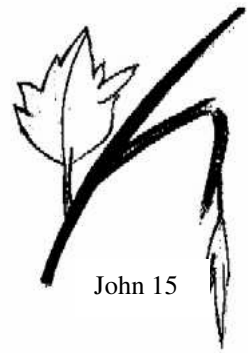


BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

Issue 6

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Welcome to Anne's Page!!

It has often been said that a week in politics is a long time, well a week or four in my life is also a long time. Let me explain. Since the last newsletter went out about four weeks ago, I have been to Perth for 8 days (emergency), been involved in a car accident in Perth (with my 2 older boys Mark and Jonathon in the car) and have broken my new set of reading glasses. They do say that things happen in threes so I am hoping that this is all for the coming year. There is no more ill wind to blow my way.

On Wednesday it was a day of special significance to the Catholic Christian world. It was Ash Wednesday. A day of both review and remembrance and a day to look forward to the future. On Ash Wednesday we remember that we have come from the desires of God shaped and molded by His hands (from clay) but none the less having to return to the original material from which we came from. Ash Wednesday is a sobering day. Indeed for me it is like a door leading towards a light in the distance with the spaces in between in varying shades and shapes.

During this time of lent I think a lot about women and men who experience an abortion. Somehow the experiences of the aborted women (and men) and the experiences of Jesus along the road to Calvary and on the Cross seem similar to one another. There seems to be an eerie replication of the two. The suffering, the wracked body, the emotional distress, the sense of abandonment the sense of helplessness. These are present at Calvary and the life of a woman suffering from post abortion syndrome. In both of these cases and lives the characters are abandoned, betrayed, dehumanized and broken for "sin."

Reading the Gospel story of the last days of Jesus we sense that "something" is really wrong. Something monumental is about to occur

because there is an almost tangible sense that there is going to be a titanic clash between innocence and sin and in this clash there will not be any captives taken. Innocence and sin will collide with one or the other being the victor. Of course we know who the victor was and we rejoice in His and through Him our victory over the enemy. We also rejoice because "innocence" won and in that winning our own innocence is renewed. As I continue to reflect on Jerusalem and Calvary and then on the Jerusalem and Calvary of the aborted woman I am amazed at the similarities. Both Jesus and the aborted woman (and at times man) head resolutely towards suffering. He (though innocent) will suffer for the "Sin" of others she will suffer for her own sins and the sins of others. In both instances a death of an innocent (Jesus and the baby) will occur and nothing will ever be the same again. It is also important to remember that the death did not culminate with extinction but indeed opened the door to a new reality. For Jesus His death was the fulfillment of a promise made to the Father that He would succeed where "Adam" had failed and He would lead God's own people back home. This He did and was faithful to, until completed. For the aborted woman the abortion is her dark tomb, her death, and her loss of innocence. The abortion is her own journey into darkness. Her own journey along the road, leading to Calvary and death.

At this point it is important to remember that Jesus did not remain on Calvary, or in the tomb. Had He done so then He simply would have been another good man who died for ideals and soon to be forgotten. No- Jesus rose from death defeated man's archenemy and is Lord over heaven and earth, life and death. The aborted woman (and man) must also rise from the tomb of death (abortion) but not by her own power but in the power of Him who is Lord of the resurrection. Through Him, in Him

and with Him, the aborted woman can and must seek forgiveness, return and learn to love again in the dimension of that cross (abortion). There is hope and redemption (even for those who participate in abortion) however, this must be sought, asked for and accepted. The journey (like that of Calvary) is not easy. There are many “fallings” along the way and “help” is at times required simply to continue carrying the cross but it is possible to continue until “it is finished.” (Jn. 19:30) The journey to Calvary cannot be “aborted” Jesus must make that journey if His promise is to be kept. For the aborted woman the journey back to the Father carrying the imprint of that cross (Jesus carried the real one) ensures not only salvation for her but also an encounter with her baby. Abortion is a heinous sin. This cannot be denied however, we know that there is no sin that Jesus refused to carry on His shoulders. This is our hope for without this hope then surely we are lost.

Shelley’s Story. (Not her real name, but the rest of the details are hers).

