

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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Guest Editorial

***Sophia**

Ahh where to start.....my name is Sophia and I live in Sydney. I am 27 years of age. Anne has asked me to write my story.

The best way to describe the changes that have occurred in my life would be to compare it to an Extreme Makeover and I mean Extreme!

I started seeing Anne approximately 15 months ago after seeing a string of counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists, to no avail. They didn't work for me because I was never challenged and I was never understood. It was partly my fault too because I never trusted them with my secret. How could I when they were busy looking at the clock hanging behind me and wondering when my 45 minutes would be up? They never gave me homework either. Anyone who knows Anne knows about the homework! In fact I know this is part of my homework for this week.

I began speaking to Anne by phone on a weekly basis after being referred to her by a friend. She hadn't done phone counselling before but I begged her and I also promised never to hang up if things got difficult. I was terrified, but Anne made me feel so loved and so safe that the trust between us soon grew and it was like she could read my thoughts just by my tone of voice. I would then travel to Melbourne every 3 months or so to spend some face-to-face time with her. But enough about Anne...this is about me! (See what happens Anne when you give someone their life back)

I was sexually abused as a child from an early age by my stepfather. He would beat my brother and torment him mentally to buy my silence and this also had the effect of driving a wedge between my brother and I because he resented me for never getting into trouble, which was how it appeared on the surface. My brother never knew what was happening behind the scenes until I found the courage to tell him 20 years later. As a consequence, we were never close as children and fought continually, even into early adulthood. This is one of my biggest regrets; not including the suffering my Mother has endured as a result of this, apart from anything else. I.e. the guilt, shame, self-loathing etc. The years my brother and I lost and the hate and resentment he felt towards me made me shrivel. He is still

BROKEN BRANCHES



punishing himself for it now, even though he doesn't speak of it, I know he does. I feel it and I know Mum does too.

My life had been on a continual downward spiral ever since. I felt so dirty and worthless. How the hell could anyone love me? I worked bloody hard never to let the outside world know how I felt. I thought I had done a pretty good job, all things considered. The string of bad relationships, one after the other, might have been a bit of a give away and it was my brother who had picked up on this just before my Wedding. We were reminiscing over one too many drinks (alcohol has seen me through and far too much of it, as it has been for my brother.) about my past boyfriends. Conversation naturally progressed to childhood and how much we had hated it. He asked me what I had to hate about it because as far as he was concerned, I had been given everything, and so I told him. It seemed like the right time. However, I thought I had killed him. He was so crushed and now I understand why. I had no idea just how much he had hated/resented me until that moment when he became instantly flooded with so much guilt. It was a heart breaking to watch. He was inconsolable and afterwards became hell bent on revenge. I had always been confused as to why he hated me until then. I actually thought he was an ungrateful bastard for behaving the way he did. I had spent my entire childhood trying to protect him. But how could he have known when I kept the secret. There was no way he could have known. It was not his fault. It was not my fault. We survived. I consider us lucky. Now we know and we work very hard on our relationship. We are very protective of each other. If there is a positive to come out of this it is that we are so close and so honest with each other. There is nothing we wouldn't do for the other and nothing we couldn't say.

I consider myself a very fortunate person because now I love myself and I love my life. (Something I never thought I would say, especially the loving myself bit). I love the people I have around me. I have a very good network of family and friends. I hated myself for so many years that I never thought it would be any different. My world was a very dark place and I was enjoying the sensation until I realized there is only so much the people that love you can tolerate. I was destroying my marriage and I didn't care. But something incredible happened. My husband meant what he said in his vows. "No matter what" and I thought "I am drowning and I am taking him with me. This is not fair." Could I live without him? The answer was a resounding "No". I had to do something. This set me on the path to Anne.

You can see how lucky I am. He (my husband) is still loving me and in fact all my relationships have also improved. I have found my Dad again after 11 years and we are working on our relationship as he is with my brother. It was my gift to my brother to find Dad (at Anne's urging) again, and it has all worked out really well. There are still issues to be worked through, we are all aware of this, but it is a start.

