

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

"Take courage! God has healing in store for you; so take courage" (Th. 5:10)

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For Fr. Leo Kelly

This issue is dedicated to the memory of my dear friend and supporter both spiritually and financially, Fr. Leo Kelly.

Fr. Kelly went to meet Jesus just before Christmas and for me his death dimmed my own Christmas. He would no doubt be cross with me for even thinking that, but that is how I felt and feel. For me he was *just there* I could ring and ask his opinion about anything or just to say hello. I am especially sad at his going because Fr. had kindly offered to read my book and write the foreword and I very much had looked forward to this and felt so honoured that he would even consider doing this for me. Fr Kelly also always knew when I desperately needed financial help and responded instantly. Somehow I had learned to believe that he would always be there. It was inconceivable that there would come a time that he would not be there. And yes his mind was so sharp and his voice still booming. I can still hear it, and yes every phone call was to always include reference to *Hound of Heaven*. (woe betide to anyone who didn't know the said poem –like me when I first met him) I am going to miss him so much. We can almost always know the measure of person when children and young ones take easily to that person. My boys Luke and Nicholas and my husband, Andrew really enjoyed Father's company when he came to lunch and what is more he enjoyed theirs.

Thank you father Leo and may you enjoy the company and conversation of Jesus.

Welcome to 2003 to all my friends and readers of Broken Branches. Thank you for all the cards and kind wishes I received before Christmas and thank you for your concern for my tiredness and health. Indeed I was so tired by the end of the year that long after I closed the office the brain continued to "talk" non-stop. In fact I thought that the "off" button had broken down and I wouldn't be able to switch off. However, after several weeks and half a bottle of strong vitamin Bs (no not scotch!) I began to be able to sleep well and hallelujah I woke up one morning and the "talking brain" had stopped. The noise stopped. It was so nice.

BROKEN
BRANCHES



John 15

In early January, Andrew (husband), Luke and Nicholas and myself went to Perth for two weeks. We went to see our family there and my other two children (Mark and Jonathon) but also because it was Luke's 21st birthday and he had a desire to celebrate it with all our family. It was lovely a time and good to see friends, family and also home ground. Perhaps it was the "home ground" and searing heat, which helped in the end to still the "talking brain."

Whilst in Perth I also had the opportunity to speak to several girls who have an abortion within their history and to re assure them that their experience of loneliness, isolation, ongoing sadness, distress, failed relationships, promiscuity is abortion related. Somehow wherever I seem to go, I am found, but this I don't mind. I reckon that if someone "finds" me then I must be needed there at that moment. So that's OK.

Also whilst in Perth I had an opportunity to speak on Radio Fremantle, a Catholic Radio station. Raymond and Theresa De Souza (apologists) were kind hosts and appeared to be knowledgeable in the area of post abortion trauma and grief. It was really good for me to be there. The radio programs and interviews are good because they reach quite a large number of people and even if we "preach to converted" as has been suggested, that is acceptable, the converted also need to know what is happening in the pro life area and to be prepared and kitted out for battle for life. Irrespective of how many times we hear the stories at some point they cease being stories and begin to be taken on board and made one's own belief. This is important because to be pro life because it is fashionable, or even because we "know" someone who is pro life will result in being pro life for only certain "issues". Or only for a season.

PRO LIFE

Have you ever asked the question "what does it mean to be pro life?"

I think this question has to be seriously thought about and contemplated in order to be able to respond to such an awkward question. Hesitation over this question can only mean that in the depth of one's being there is not a conviction that ALL life is good, All life sacred. All life is of inestimable worth. This then becomes the place of weakness. The Achilles heel and vulnerable.

It is my contention that today we have a society, which in effect does not really know what is actually meant to be "pro life." We live in a society whose ethos is established by scriptwriters and film directors. This has come to pass because it is in, and through the medium of television and movies, film clips, pop stars and other visual and audio mediums that morality and ethics become established.

