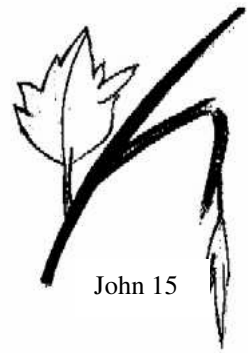


BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

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Welcome.

It was with enormous sadness that I learned of the death of Br. Andrew, the Jesuit missionary priest and colleague of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Together with Mother Teresa he founded the Brothers of the Missionaries of Charity. His death together with that of my father in law (Abraham Lastman) coming together in early October seemed to bode not well. Br. Andrew was a strong supporter of mine (in all ways) and it was always a pleasure to talk to him or to read his short notes to me. Indeed I was so in awe of his humility. His gentleness and his kind words about everyone. When standing near him there was always a sense of peace which seemed to emanate from him and made me not want to move from his presence. My goodness his smile lit his face with a special glow. May he now rest in the peace of Him whom he has served most faithfully. (*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let your light shine upon them. May they rest in your peace.*)

Whilst the month of October is traditionally the month of Mary and the month of the Rosary, for me this month has been a particularly busy one. Many new calls were received and attended to. Indeed I began seeing 7 new women. Two who needed only several sessions to talk through their feelings. These did not wish to discuss religious beliefs of feelings and only needed to understand their ambivalence and dissonance. As I saw them out the door I knew that it wasn't over for them however, I must respect their wishes and freedom. The others continue with me.

Of particular distress for me this month were several calls by very young women who have recently had abortions. By young women I mean 15 yr. old and nearly 17 year old. Both of these young women were only recently aborted and both were from Catholic Schools. As I spoke to these girls and listened to them I

think I began to quietly seethe. I did not seethe at them but at what I was hearing. Whilst both of these two girls were from different schools and different family backgrounds and even different psychological development, the story they told could have been rehearsed verbatim.

On enquiry I was told that yes they had had sex education classes. That abortion was discussed but really not much was said about it. That sex education classes "were really good because they explained things to us" but *Absolutely nothing about the sacredness of human life. Absolutely nothing about possible dangers of abortion. Absolutely nothing about the humanity of the child to be aborted and absolutely nothing about the lifelong grief that will be associated with abortion.*

I understand that for the educator within Catholic school setting it is more difficult to today than in past eras because the classroom milieu is changed. I understand that the classroom is made up of multi cultural and multi faith students and that the teacher is encouraged to be all things to all people. However, unless something is done we are heading for disaster because younger and younger girls are undergoing an abortion procedure and we will reach a time when it is simply another hiccup and then continue.

As I listened to these young women and their innocence about sexual matters I was shocked to the core that they had undergone a procedure which was potentially serious physically and definitely serious psychologically and spiritually, yet they had not even been told or explained what they were doing.

I understand that educators in Catholic schools today do not need to be Catholics or practicing Catholics and that those teaching programs on life do not need to believe that life is "sacred" but my goodness, unless this is begun to be

taught, that is, that life is sacred. That sexuality is sacred. That chastity is acceptable and desirable then I dread for the future of our young people. Our educators need to take responsibility for those that are placed in their care. They need to exhibit integrity. They need to understand that young people have an inbuilt “porkie pie” detector and when an educator does not believe or teach a truth, the young will pick up on that lack of conviction and refuse to believe anything else that is taught to them. Matters of life and death should not be left to the whims of educators who do not believe that life is sacred and it is only mechanistic exercise with a biological and physiological slant.

Students need to be always presented with the ideal. They need to hear the ideal. They need to know that even if the ideal is absent from their milieu and lives that indeed it still exists. That it has not been destroyed. Post Abortion Grief in fifteen and nearly seventeen-year-olds is a sign that the ideal is still exerting some influence in their lives. Post Abortion grief in ones so young clearly shows that the sense of mystery and “goodness” is still present. “Mrs Lastman I killed my baby and I didn’t mean to. I didn’t want to be pregnant but I didn’t want to kill my baby.” (Sally, 15yrs) “Do you think that I will ever forget?” These are words of a young woman who is really hurt. These are words of someone saying it was the problem that I didn’t want and I didn’t know how to deal with. It was not the baby that I didn’t want.