Like Anne says, healing is like “ripples in a pond”. The whole family is slowly healing. Because I dared to allow myself to be helped and healed first. Mum has now reconciled with her Mother, we are in touch with my cousin again, and whom we treasured and thought we had lost. Auntie Jenny and Uncle Fred want to know us, and love us and be involved in our lives. Did I mention I have a half brother? We have a whole other family that loves us just because we are. This has just exploded my mind. I think this is so incredible but then, this is the way family should be. It was, until recently, just a foreign concept to me.

Do I believe in God? I had always considered myself an atheist. I didn't want to be an atheist but I liked the idea of being a recalcitrant and I was so bitter for so long. Now I can see how blessed my life has been so as far as my spirituality is concerned, I do believe in the cosmos, in a higher being. It may not be your traditional God but I do believe in something. I know this may sound flippant but I don't mean it to be. I haven't really evolved my relationship with this fully yet so I am not doing the best job at describing it, but yes, I do believe in A God.

Anne has helped me to see my life from every angle and from a different perspective. It is easy to hate but it is hard to find compassion. With her help I have found compassion. It has been hard work...really hard work, (Anne didn't make it easy with the tasks she set me every week) but I would do it all again to bring me to where it has today and I will continue to work hard for as long as it takes. Anne really has given me my life back. I will never in a million years, be able to thank her enough. She has given me my nip and tuck so to speak!

I love you Anne.

P.S. “Doesn't your husband deserve a gift?” I hear you ask. (Anne always asks this) Yes he does. The most precious gift of all...we are working on it!

*Thank you darling Sophia * (not her real name) and thank you to all my readers you have actually been praying for this young person for a long time. Today as you can see (and read) she literally shines. She has had to overcome many obstacles but she has faithfully worked with them. Everything I have asked of her she has done and today we are seeing the fruits, which come when someone who wanted to be really healed and who has a heart filled with compassion and with love. People like this girl help me continue when it looks too hard. Sophia's whole story is worthy of a book and I hope that one day she will be able to write it (a task for the future) because it will be an inspiration to anyone who has been sexually abused. It is possible to see that life and deep love are possible again after such deep trauma- Anne*

Sexual Abuse & Abortion

Two types of traumatic losses which render the world of the victim asunder are the losses experienced through sexual abuse, especially sexual abuse against a child and more specifically incest, and also induced abortion. The populations experiencing these types of abuse and trauma are different (child and woman generally) yet the grief experienced by both types of population share many similarities.

Abortion, as with sexual abuse introduces into the victim a “death imprint” Abortion as with sexual abuse introduces into the ontological essence of the person a notion of “death” because whilst abortion may be deemed a legal and a “rights” issue a woman’s design has no inscription imprinted within it to cope with a termination of her pregnancy.

Child sexual abuse also introduces into the essence of the human being a new and alien imprint. Indeed this “death imprint” speaks of a death of innocence. Both of these two forms of death (abortion & sexual abuse) have within them a high degree of grotesqueness, ugliness and absurdity. The various comments from abortive women have been “it was and is so awful what I have done” and those who have been sexually abused grieve for the loss (through psychological death) of the person they should have become. They grieve for the loss of their original life story.

Sexual abuse, as with abortion, is not only prevalent in society and within every strata of society but also still remains one of those social taboos. It is a topic, which is still whispered about, especially in polite society. However, this “silence” must not by default lead to the assumption that it no longer exists and that today we live in an unoffending society. The reality is that sexual abuse exists, and more so today, because of the society in which we live, than in past societies.

I would contend that sexual abuse is more prevalent than in the past because we have new forms of sexual abuse of young. We know of the old types of abuse (familial, friendship, illicit friendships) but today we have abuse of the young by the visual methods. The senses of the young and very young are constantly assaulted by images which they are not equipped to process.