We in pro life face an uphill battle, with this belief that life is sacred and valuable, because the scriptwriters and producers and movie makers and

song writers and performers perform their magical acts and convince the audience that their views and ideas are the more relevant, more modern, and most endearing. To be pro life means that one has to go counter culture. To be anti abortion means that one has to be radically different. The only slightly acceptable reason to be anti abortion (according to feminists and pro choicers and pro abortion) can be cited that abortion “hurts women” and of course this is a valid argument and rightly should be highlighted, stressed, brought to attention. Indeed to this end the abortion and its link to breast cancer can be a highly evocative and true and good argument to be pro life. However, if this is it then this also **fails us all**. To be anti abortion and pro life because certain members of society will be adversely affected can only, in the long term, lead to future disasters. To be pro life/anti abortion we have to understand the why, and only then having truly understood the “why,” can we become genuinely and truly pro life or indeed not at all.

Today, after nearly 7 years of doing the work that I do and having heard many and varied stories, I can say that to be deeply pro life has a different meaning for me. For me to be pro life today means that I recognise in the human person the image of Jesus and having seen the image of Jesus I cannot say that this infant or this disabled or this aged or this sick person is worthy of disposal for convenience. To recognise the image of Jesus then changes for me the fundamental reason for being pro life - It is not because women or men or others are hurt by the abortion (which they are) but it is because the abortion seeks to destroy that image. It is because the abortion does not only destroy the infant and cause life long anguish to its mother and others, but because the inestimable worth of the new human can be measured by the new structures which heaven and earth have to create in order to accommodate the new person. **That** is the worth of each and every new human being. All other creation must make room to accommodate the new one.

To be anti abortion and pro life because abortion hurts women is another ruse of the devil. Yes indeed abortion **does hurt** women and men and children, and grandparents, and friends and society but above all it robs the infant of its right to life. It pilfers the infant of its God given right to its own existence and its own destiny and it robs the infant of its own history, past and future. Furthermore, being anti abortion and pro life because abortion “hurts women” leaves the door wide open for a time when abortion maybe wont hurt women so then it can become OK. Or if we are only pro life and anti abortion because abortion increases risks of cancers (and this should be continuously highlighted and stressed), then if a drug can be produced alleviating the risk, does this say that abortion then becomes OK?

Mental health problems, physical problems, cancer problems whether breast, uterine, ovarian, etc, are the fruits of the poisonous tree called abortion, but they are the fruits and not the tree. The tree is surely devalued humanity. A humanity that has lost its sense of its own worth. A humanity that has turned in on itself. A self centred, egocentric humanity at the mercy of its own nihilistic beliefs. Ultimately, a humanity where the parents have turned against their children.

We really must decide what we want to understand about ourselves and about our beliefs about being pro life. We must ensure that we do not inadvertently open doors wide so that the “enemy” can simply walk straight in, but instead that we have a grounded knowledge, and understanding of not only what it means to be pro life, but also more importantly why.

ABORTION AND VIOLENCE

A recent World health Organisation report on violence and health (see *BMJ* 2002;325:731 5 Oct) clearly indicates the enormous amount of violence, which humans inflict on other human beings. However, this report seems to stop just short of clearly showing that violence and death among women, especially pregnant women or recently pregnant women, is on the increase. Several reputable studies (Finnish study by Gissler, Kauppila, Merilainen, Toukomaa, & Heminki 1987-1994; and a study by Reardon, Ney, Scheuren, Cogle, Coleman & Strahan, 2002) clearly found a history of violence and death associated with pregnancy and abortion. Indeed this increased risk of violence and/or death persisted for many years.

Abortion and violence are synonymous. Abortion is a specific type of violence. Ultimate violence. But there is more to this violence because the violence does not stop at the abortion itself but continues to feed on itself. Abortion, whether wanted or unwanted, introduces a dimension previously unknown in the woman’s life. She has now brought into her being something for which she was not equipped and which causes a rebellion within her. Whether she wanted the abortion or not, violence to her essence is done and this violence will continue to erode her feminine nature. It will diminish and decay what has been written into her biological nature. That is, to receive “*the gift*” To nurture the “gift” and to protect the “gift” of Life. Other response to the “gift” is an aberration and her being is unable to reconcile the violent actions against that which is in its nature. It should then not surprise anyone that women’s health has deteriorated. Women’s own (genuine) estimation of self has diminished. That wanton abandonment of her very self has occurred. Whether abortion was self sought or inflicted or coerced by another the wound can be mortal.

