

**MOTHER AND CHILD - A UNIQUE LOVE.**

As workers in this labor for life, we are called to love. It is a call which whilst seemingly obvious may at times become clouded and lead to a forgetfulness of the reason why we are here and why we do what we do. As workers in this vineyard, we are called to love both the mother and child. The concern has to be for both individuals because it is both individuals who are in crisis and calling for help. If the abortion proceeds both mother and child become victims.

In the last week, I had the marvelous opportunity of meeting and speaking with Mons. Reilly, founder of The Helpers of God's Precious Infants – a worldwide Catholic Pro Life charism which witnesses to life by praying and counseling outside abortion clinics. It was so good to hear a man of such wisdom and holiness speak with confidence about the future. It was good to hear him speak about God's big picture rather than our own miniature frozen frames. It was good to hear him speak about the importance of the women **EVEN after they'd had the abortion**. And I felt humbled that he should take time out to thank me for the work that I do. He who has done so much thanked me who has done so little.

As we again come to the end of another year it has been good to hear from someone like Mons. Reilly that my work is of value especially as many times this past year I have come almost to the end, and then there was relieve.

**HUMAN FROM ITS GENESIS**

It is interesting to note that the original meaning of the word *conceive* actually meant that a woman had received the seed of the man in her womb and had become pregnant by taking the fetus to herself. This is what is meant when the terms "conceive" and "conceptions" are spoken of. In fact it could be said in stronger language that the woman actually "took in and held" onto the fetus. There was a sense of protection even in the word itself. Thus, knowing this, it is important to understand that imprinted into the woman's design will be the desire to hold onto and be protective of the thing, which has been conceived; that is the child. Today science no longer can discredit the humanity of the child. There is no doubt that at the moment of conception a new human person begins on its journey of fully becoming all that it can possibly be. The new life has inbuilt within its

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John 15

system its own genetic programme with all that it will ever be inscribed into the blueprint. The life that has begun at conception is different (in size) than the one that will complete its earthly life, however, however, it is no less human because of its difference. The new and unique life will traverse many stages zygote, embryo, fetus, infant, child, teenager, youth, adult, older adult. Each stage different yet always the same. Ontologically the person does not change. Visibly and physically it will change through its passage through history, but the humanity cannot be challenged or changed. It cannot change its nature from human to another species as it traverses through the various stages. It cannot change from human nature to bird nature; it always is and remains human. To understand that from forever, this new created being has existed and is now ready to claim its place, is to understand that in a certain sense there is a connection between all of us (because of our nature) including those of us who talk to that mother and/or her child. It is this that has to be understood so that we can help both mother and child and when the child no longer is (aborted) to continue to talk to the mother. It is this Truth that we need to grasp before we can truly see the big picture The infant apart from its mother cannot be, and the mother apart from her infant also cannot be, **without wounds and pain.**

### **ABORTION FOR FOETAL ABNORMALITY-AGAIN**

Again this past week, I have been called to speak to someone who aborted her infant for foetal abnormality (17 weeks) and again I am left feeling bereft and angry that this (abortion) occurred. I am most angry that the medical profession always counsels termination of pregnancy when an abnormality is found. Irrespective of the foetal gestation, bonding, parent's desires, a termination is touted as the best outcome for such a situation. **I absolutely disagree.** The medical/ public health profession look only to the immediate difficulties, but none of those who advise the termination of the pregnancy are there during the night when she can hear her baby crying. They are not there when she "sees a fleeting image of my baby." They are not there when she feels that she can "still feel the baby kicking." Those who advise termination see an abnormality and have a need to dispose of that, because it offends sensitivities and because it appears to solve the immediate dilemma. Those who advise termination do not take into account the complicated type of guilt and sorrow which the mother is left with especially as this mother would never have countenanced abortion had it not been posited.

It is a terrible shame that new inventions are being used to end life rather than enhance and assist life. It is a terrible shame that only the immediate is considered. Just like the condom vending machines in schools, morning after pills, contraception for 12-13-14 year old these also look to the immediate so called difficulties and overlook the future suffering and the future calling into question ones own worth and morality. There is no thought about the ramifications of such actions not only to the individuals but also to their families, friends, and society and future. The future is not

the problem of the medical profession of today, and it is not their concern when mental health problems develop at some time ahead.

