



Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 Submission of the Guild of St. Luke

The Guild of Saint Luke (Catholic Doctors Queensland) is the official group representing Catholic Doctors in Queensland. We believe that the Government of Queensland is in error in seeking to make the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 into law. For the first time in Queensland's history, according to law, unborn babies will have no rights. No rights at all. Mothers of unborn children will be so easily coerced and pressured into having terminations. The fathers of unborn babies will have no rights as well. All according to law.

Unborn babies will be killed even up to term. The babies killed will be older than those already born and in special care nurseries or even at home with their families. Such babies will die cruel and painful deaths hidden from society's view.

The Roman Empire originally had widespread abortion and infanticide. Unwanted infants were 'exposed' and left to die. This was sanctioned by Roman law. Gradually 'exposure' became less common and abortion increased. Abortion was preferable to exposure to the Romans due to the difference between the emotional reaction to what was visible and what they could avoid seeing.¹ The stoic theory which prevailed in the Rome of the early Christian days held that life began at birth.² The Christian idea of life beginning at conception became accepted. Abortion became unacceptable as civilisation progressed.^{3 4}

The Bill as set out in Section 8 will result in a medical practitioner being forced to refer a patient for a termination when it is against their conscience to do so. This is a retrograde step in a great state such as Queensland, which prides itself on its religious and democratic freedom. Many of Queenslanders are descended from those who escaped religious persecution in other countries and moved to Queensland for a better way of life. Refugees still come here for this but now political coercion is to be applied to doctors and other health professionals who will be compelled under the threat of legal penalty and criminal punishment to practice medicine against their conscience and religious beliefs.

It is ironic that Labor politicians will be given a conscience vote to legislate that doctors will not be able to have freedom of conscience in this area. Catholic doctors will be compelled to commit serious sin if they obey this proposed law. Pope St John Paul in his Encyclical "the Gospel of Life" wrote that, "direct abortion that is abortion willed as an end or a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church."⁵

The World Medical Association in October 2008 stated "The central element of professional autonomy and clinical independence is the assurance that individual

¹ John a. Hardon , S.J. The Catholic Catechism p334. 1981

² Seneca, De Ira Book I , XV

³ Didache II,2.

⁴ Epistle of Barnabas ,II., 19.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae 62 pp 118-119

physicians have the freedom to exercise professional judgement in the care and treatment of their patients without undue influence by outside parties or individuals.”⁶

At the time of the passing of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 in Victoria, The Australian Medical Association stated that this law “Infringes the rights of doctors with a conscientious objection by inserting an active compulsion for a doctor to refer to another doctor who they know does not have a conscientious objection.”⁷

The establishment of safe access zones as set out in Part 4 of the Bill is unnecessary as there are already laws to prevent illegal behaviour towards others. Furthermore, it prevents peaceful protest or prayer which is harmless and the democratic and religious right of our citizens. We will be returning to the days before the right to march was won in the seventies and eighties in Queensland.

In summary, the Termination of pregnancy Bill 2018 is a horrendous bill which should never be allowed to become law and i call on Parliamentarians to reject it.

⁶ World Medical Association Meeting, Seoul, October 2008

⁷ Victorian LA, Hansard, 9 September, p 3306