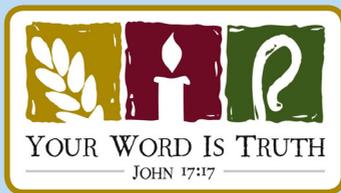


May 2018

# Spring Pastoral Letter

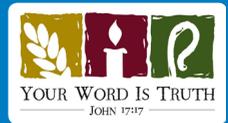


from  
Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly



ARCHDIOCESE OF CASHEL AND EMLY

*“Missionaries for life...”*



***Dear parishioners and all people of good will in  
the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly***

Spring has at last come and I wish to send you greetings and good wishes. The harsh winter we have experienced is now coming to an end as the signs of new life are all around us. Truly a wonderful time of the year. It is a time when we look forward to the longer evenings and the warmth of summer. This year, the coming of spring coincides with a referendum that has been called by the Government to invite the people of our country to pronounce on an important article of our Constitution.

Our Constitution is an important part of our life and identity. Framed and fashioned by the people through decades - since it was written and promulgated in 1937. Various referenda have taken place over these years giving the people the right to decide on important matters that touch our core identity.

In 1983, a significant change came with an addition to Article 40. As a people we opted to write into our Constitution an article to protect the life of the most vulnerable among us - the unborn child. That article gives equal protection in law to both the baby in the womb, and the baby's mother. At that time, perhaps, we did not realize how significant this addition to our Constitution was. Recently, the Supreme Court ruled that this article is the only article that protects the life of the unborn. A great responsibility now rests with all who will vote in the coming referendum. Removing this article will mean that there is no protection for the unborn in our Constitution.



*“We are called to care and support the weakest, to believe  
in the intrinsic value and worth of each human being.”*

In writing this letter, I urge all of you to reflect on what is being asked of us as a people. We are challenged to engage and reflect calmly and maturely about this important issue. **The child in the womb is a person with potential not a potential person - as each one of us was when we were in our mother's womb.** The silent infants in the womb call on us, out of our common humanity, to protect them and to give force to that protection by rejecting this proposal being put to us.

The unborn child is in the weakest of all positions and is surely most vulnerable. Our ability to be able to protect that little life is the sign of our strength as a people. Each society through various documents - like its Constitution, defines itself before the world. Our commitment to life is contained in the 8th amendment to the Constitution - a significant indicator of the values we hold as a people.

For the above reasons I am voting NO in the coming referendum. It is my sincere hope that a majority of the people of our country will also vote No and retain the article in its present form. And with this vote we will reiterate our commitment to life.

***Disciples of Jesus Christ are called to respect all human life from its beginning to its natural end. We are called to care and support the weakest, to believe in the intrinsic value and worth of each human being. This is a belief shared by Christians with our brothers and sisters who follow the great world religions and also people of no faith tradition.***

*In the coming days, I invite you  
to pray earnestly and to become  
“Missionaries for Life”  
so that the people of Ireland will  
“Choose life.”*

*We pray that the lives  
of all women  
and their unborn children  
will always be loved, valued,  
and respected in our land.*



# become “Missionaries for Life”



I wish to make a special appeal to our young people. I am encouraged to see so many of you active in promoting the pro-life message, in colleges, marches and elsewhere. I know you are committed to equality and fairness. Please speak to your family and friends explaining to them why you believe that **the life of the unborn baby must be protected**. Let your voice be heard now and not just on the day you cast your ballot.

In the coming days, I invite you to pray earnestly and to become “Missionaries for Life” so that the people of Ireland will “Choose life.” We pray that the lives of all women and their unborn children will always be loved, valued, and respected in our land.



+ *Kieran O'Reilly*

In Laudato Si, Pope Francis prays:

*“All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  
And in the smallest of your creatures.*

*You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters harming no one. Amen”*