My name is Shelley, I am married and I have three children. I have had three abortions over the past sixteen years. The fathers of these children were my first boyfriend when I was 17 years old and the man who is now my husband. My parents and my boyfriend (then) thought it was the right thing to do when I got pregnant, because I was still at school but I never wanted an abortion. I always thought it was my baby and that it was a baby and not a piece of “tissue.” I couldn’t fight the opposition so it was easier to give in and have the abortion instead of trying to fight this on my own. My boyfriend also said that he would leave me if I didn’t go through with it. In the end he did leave anyway.

The other two abortions happened years later. I was living with my new boyfriend (now husband). We had been living together for a couple years and we already had a child together so I was very surprised when he suggested that I have an abortion. At first I didn’t want to and I fought very hard not to have the abortion but then life at home became so hard and I had another little child so it was easier to do as was expected of me. It was really funny because after the first abortion, I shut down my emotions completely, I didn’t think about it again. I refused. But after this second abortion I could not shut down

everything again, although I did want to. The tears came, and the nightmares, the difficulty with my other child I couldn’t cope, the difficulties with my husband. All I could do was cry all the time. I think I actually got pregnant the third time on purpose because I wanted to have a baby and to love it enough for the other two. I really didn’t care about my husband but I just wanted another baby to make up for the ones I killed. This time I waited till I was 14 weeks pregnant to tell my husband and family so that I couldn’t be forced to have another abortion but my husband’s friend told him of a place I could go to have a later abortion. Again he forced me by saying that he (and my mother) thought that I would not be able to cope with another baby and they wouldn’t help me. Again he threatened to leave me and not support me while I was pregnant. It seemed like there was no other way to go so again I went through with it. After this abortion I no longer could speak to my him or my mother and after a few weeks I started to plan to leave and take our child with me. This I did and have been slowly trying to build my life up again. Its not been easy, I cry a lot and I think its beginning to affect my daughter so I would like to get better before I hurt her a lot. I love her and I don’t want to hurt her but I cant forget my other babies. I wish I had been stronger and able to leave before I killed them. I have now been talking to Anne for 5 months and its getting a bit better. I don’t always like our sessions but the good thing that has happened is that the nightmares are not coming any more. I can sleep at night. So I guess that is a blessing. I still don’t believe that God would ever forgive me or that my babies could ever forgive me but Anne tells me that God does and my babies do love me and want to see me one day. I look forward to this. For now I am learning to go with one day at a time and I really look forward to my days with Anne because when we finish with the session I really believe for a little while that I am Okay and that maybe I am not so awful. It’s a good feeling and its also good to hear Anne tell me how much God loves me. I may not believe it but I really would like to believe it. If there is a God I would like to say thank you and I am sorry anyway, and thank you for sending someone who really understands every feeling that I talk about. Maybe by the time we are finished I might believe.

Shelley. (age –37yrs)

All the details of the above personal story are true however, I have changed her name and some personal details in order to safeguard her privacy. Shelley's story is not unique it is the norm. The numbers of abortion change, the ages change, the boyfriend's/husbands name changes the number of children changes but abortion trauma remains and it remains universally. When I was in Perth several weeks ago, I spoke to a young lady whose boyfriend had forced her into aborting their baby about a year earlier. Since the abortion that stable relationship (which appeared to be heading towards marriage) has come to an end and the girl has embarked on a series of "wrong" relationships. She knows that these relationships are both temporary and "wrong" and that she is placing her life in serious danger, however, as she says "I don't care, I don't like me much anyway." This young woman (22 yrs old) is also experiencing nightmares, unexplainable terror, really diminished self esteem and has embarked on a life of drink, drugs and promiscuity. Her behaviour is classic Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS). Prior to her abortion she was a normal young woman looking forward to life. In love with her boyfriend and looking towards a future with him, and ultimately being a young person growing up in a society that still had not been cruel to her. In the span of a year this young lady has "lost her way" the detour has been a very sharp one and one which will leave its marks on her for the rest of her life.

As I think about all the women I have spoken to over three years and as I thought about the above two cases it is possible to see how devastating an abortion is to an individual, family, and society. In an extract from Births Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 12 November 1998 it was reported that "in 1995/6 there were 95,200 induced abortions recorded in claims on Medicare and public patient hospital records. This is likely to be an underestimate of the total number of abortions performed in Australia." I also believe that the figures quoted are underestimated, however, even if they are not nearly 100,000 babies died in Australia in that year and similarly since then. This means that since 1995/96 – 1998/1999 there have been approximately 400,000 babies who have died in a nation that is not replacing itself.