Of grievous concern to me is that on the issue of abortion, students are not being facilitated with all the available information concerning the procedure. Concerning fetal development. Concerning post abortion trauma and grief. Concerning life long grief. Concerning the increased risk of breast cancer Concerning possible future infertility and it is of grievous concern to me that instead of issues like abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, cloning being discussed with students and always with the “sacredness” slant, ethical issue like “Just War theory” is discussed. Of course this theory is a good theory to discuss and debate however, for the students the “Just War Theory” is far removed from their lives. This theory is safe and far removed both from the teacher, the students and the society in which they live. It is a theory which can be discussed unemotionally because the possibility

is that the students will not have been in any way impacted by war itself. With such a theory it is easy to decide who is the “enemy” because the “enemy” is hypothetical. The “enemy” is distant or merely on paper and not real, thus cannot cause the students or teacher any undue harm or distress.

Today in Australia there are approximately 100-140,000 abortions annually and hidden within this figure is a percentage of students who abort a pregnancy without even their parent’s knowledge. The abortion is carried out on the young woman and with only minimal counselling (where there is any at all) either by school counsellor or maybe a favored teacher. By counselling what is meant is that the young woman’s situation is appraised and the abortion is proceeded with. Most often the young women are encouraged to abort simply by highlighting the difficulties which the pregnancy will present and the “quick fix” which is abortion. Indeed post abortion imagery will be one where the student will be encouraged to visualize herself as being “sad” for a few days and then a return to pre abortion state without anyone being the wiser. This is NEVER the reality. The reality is that no abortion will go unremembered. No abortion will cause little or no discomfort. Indeed what does occur is that the abortion will serve to change the spirituality and the psychology of the young student.

For educators who are mandated to educate on social issues it is absolutely imperative to understand the outcome of abortion. It is imperative that educators be themselves informed about the reality of the damage of abortion and the suffering, which is the outcome of such a procedure.

It is my contention that we can no longer tread lightly on this issue. Between the spiritual, psychological, physical and the now widely accepted increased risk of breast cancer, abortion can no longer be offered as an easy “option” to a difficult problem because the “easy option” will be what becomes the destructive option for this generation and future ones.

“I Have Loved You”

As I counselled young Sally and young Leah (independently) I saw the unspeakable

connection that there exists between even an unwilling mother and her infant. There is an unspeakable intimacy between them, which no amount of dissuasion will remove. The infant has fed from its mother. It has been sustained by her. It connected with her and even in her “unwilling” state she could not help but respond. Both Leah and Sally unbeknownst to one another virtually said the same things. They made the same comments and clearly were similarly affected. It is interesting that both made this comment “after the abortion I felt empty-it was as if something was taken from me and it left a big space.” And further “I can’t seem to fill that space with anything.” This comment about emptiness is common. When asked how she felt immediately following the abortion a woman will most often respond, “at first I felt a sense of relief as now the problem was over, but immediately there was a sense of loss, of emptiness of something missing.” Even where the abortion was considered as the right decision for the time, the comment was still that there was a sense of desolation. Perhaps the best that I can deduce from this is that even in this brief time in the womb the infant has influenced the mother and developed a *bond of love* between them. Indeed it is this bond which I believe leads to post abortion grief.

Letters:

Two weeks ago I received a letter which was both encouraging and disturbing. Encouraging for me because the writer was complimentary and it is always lovely to receive compliments but disturbing in another way. I will quote a few lines:

“I came across your newsletter at a friend’s house and read it. I thought it was good that there is now someone who actually offers counselling to women who have had abortions. When I had my abortion 55 years ago there was no one I could even talk to. I cried so much for that baby and I regretted my decision so much. You see I have never married or had a child again. That was my only chance of being a mother and I botched it up. I have lived all these years and not a single day has gone by without me remembering my baby. I was 14 weeks pregnant at the time of the abortion and I was so sure I was having a little girl. In fact I have a beautiful secret name for her. I don’t blame anyone for that decision. No one even knew or knows that I have had an abortion, but I want to say this you, never forget an abortion because it

leaves an emptiness which cannot be filled with anything else. I am much older now and as I come nearer to the end I seem to think about it more often. I wonder what might have been. I miss my girl so much. I have friends and nephews and nieces and I love them dearly but I would give anything to have my daughter back. I have never been a religious person but what if there is a God and he hates me and my daughter hates me.”..... (Valerie)