A further shame on the medical and other health professionals is the reality that emotional and moral elements, which make up the individual, are not given thought. When an abortion happens it does not happen in isolation even though it may appear so. It affects the baby, the parents, the grandparents, the siblings, the uncles the aunts, the neighbor, the friends, the school, society and above all GOD. There is a hierarchy involved in the life of every human. There is a sublime dignity inherent in the human person and so high is that worth and the calling of the human that the foundations of humanity are rocked when a mother and/or father decree that their child will die because it is unwanted. The lie is this; that a disabled infant is of no value. Or for that matter any conception is of no value unless it is “wanted.” This is the Lie. This is the demonic dimension. To remove the humanity from the infant so that it becomes a nonentity and therefore to belong to no one and nowhere. In this way nothing that happens to it is of importance, because after all it’s only some “damaged tissue” or “undeveloped matter” or “too deformed” which has no bearing on the rest of humanity...lies.

Just like condom vending machines in schools, contraception of different kinds to all and sundry, abortion, euthanasia, cloning, interspecies parts usage, embryonic stem cell research, and other life devaluing actions, these are not simply something minor. These activities have a moral, spiritual, emotional and physical dimension, which is violently assaulted. It is no wonder that we cannot see the big picture. To see the big picture would demand change. Would demand an expression of horror at what we permit to happen in the name of doing “good” for the other. We need to arouse ourselves from apathy and reject all that is anti life. We cannot otherwise be sincere in our expressed horror, of all types of abuses. We cannot be sincere in our expressed horror when we hear about wars. We cannot be sincere when we express horror at Internet porn and what it does to lives. We cannot be sincere when we express horror at the huge rise in all forms of violence in society beginning with violence towards young, very young, women, men, elderly, disabled. We cannot be sincere in our expression of horror and sorrow over the mindless terrorist attacks against innocence. To be taken seriously and believed we need to begin to see the big picture as God might see it and begin to do something about it.

### **NIC’S COMMENTS**

Bonsoir fine people,

How are we all today? Looking forward to the quickly approaching Christmas season again? Ah yes, it seems like only yesterday I was busy

trying to find where mum hid the presents from last Christmas 😊  
University has finished for this year for me; it was a KILLER! I had 9 exams in the space of 8 days – Not much sleep was experienced in that time I can tell you. But not to worry, I am catching up all the lost sleep now, much to my mother’s discontent. I still don’t see why she persists on me getting up before 1.00 pm!

Anywayz, my topic of this article is one of hope (I thought I better put in a nice one since my last one was pretty intense, and I wouldn’t want you to actually think that I could ever be really serious 😊). During my last semester at Uni, my friends and myself decided to go and get pizza for lunch from the local pizza shop. The four of us ended up sitting down to a couple of pizzas and just chatting about life and Uni and girls... ya know, the usual. Anyway, our conversation eventually led to where humanity was leading in the future. Now you must understand that I had never discussed religion or ethics with these particular friends, so you can imagine the shock I had when we started to talk about ghosts, but then moved to angels. We began to talk about guardian angels, then God, Saints, etc. Soon we moved on to discuss what we thought God would do in the near future as we all agreed that God would not allow things such as abortion, euthanasia, and also this new terrorism to continue without some form of intervention.

What astounded me though was that these guys who didn’t go to mass (they were of non-practicing Christian families) actually had quite strong beliefs that our way of life would have to come to halt soon. We even got onto the topic of Padre Pio’s prophecies, the Stigmata, and how we had to persevere to live good lives and keep some form of connection with our faith. My Greek friend told us of how whenever he was feeling lost within the world, or when a family member had died, he would spend a lot of time with his Grandmother who was very religious, and would find solace in religion and in the knowledge that he was not alone but that God was with him in times of hardship. My other two friends also concurred that they would always seem return to their faith at times of hardship, and that although they were not strict to the 10 commandments, they continued to try and live good lives always in the knowledge that if things got really bad, they would always be able to turn to God.

Now for me, this was amazing. To see young people who had not been forced into faith actually turning towards it and trying to find out more about it really inspired me to think that although we live in uncertain times, there will always remain a remnant of those who are not afraid to turn to religion and stay strong in their beliefs. No matter how little they had been taught, they were still keen to hear the opinions of other’s, and to further strengthen their own connection with God. To me, this showed quite a positive sign that our future may be bleak, but doomed it is not.