Further to these 400,000 babies which have died, there have been approximately 400,000 women who have acquiesced to an abortion and

approximately 400,000 fathers who have either forced, colluded, encouraged, or even been ignored in this decision. Indeed the harvest is most bitter.

Today we live in a society, which is intent on self-demolition. The family, the stalwart, and the backbone of every society is crumbling. It can no longer ignore what is happening. To offset this notion of crumbling there are many conferences and talkfests on the "fixing" of the family issue. Many speakers propose ideas on remedy, however, the remedy is really very simple and staring at us right in the face. Unless abortion is dealt with then the family will breakdown irretrievably. Let me explain:

Abortion is not simply the killing of a baby. It is more than that. It goes to the very heart of humanity, and the very heart of humanity is the family. It is within this structure that society finds its health. It is within this structure that society finds its *raison d'être* and it is within this structure that society will continue into the future. Without the family structure there will be a collapse because the bonds which unite families, extended families, relatives, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and others will without this structure slowly disintegrate. The "goods" of family, that is, children, love, nurturing, protection, guidance will be slowly replaced by mechanized structures finally leading to nihilism.

We know that abortion leaves in its wake very traumatized men and women. These same men and women are then expected to move into a familial structure and proceed to bring forth and then raise happy families. *THIS CANNOT BE* because the psychological and spiritual nature of the abortion trauma will not permit this to happen. I have only seen just over 100 men and women and I know what has happened to their families. Now multiply this by ten thousand (10,000) and it will be easy to work out the damaged humans walking around Australia today. This is only Australia. The rest of the world has not fared any better, indeed in some nations it is much worse.

Yes we do need to put a buffer around the family. It needs to be protected against the onslaught. However, this buffer must start with the truth, and that is that all children are valuable. That all families are precious. That all babies are designed by God and He is in control and His design is "good" and most importantly that

abortion kills not only a tiny helpless life but in its blueprint is the mechanism for societal demise. Abortion, we know destroys an individual's peace of heart and mind. Without peace of heart and mind it becomes impossible to pass these on. We can only pass on what we have inherited. If we inherit love we pass on love, if we inherit woundedness we can only pass on woundedness and so it continues.

Yes there should be a deep concern for "the family" because it is society's best guarantee for the future. However, looking for novel ways of solving the problem will not work. The family needs to strengthen its bonds by protecting its weakest members that is the tiny and the frail. Unless this happens no amount of intellectual discussion will do a jot of good. Further families need to believe that this charism (family) is divinely designed and this being so it is the best way of ensuring that the command to be "fruitful and multiply" is obeyed. God again needs to wear the number one guernsey and neighbour needs to wear number two.

Before I conclude I would like to ask all my readers and especially priest friends to please pray and maybe offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the names that I will include in the newsletter each month. Some of these men and women have moved on however, I believe that it will take a lifetime of striving against the tempter whose aim is to tempt towards despair. For this month please pray for Anna, Hannah, Paula, Melinda, Shelley, Kevin G and Jon. Cathie. Next month there will be another list of names. Someone who has experienced an abortion will always (even when forgiven) live with a terrible regret. Regret is lonely.

In conclusion I would like to thank those who correspond with me and those who support me in any way that they can. It really, really is much appreciated. The rooms are progressing slowly. I have actually moved all the counselling into the rooms so that it is out of the home. This is much better for the family. At the moment the rooms are still fairly empty although I have bought several settees, small fridge, small microwave, kettle, office desk and office chair and "things" to make tea and coffee with (absolutely cannot do without these!!) The other 2 rooms will be dressed as the opportunity arises. These two rooms will eventually be waiting room and utility room, kitchen, storage etc. At the moment I am contemplating placing an advertisement in local papers and the Catholic newspaper for Melbourne. However, I have to do this slowly as I don't know how much more I can deal with. More next month.

For now,
May the Lord Bless and keep you.

Anne Lastman
Founder-Victims of Abortion.

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