I am unable to respond to the letter writer because it was anonymous but I would encourage her if she reads this newsletter to contact me (mobile please). But even if this lady does not make contact I think that by being able to speak/write about it (letter was much longer) to someone she has let some of the steam out of the pressure cooker. Why I mentioned this particular letter is because I would like to hear from her but also to share with the readers the reality that abortion does not go away. It is never forgotten. When young Sally (15 yrs old) asked if she would ever forget I had to gently say that no she would not forget but with God’s help in time it won’t hurt so much. It also brought to mind the words of Scripture and how true and prophetic they are:

*Does a woman forget the baby at her breast,
Or fail to cherish to son of her womb?
Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you.
(Is.49:15)*

The tone of these words is that it is inconceivable that a mother will forget the child of her womb, but even if the unthinkable happens then God will never forget. It is my humble contention that the mother will also never forget. She may suppress the experience. She may deny the reality that she had an abortion or even the reality that it mattered greatly, the loss of her child, but she will never ever ever forget. Mothers simply were not designed that way. They were designed to love and nurture and it is only in our fallen nature that at times this becomes disfigured. No longer looking like the human being is intended.

This reality of great loss with the abortion of a child was recently explained to me from different perspective. One set of grandparents told me of their grief and loss. They had a fierce loyalty to their daughter who had aborted without discussing it with them (she is 36 yrs old) but also they felt a sense of deep loss of their grandchild. They explained how much they would have helped out and wanted and loved the

baby. Further they felt they could not talk to their daughter because she had decided that she did not want to discuss the matter and in order not to hurt her they could not speak about their own hurt. The Pain of abortion is like a paralyzing ripple. It courses onwards and creates many victims along the way.

Human/ Pig Embryo.

With over 40-50,000,000 infants aborted annually (globally) it came as no surprise to hear that Melbourne research group has sought to patent (in Europe) a thirty two cell embryo with a genetic make up human-pig. Fortunately, due to international criticism at this time the patent was withdrawn. However, having withdrawn it this time does not necessarily mean that the intention, knowledge and experimentation that has gone on to reach such a stage will suddenly be forgotten and never used again. I am of the suspicion that if we are told that experimentation has reached this stage then indeed it is more advanced than any of us would imagine. It is reported that the procedure used was “the transference of a human cell’s nucleus into a pig’s egg to allow it to revert to a potentially useful type of stem cell.” Further in the same news report it was stated that “Bioethicists in Europe and elsewhere were reportedly deeply concerned with the patents because they believed that they devalued human life.” (ZE00100923) It is an irony that the words “devalued human life” were used. Indeed 50,000,000 times annually human life is devalued yet there is only a whimper. These research antics have proceeded because of the silence of the majority. When the Holy Father called our society a “culture of death” indeed, like past pontiffs he was being most prophetic. I mention this little piece of information not to shock but to say please

become involved. Whatever and whichever way is possible become involved. Interspecies experimentation becomes possible when abortion, partial birth abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia are implicitly accepted. When life has become so cheapened then it becomes possible to use the genetic materials of life to toy with and experiment at will.

This month I would like to ask for prayers especially for Maria, Sally, Leah, Sharon, Grace, Sophia, Roger, Melissa, Valerie. For my Priest friends a Mass for any or all the above would be appreciated. Please also pray for Mark and Jonathon. Thank you to those who supported me last month it was really appreciated and I would humbly ask that support is continued. Please pray for me as I have about 7 public speaking engagements in the next 4-6 weeks and I am looking at writing something for teachers for next year. This of course will have to be approved but more about this later. Hopefully as soon as I finish last assignments for Masters degree and catch up on mail and other office “stuff” I will start thinking about the writing. I am also hoping to be in Sydney for a few days mid November 18-22 and hope that those who know me will come to hear my talk and hopefully meet face to face. Human Life International (02 92112793) is sponsoring my trip but I am not sure of the venue. I would love to meet my NSW and of course other friends.

May the Lord Bless and Keep you.



Anne Lastman.

Name _____

Address _____ P/C _____

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

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