Anywayz people, I am tired, I think I’ll have a sleep now 😊

I hope you all have a very happy and safe Christmas, and a very relaxed New Year!

I leave you with this Chorus Line from a recent song by the group 'Black Eyed Peas.' I thought that this song conveyed quite well that people do indeed turn to God in times of need. From the No. 1 Chart topping song, *Where is the Love?*

**“People killin’, people dyin’  
Children hurt and you hear them cryin’  
Can you practice what you preach  
And would you turn the other cheek?**

**Father, Father, Father help us,  
Send us some guidance from above  
‘Cos people got me, got me questionin’  
Where is the Love?”**

Take it EZ,  
Ciao,  
NiC Lastman

## **THE YEAR THAT WAS:**

Perhaps it might be a good thing just to outline very loosely some of the work which I was involved in this past year. I hope that you will consider that your support of me has been worthwhile.

The family began the year in Perth where all our family lives (I miss them especially at Christmas. I have two other sons there: Mark & Jonathan, and three granddaughters, my parents, 5 bros and sisters and their spouses and their children and I have long running friendships. So you can imagine that I miss family life especially around special days.

In January we went to Perth because it was son number 3's, 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and he wanted to spend time with the huge family there. Whilst in Perth I was asked to do radio interview (Radio Fremantle Catholic radio station with Raymond De Souza) it was a good interview apart from Kathy (my gorgeous friend) losing us on the way home after we finished.

As I settled back (when we returned) I began the year with about dozen people to see and throughout the year the numbers have been between 12-22

per week. This, not counting the once off people who simply need to speak to someone but do not want to continue long term. It has been an unusual year because I have had to see about 6 of these individuals in my home office for most of the year. This because of the stairs leading to my office (51 steep stairs) and some women have had difficulty in climbing up. I have also over the year counseled long term (phone) 3 Interstate women on a weekly basis and they came to see me in person for a whole day every about 6-8 weeks. I have dealt with 5 countrywomen who traveled by rail faithfully to see me.

I have seen three males long term. Apart from Perth radio interview I have done an interview with an Adelaide radio station and one with my most favorite radio personality here in Melbourne, Ivor Jenkins. I have spoken to youth groups, ladies groups, prayer groups, Thomas More Summer School, Human Life International Conference. I have done a media interview with a Christian Newspaper, had several articles published, completed a book on the spiritual damage of abortion (waiting publishing) and nearly completed another University degree on Trauma Grief & Loss (except I had to withdraw from one unit because I couldn't find enough hours in the day - now I have to do this last unit next year) I have attended meetings concerned with life/family matters and prepared and attended special Masses and closure ceremonies for those women who have completed with me. I have helped to place many more infant name plaques at our South Melbourne Children's Memorial Garden. This, together with the usual on going counseling, phone calls, mail and preparation and distribution of six issues of the newsletter. Some good and some maybe not so good. I hope that no one is disappointed and I hope that you feel that your support of this work and me has been worthwhile and not a waste of time.

I feel it important to let you know what I do, because without your support and encouragement and ongoing concern, it would not be possible. Thank you immensely. If you don't think I have done enough please talk to me.

### **THANKS AND BLESSINGS.**

Thank you for the ongoing support of my Archbishop His Grace Denis Hart, without the rooms ( at manageable rent) I couldn't continue.

Thanks Fr Michael Sh & parishioners, David & Isabelle & colleagues, James G. , My friend L. M., from Armidale NSW, thanks Paul & Michaela (it carried me through to this month). Thanks to those who prayed and wrote and urged me to continue. Thanks to Gail Instance & crew at HLI, thanks to Fr. Adrian H. for your letters and words of encouragement and support, Br Simon and confreres (you are treasures) Fr. Gabriel & Bros (Dingley) Margaret O., Bro. Con., Yvonne D., Errol D., Kathleen C., Fr A. J. G (Vic), Fr Leo G., thanks Christopher S., thanks dear sisters, Paul M. thanks you are a legend, Janet & Greg thanks, Janet K-W (Perth) thanks, Lorna & Judd thanks, Catherine H. thanks, Nancy M thanks, Mark C. thanks, my Parish priest Fr Brendan & parishioners thanks, Fr. Cyril (UK) thanks,

MJB G., thanks, John (NSW) thanks, Lorraine L. thanks. Thanks to those who have requested anonymity.

