

Welcome to this months newsletter.

Several issues back I wrote a newsletter in which the main topic was abortion/suicide and the relationship between these two. I did receive many calls when I wrote this however, I did not realise how soon after writing I would be confronted again with this very topic. When reading about studies done in this area and the statistics and facts and figures it can become very easy to be distanced from the reality and to simply fill the mind with the data collected and then recited. This week the issue of abortion and suicide came calling into my office and when this happened I realised how amazing and how fragile is the human mind and above all how finely tuned are the heart and mind and when one of these is out of balance the result can be tragic. Let me explain:

Since the last newsletter I have had an opportunity to speak to a young woman who is grieving deeply over the suicide death of her best friend. Her friend (Jane-not her real name) committed suicide just over a year ago and this young woman in front of me whom I will call Samantha (not her real name) is still finding it difficult to reconcile herself to the loss of her best friend.

I met Samantha in a stationery shop. When I handed over a "Victims of Abortion" cheque for office purchases, she looked at me with such sad eyes and simply said "where were you when we needed you?" I knew that behind this comment/question was much pain because it was there close to the surface and easily visible. So I discreetly made arrangements to come back during her lunch time and we could talk. I saw her at a place near her work so that it would not disturb her job and she would be able to talk privately. I sensed that there was much anger, hurt, betrayal in her life and that the pain was really close. This proved to be true.

Samantha's friend Jane (20 years old) became pregnant early last year and when her boyfriend found out he insisted (he *made* her do it-according to Samantha) that she abort the baby or he would leave her. Jane apparently did not want to have the abortion but felt that she could not look after herself and the baby on her own. Jane also had mild schizophrenia, which according to Samantha, was under control. Samantha and Jane's boyfriend took Jane to the abortion facility and waited whilst the procedure was carried out. Jane, throughout all of this was silent-she refused to speak, discuss, look at anyone. She resignedly went in had the abortion, was driven home and didn't want anyone to stay with her that day. From that day onwards Jane was never the same again. She began "forgetting" to take her medication. Stayed constantly in her room. She lost her job and simply withdrew. The last time that Samantha saw her friend Jane, Jane mentioned that she often "heard" the baby cry and call to her. Samantha became very concerned for her friend but couldn't do anymore than be with her as much as she was allowed. Four months following the abortion Jane overdosed. She was found dead in her bedroom. The last thing that she had spoken about to her friend Samantha was that she wanted to be with her baby because her baby was "crying and needed her."

Since the death, Samantha has experienced much grief and a real sense of failure. She feels that she has failed her friend and she should have been more supportive. She is also angry with Jane's boyfriend because she believes that if he had supported Jane with the pregnancy then Jane would still be alive. Further, she is

BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

experiencing anger at the boyfriend because no sooner had the funeral been then he found someone else. Her best friend had died because of him and he had uncaringly moved on. There is an enormous amount of sadness, anger and guilt in the life of this young person. There is much suffering because she feels she should have done more. Tried harder instead of accommodating her friend's request to be left alone.

As we sat and talked and I listened, I was reminded of how far the tentacles of pain inflicted by the abortion *holocaust* spread. More and more we are understanding the enormity of abortion damage and pain. Samantha understands that her friend suffered schizophrenia. She understands that her mental health was always delicate and further she understands that she cannot be held fully responsible for her friend's wellbeing. However, this does not make it any easier for her to remember the nature of her friend's untimely death.

Eternal rest grant to Jane and her baby O Lord and let your light shine upon them and may they rest in your peace....Amen.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND ABORTION

Samantha's story reminded me of a few other cases where abortion had exacerbated the problem of schizophrenia. During my time as an abortion grief counsellor I have encountered at least half a dozen other cases where schizophrenia and abortion had resulted in tragedy or near tragedy. The interesting aspect about abortion and schizophrenia is that the women all use the same terminology when talking about experiences post abortion. Before the abortion they "heard" voices after the abortion they "heard" their baby's voice. The child cries, calls, beckons and the mother feels that she needs to go to the child. There is a strong sense of "need" of both the mother and the child and the only way to fulfill this need is to "go."

Prof. Phillip Ney and other researchers have investigated mental health issues and abortion and have found that indeed there are no indications for abortion. Instead it was found that women with psychiatric issues who had an abortion were more than 53% more likely than delivering women to be admitted for psychiatric care. Prof P Ney reporting on research into mental health illness reported that those aborting for psychological reasons always fared much worse post abortion. Indeed it was found abortion is always contra indicated. "Depression following selective abortion may be as high as 95% among women and as high as 82% among men studied and was greater than that usually associated with elective abortion for psychosocial indications or with delivery of a stillborn." (Blumberg, BD; Golbus, M S, Hanson, K H. *The psychological sequelae of abortion performed for a genetic condition*. American Journal of of Obstetrics and Gynaecology 1975, 122: pp 799-808)

