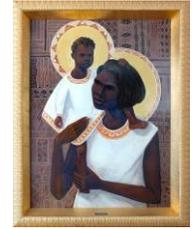




CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF DARWIN



*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
Psalm 139:13-14*

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

In view of the changes envisaged by the new legislation involving abortion in the NT, I would like to share some reminders and some recommendations with you.

Abortion is a deliberate termination of a pregnancy. It is a termination of the most vulnerable form of human life.

Our Catholic Christian Faith is very clear that we respect the dignity of human life in all its stages i.e., from conception to death.

While there has been debate as to when the fertilised human egg is deemed to be human the Christian community has always treated the moment of conception as Sacred.

An example that could help is that we don't throw a boulder from the top of a cliff when we don't know if there is anyone underneath.

Medical evidence shows how early the unique structure of a fertilised egg starts to happen.

Hence the deliberate killing of a fertilised human egg has always been considered as an immoral act.

It is timely to remind ourselves that some forms of contraception are not really contraceptives. This means they do not actually stop conception, rather they kill the fertilised egg. Hence, it's an early form of abortion.

There has been a gradual widening of the law when abortion is permissible. The right to life of the most vulnerable form of human life is increasingly being denied.

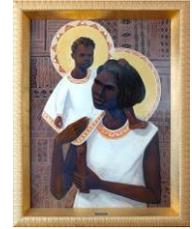
They are increasingly being terminated in the womb or just after they are taken out of the womb.

I do not wish in any way to ignore or underestimate the tremendous pressures and conflicting situations that some women find themselves in when they are considering undertaking an abortion.

After 44 years of Pastoral work, ministering to thousands of people I have no delusion about the reality of this conflicting pressure that some women find themselves in.



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However, my dear friends we cannot ignore the fact that abortion is the taking away of life of the most vulnerable and as such wrong.

Of course, following the example of Jesus, we need to treat with great love and compassion those who have taken part in abortions. Even though we do not agree with their actions we need to leave our hearts open with compassion for them as Jesus would.

We know that He reached out to those who others considered in some way sinful or wrong and He gave them an opportunity to heal.

We need to be reminded in our times that the right thing to do is not always the easy thing to do. Doing what is right cost Jesus His life.

As a society we need to provide opportunity for those considering an abortion to look at possible alternatives. This is often not available to many women. I personally know women who were strongly encouraged to have abortions even though they themselves were not looking for one. Some of these women have told me how grateful they are to have gone on with their pregnancy. Friends of mine who could not have children found it impossible to adopt because of the lack of availability of children for adoption here in Australia.

Our values do not come from popular opinions or what others might say. Our guide for right moral action is the teachings of Jesus and of His Church.

The new legislation will extend the time as to when an abortion can take place. While abortion at any stage is not morally right late term abortions are even much more problematic when many of these unborn children are viable when they are aborted. They are sometimes left to die.

I would encourage you to write to your Member of Parliament or MLA, encouraging them to use their conscience vote not to support this legislation. In this conversation we cannot ignore that while the rights of the mother are very important, we are also dealing with a very vulnerable unborn human being.

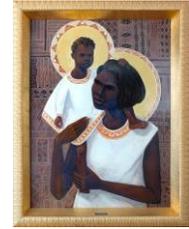
I came across information recently that at huge proportion of children with down syndrome are aborted.

I remember hearing a young man with down syndrome speak 'We are not sick, we love our families, we have friends, why do you want to kill us?'

My own cousin's daughter has down syndrome, now a delightful young woman full of love and loves life.



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We also need to safeguard the conscience rights of health workers who are often put in difficult situations where they are being asked to violate their conscience. This right needs to be protected especially for those how are committed to the preserving and enhancing of life.

While I am putting a suggested format for the letter, please feel free to use your own words. Please also keep in mind we are trying to convince respectfully as this will have greater effect and a better outcome. It is after all our Christian duty to be respectful to all.

Personalised letters are encouraged keeping in mind the recommendations above since this is a conscience vote.

Yours in Christ.

+Charles Gauci
Diocese of Darwin and NT



Suggested letter:

Dear _____,

Re the changes of Pregnancy legislation in the NT

I oppose these changes since while I believe that abortion at any stage is wrong aborting babies who would otherwise be born alive is abhorrent and would be opposed by many in the community.

There are other aspects of the Bill that are of great concern. Hence, I am urging you not to support this change in legislation.

We need to follow the path of wisdom regarding the dignity of human life and not rush into legislation which could erode this dignity.

Yours sincerely,

Name
Address
Signature