

“WHAT’S THE POINT IN
WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
IF I DON’T HAVE THE
RIGHT TO LIFE?”



LIFE. THE FIRST RIGHT

CELEBRATING LIFE

One in 10 Irish people have some form of disability. That's more than 400,000 people.

People with disabilities have worked hard towards attaining real equality. In every walk of life, and at every level of society, huge improvements have been achieved.

Equality is being achieved with the support of the Irish people, a people who have traditionally seen the person rather than the impairment. Our celebration of every life is a great tradition. But that tradition now is being seriously undermined.



THREAT TO THE DISABLED

In Ireland, there is widespread support for rights for those with disabilities. In many areas - employment, access, inclusion - these rights are recognized and respected. But a much more fundamental right is being attacked - the right to life.

Powerful elements within the media and the Government are arguing that some people with disabilities should not have the right to life. Babies they consider less than perfect, they want them to be aborted.

Allowing people with disabilities to be aborted is the most devastating blow to disabled Irish citizens. **As Tony de Barra, wheelchair user, and a founder of *LifeAbility* put it: 'What's the point in wheelchair access, if I don't have the right to life?'**



THE 'D' CASE

In the recent 'D' case abortion controversy, the lawyers for the *Health Services Executive* (HSE) made some disgraceful and alarming statements in court. They said that the unborn baby at the centre of the case wasn't really human because he or she had a brain anomaly. They argued that some disabilities disqualify you from the right to life.

In their attack on people with disabilities, the pro-abortion people were supported by the media who tried to dehumanize this little baby, by telling lies in their reports, and by describing the baby as 'an aberration of nature'. That's an old trick - undermining the humanity of a potential victim – but it is one that people with disabilities thought they would never see in Ireland.

Having a disability doesn't make you less than human - but it can expose the lack of humanity in others.

LIFE IS A GIFT

The fact that the little baby in the 'D' case might not have lived very long after birth in no way justifies taking that baby's life. That kind of logic has led to a 'seek and destroy' attitude in other countries towards babies with disabilities.

A baby is a gift to be cherished from the first moment of his or her existence, no matter how short his or her life. In the end, the HSE and the High Court had their way, and baby 'D' was taken to England, and killed. But now, abortion campaigners are calling for the 'right' to kill unborn babies with disabilities, in Ireland.

KILLING OF THE DISABLED

It is an outrage to abort babies just because they have a disability. Pro-abortion campaigners want to establish the 'right' to kill disabled babies, as a first step to legalizing abortion on demand in Ireland. And the Irish government has spent taxpayers' monies to send pre-born babies with disabilities to England to be aborted.

Think about what this means. It is killing, plain and simple; the worst form of eugenics practised on Irish citizens by the state. Abortion is always wrong, but it is particularly vile to single out disabled unborn babies to be killed.

In Britain, where abortion has been readily available for 40 years, **more than 90% of all babies diagnosed with either Down's Syndrome or Spina Bifida are aborted.** In practical terms, this eugenic genocide is resulting in the near extermination of an entire category of persons. The authorities have decided they are useless, and not worthy of life. **Is this what we want in Ireland?**



WHAT WILL IRELAND DO?

Ireland should continue to 'cherish all the children of the nation equally', and should reject these new calls to abort the disabled. We should not follow other nations in their errors. In the UK, years of aborting children, especially disabled babies, have led to the current situation where parents are condemned for bringing a child with a disability into the world. Abortion devalues human life.

Pre-born children with disabilities are entitled to the same legal protection as everyone else. They should have all the rights to which every person, born and unborn, is entitled under the *Constitution of Ireland*. To argue otherwise is inhumane and insulting.

Let us cherish the humanity of every person, born and unborn, as they have been created by God.



A PERSON FIRST

In May 2003, doctors and medical professionals assembled in London for the *International Down's Syndrome Screening Conference*. Despite an attempt to prevent a group of people with Down's Syndrome from speaking, one of them, Anya Souza, finally addressed the conferees. She said:

“ I CAN'T GET RID OF MY DOWN'S SYNDROME, BUT YOU CAN'T GET RID OF MY HAPPINESS. YOU CAN'T GET RID OF THE HAPPINESS I GIVE TO OTHERS EITHER.

IT'S DOCTORS LIKE YOU THAT WANT TO TEST PREGNANT WOMEN AND STOP PEOPLE LIKE ME BEING BORN. TOGETHER WITH MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS I HAVE FOUGHT TO PREVENT MY SEPARATION FROM NORMAL SOCIETY.

I HAVE FOUGHT FOR MY RIGHTS...I MAY HAVE DOWN'S SYNDROME BUT I AM A PERSON FIRST. ”



Anya Souza

May 2003

*International Down's
Syndrome Screening
Conference*

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

- 1) Voice your opinion to the new government that abortion, and particularly abortion of the disabled, is always wrong. Your local TD should hear your views on this issue.
- 2) Get involved with an organization whose purpose is to assist the disabled.
- 3) Learn more about disability online. Be inspired by the following stories and the worth of every life:
www.anencephalie-info.org
www.kansascity.com/static/media/Audio_Photo_Gallery/
www.ninetynineballoons.com
- 4) Distribute more of these leaflets (address below).
- 5) Become informed, and be an advocate for all unborn children, and for people with disabilities.



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