My own experience with women who have had mental health issues and whose abortion was treated as a minor consequence has been that these women cannot and will not want to recover until their abortion is dealt with and taken seriously. Many a time I have heard the cry "I have told my psychiatrist/ psychologist/ psychotherapist about the abortion but he/she didn't think it was important. That that was not where my problem lies." I wish to say this, unless an abortion is taken seriously because the person presenting is traumatised by it, then the rest of the mental health issues cannot even begin to be truthfully faced and dealt with. Indeed whilst I can appreciate that anti depressants and palliative measures are necessary in order to bring some balance to the individual suffering, long term

these cannot help. Neglect of this important event (abortion) in the life of the individual will not ameliorate her situation, rather it is intensified. A practitioner may not personally consider that an aborted child warrants time and effort but the person presenting may believe that this ‘ache producing’ event is the most important event in her life. To this end, if it is important for the person presenting, it must be more important for her practitioner to help her deal with it. I think however, that the reason why mental health professionals find it difficult to deal with an abortion issue is the reality that abortion pain is related to psychic pain. An individual’s spirit is in pain and is crying out for healing which comes from God. Unless a mental health practitioner can deal with a person’s own religious beliefs and the meaning of “life” then the practitioner and client would be better served to refer the client to someone (like me) who can speak about God and mercy and love and forgiveness. Abortion pain can only be healed through reconciliation between God, child and parents or those who insisted on the abortion. Other pseudo healing is just that. Temporary “feel good.”

A SPECIAL MASS.

All has not been sad this past month. In fact on Friday night (Mar 2) we celebrated a very special Mass for a very special young baby whose name is John. Perhaps this is what keeps me really and truly going. The Mass for this aborted baby was attended by myself and a friend, the mother of the baby, Sharon, and the father of the baby Roger who actually travelled from interstate to be present at the Mass. This young couple are no longer together (this is the usual following an abortion) however, they have remained friends and he continues to be mindful of her welfare. Throughout the counselling sessions she, (having been with me since about July 2000) has faithfully come to the sessions every week. The young man has also acted in a responsible way and has come to Melbourne every time I have asked it of him. Roger (a Catholic) has also come for counselling several times and returned to the sacraments, whilst Sharon (Non Catholic - non religious) has devoutly participated in two Masses for her infant. On the feast of the Holy Innocents was the first Mass and last Friday night, the second. Indeed now there is a request for a plaque with the infant’s name, to be installed in the Garden of the Innocents. It is really good.

There are many moments when I experience doubts about my effectiveness. Of wondering if the difficulties are worthwhile. If I really make any difference. Nights like Friday night and the knowledge that I have made a small difference (with your prayerful help and the Lord’s guidance of course) seem to eventually win through and whilst the counselling sessions for Sharon have not completed yet, we are now on the homeward stretch. Today she knows that God loves her and forgives her. She knows that her baby will await for her until the appropriate time and she is avowedly pro life. She has personally asked Jesus to forgive her and to be a part of her life. What happens from here can only be good.

Thank you Fr Victor for the very beautiful Mass last Friday night and all the other first Fridays that I have had someone there and thank you Lydia for the whole preparations. Bless you both for this wonderful opportunity for the healing of the broken and wounded.

LETTERS PAGE:

In my last newsletter I asked that some of you let me know what you thought of the newsletters. Whether they were difficult, too heavy, etc.etc. Thank you to all those who took the time to write or to ring and let me know. Overall the consensus appears to be that the new format is "good." That I should not professionally print them because it would be a waste of money as the standard is good as it is. The content was deemed to be a "little heavy" but nonetheless the "truth has to be told" and to keep going. Samples of some letters received:

"Congratulations on the latest newsletter. I wouldn't read it any more avidly if it were in a more professional form." Mr & Mrs B & M, Sc. Melb.

"Anne, content is really good but its too long and too heavy, it takes me three days to get through it and then I need to read it again." Mrs J. O. WA

"Dear Anne, current newsletter-beautiful! I felt it had the touch of the Lord Upon it. Present format-most acceptable to me and I feel those who are With you in spirit would feel the same. Present format is professional." Your brother in Christ-Qld.

"Firstly I feel you have reached a good balance in your newsletters. The length is good and the style perfect for the information you are giving. I personally like the real life stories you put in. It makes everything seem so much more real and immediate. If you added more anecdotes this reader would be very happy! I like the new layout its very professional and clean cut." Jane. Syd.

For now I will continue as it is. Thank you to those who responded to the call for fund support. Thank you to Fr. Leo K. for your help. Thank you to my "brother in Christ" you are both wonderful. Thank you to my wonderful friends who regularly support me in one way or another. I appreciate you. For now please, please pray for Sharon, Roger, Carol, Teresa, Sophia, Josephine, Frank, Angela, Leanne. Please pray especially for Josephine, Frank and Angela, Leanne. This is important.

May the Lord Bless and keep you.



Anne Lastman

Name _____

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Donation Newsletter

I *would/would not* like to be on your mailing list.

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