The violence in our society should not surprise any of us because we have corrupted our nature and inflicted upon it something truly alien. Woman was created to receive, nurture, carry and give. Abortion has said that woman does not *have to* do this. It is no longer a privilege to do this, so if she does not want to accept what she has received; she does not nurture, carry or give. It is then not surprising that nature has changed and instead of a symphony there is chaos. The male was created to **provide** and **protect** and **not to conduct** to its death his own child. This is also alien and also a

fruit of a society, which has forgotten who “human” is, and rejected its own future human life and citizens.

My reason for writing on this topic is that I hear the confusion in understanding of what it means to be pro life. There is an absence of genuine knowledge about life and its sacredness. Life and its worth. There is an absence of clarity and a beginning of blurring of the lines. Please don't allow the pro life lines to be blurred. And please don't allow language to be hijacked for purposes against life. Abortion.

NIC'S COMMENTS

Greetingz All,

I hope this newsletter finds you having a delightful New Year. Did everyone get what they wanted for Christmas? Yes – Good! Mum seemed to miss my hint about the DVD player, she remembered the underwear though! 😊 If any of you are wondering, yes, my exams went well. Thankyou to those who said prayers for me, they really helped as I am now on my way to becoming a CHIROPRACTOR!! Yep, I got well above the score I needed and I am soon going to be cracking necks and backs for a living.

I recently had the privilege of attending the Australian Youth Festival put on by the Catholic Youth Ministry of Melbourne with some Catholic friends of mine. This was a small festival held in the Cardinal Knox Centre behind St. Patrick's Cathedral, to bring together Catholic youth from all around Melbourne. The event was fantastic as we were introduced to other young Catholic people like ourselves, we were fed an excellent gourmet meal of barbecued sausages 😊, we were entertained by some great acts, we listened to what it meant to other young people to be Catholic, and we had a great time, culminating in a dance party where everyone got jiggy with it – for those more senior readers, that means we danced the night away. I encourage those young, and young at heart, or with pacemaker – whichever the case may be, to come to next year's Aus Youth Fest, as it will be a national event in 2004, and it is a nice change to be able to talk and listen freely about being Catholic with other youth who feel the same way.

By the way, thank you to all those who sent Christmas Cards, they were much appreciated. Anywayz people, I hope you all have, and are having a great 2003, and don't forget to write in with your compliments about the newsletter – especially my piece.

Take it easy,
Laterz,
Nic Lastman.

Conclusion

As I conclude this issue of the newsletter and begin in earnestly the work of this year I entrust into the Lord's hands this charism and I also entrust into your care the possibility of this newsletter and indeed the whole work. Without your ongoing support I cannot continue.

At this point I need to place before you a request, I have an opportunity to bring into my work two girls who have completed with me and are healed and happy and reconciled both with God and their infant. It would be good for me because perhaps I won't tire myself out so much and also because this year I want to start a support group and one of the girls (Maree) would be eminently suitable to work in this area. Leeanne could help in administration area. I would also like to ask Nicholas to work 1 day a week (building a website and entering data into computer). I particularly want to keep Nicholas within the prolife movement. However, Nicholas begins university this year (he is modest but he is doing a double degree Science/Chiropractic – eventually after 5 years he will be a Dr of Chiropractic) and he will need some money-so in all of this I would like to appeal to any of my readers (or all) to please help in the financial area. (If you know of any multi squillionaires I would like to meet them please). Maree and Leeanne and Nicholas have a **NEED** to earn some money. I think group work is important because after I have finished with the one on one counselling it will be good to see that others also have suffered and are recovering and that no one has horns growing out of their heads.

I have many hopes and plans for this coming year but all depend on your generosity. I begin the year with many accounts to be paid including my six monthly rent to the archdiocese. So it is over to you with what happens from now on. Please consider as it is getting more difficult to continue as three of my strong financial supporters have passed away this past year.

Please pray for Michelle (one of my former girls – abortion for foetal abnormality) whose new pregnancy (after the abortion) miscarried. She and her husband lost their baby at 20 weeks and they are devastated. Please also pray for Megan (new), Jane, Sarah (new) Rachel, Melissa, and for those that will be carried over from last year.

May the Lord Bless and keep you.



Anne Lastman

Name _____
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