Thank you to all those who supported me this year. It has been at times really difficult, because for various reasons including death I lost the financial support of four individuals who were there from the beginning and on whom I had learned to depend upon. The loss of these, who I saw as my financial backbone sent me into tailspin and even into planning for life after Victims of Abortion was closed down. However, through the grace of God and the support of some new supporters shakily we continued. So thank you. I guess I was able to see that God does want this work to continue even if at times it flies by a thread.

What I have not been able to continue to do this year has been the sending of newsletters to every priest in Australia however, we may continue next year. For this I am sorry because the only way to fight abortion and to bring healing to women and men and families touched by abortion, we need all the help we can get. We need priests and pastors and ministers of religion to take on board the reality that women in their midst are suffering. There is un mourned grief in their midst and it is this grief which wounds (at all levels) our society. We have a society at war against its children surely this cannot be right and it cannot be left unchallenged. We have women whose wombs have been ransacked leaving them desolate. We know that the womb is workshop where God continues to labour and bring forth new masterpieces. We need to help women to see what they are rejecting and for what. We need to return the dignity to all women and when this is done and they believe it, then motherhood will again be honoured. It's a long way off but not impossible. But we need this if society is to remain "human"

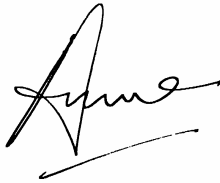
I conclude this last issue of *Broken Branches* for 2003 saying thanks and bless you. I am going to take 3 weeks off beginning from December 19<sup>th</sup> for a well-earned rest. If God wills I will return for 2004. **This also depends on you and if your support continues.** At this time your support is needed because I have to pay the second amount of rent (I pay a very manageable amount of rent for the three offices-twice a year. If I had to pay normal rent for these rooms it wouldn't/couldn't happen). And other huge phone bills and newsletter bills etc. Its over to you. I don't worry about it because if this work falls within the will and desire of God, it will continue. If it does not, then no amount of my doing will improve situation. This past week I took on board 5 new girls which I hadn't planned to do but I didn't have the heart to say no so I said yes. Please pray for all of us and I will pray for you all, my beloved supporters.

## “Boat Girls who disappeared”

I have had quite a number of calls asking me to explain who it is that I ask for prayers when I write “pray for boat girls who disappeared” Let me explain: Some months ago I went to hear a Priest speak at my parish. Fr. Joe, wanted to be a priest from a very early age and in order to achieve this he had to leave his home country where to become a priest was almost impossible. His parents saved and found a way to send him to Australia, on a refugee boat. So together with a huge number (I think he said 78 of them) of men women and children he set out in a boat which should have carried 15-20 people. During the voyage their boat was assailed by pirates, and a number of women and girls were taken (and some raped) by the pirates and these have never been seen or heard from again. Some of these women and girls were friends of Fr. Joe and as he spoke about them he became very distressed. It hurt me so much to see a priest so distressed it reminded me of Jesus weeping over his friend Lazarus. At the end of the talk I asked Father if I had his permission to ask for prayers for those missing people and he said yes. So I promised that as long as I write a newsletter I will ask for prayers for his friends. This is the origin of the request for prayers for “Boat girls who disappeared”. Please pray for them wherever they are or even that one day Fr Joe might hear some news about them and that it is good news.

Please continue to pray for Pat (new) Jeannie (new), Susie (new) Miriam (new) Kerrie (new) Merrie (new) Morris (new) Emily (new) Joanne, and the usuals, Jill, Jodie, Samantha, Jason, Maree, Vanessa, Margaret, Donna, Melissa Anne, Tina, Janine, Helen, Janet Michael, Angela, Ron Judy, Maree, Susan, Julia (NSW) Darrin,

Thank you for this past year and I wish for you a Christmas filled with Joy



Anne Lastman

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ P/C \_\_\_\_\_

Donation/Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

*Yes/no, I would/would not* like to be on your mailing list.

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