Media, movies, videos, DVDs, games, sex education programmes from too early an age, news programs blaring with stories of assault by known figures, heroes and idols abusing their position and then seemingly getting away with it etc.etc. This is violation of innocents. Now children are being asked to integrate family structures which are not the norm, and seeing and living with images which they cannot understand but must learn to accept as the normal. There appears to me to be an agenda for the corruption of the young and the as young as possible. We are asking the too young to accept differences which are outside of the “normal day to day experience” (DSM V). These differences are not differences which enhance the life of the child but set the child apart as “different” and in the long term what this being different means to them for their life and their development and their understanding of themselves.

Sexual abuse is outside the normal of a child, abortion (death experience) is outside the normal of a child or woman or man. It is outside of the normal yet there is an insistence that it be accepted as the normal. “Death” (abortion) either physical or spiritual or psychological (innocence) is not normal part of human condition, it is an interloper and causes guilt and terror and imprints into the person’s essence impressions of pain and impressions of continuing bonds of negative attachments.

Continuing bonds whether negative or positive enable relationships to continue and it is here that healing must needs be. Negative attachment (mainly guilt, shame) to an aborted foetal child can and does at times cause a catalogue of mental health problems. Negative attachment to a sexual abuser (fear) causes the same; the list of mental health problems following sexual abuse is legion. (see Sophia story) Work at the site of continuing bonds (severing gently the bonds) can help to bring some sort of healing to the wounded and this type of work must be pursued.

To my way of thinking and understanding dealing with the wounds inherent in sexual abuse and/or abortion has become not only important but imperative, if we are to salvage family as we know it, and life with its inherent sacredness as we have understood to date. These wounds misshape expectations and beliefs and create a type of hybrid humanity devoid of the essence that we call truly human.

NEWS ARTICLE.

Recently in our daily newspaper (herald Sun July 9) a story was run which on first reading sounded really good. However, I kept returning to it as something, I felt, was quite amiss. The story was about a young mother/ psychologist who has developed a programme to teach mothers how to be mothers! And this is where I kept returning. We have reached a stage where mothers have to be taught to be mothers...Why? Is motherhood a new something which the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have developed? My understanding is that women have inscribed within their being (woman) the notion of "motherhood" and this inscription is activated, nurtured and enhanced and learned from early life by observing and learning and practising. And here I think lies the problem.

Could the difficulties with "mothering" today be related to absent mothers while the children are growing? Can putting the children into different care facilities, place them in an artificial situation so that what should be learnt about "mothering" cannot be learned because it is not a home situation "with mum" doing what she does, (role model) but a place of babysitting with different others who have a daily program and time frame for all activities. Has the cliché "quality time rather than quantity time" robbed future "mothers" and future "fathers" of their right to progressive experiential learning vital to their wellbeing? I felt sad that we have reached a time when mothers have to be taught how to be mothers. Is this why young men have no sense of being male because they have not learned how to be male? What has society done?

I also suspect that there are many other reasons for this, not least of which many young mothers today go into marriage and motherhood having first rejected a "motherhood and a mothering" (abortion). Where there is this in the woman's personal history (or the man's) we know from studies that motherhood and mothering of other children becomes difficult.

My concern with this article was not as a criticism but as a sadness that we have come to the point where mothers have to be taught how to be mothers. What have mothers done from time immemorial except watched their own mothers at work and do

the same or same with differences. Perhaps today there is no opportunity for the child to observe and to learn. The culture of death has not only meant a real death mentality, but also death via the medium of psychological and spiritual neglect. Today we are a society more supposedly book learned than in any past era, yet we have learned little.

Letter (1)

“For nearly ten years, my soul has been disturbed by the unnecessary taking of human life from the most terrible scenario of abortion. Much time and many letters I have had published on this most serious issue of the value of God’s gift of life on earth! Some years ago, I connected to what Anne Lastman has been endeavouring to do in a Ministry that has so inspired my soul even further towards this issue. She has certainly been sent by God to alert comfort, inspire and courageously bring home to those who wish to listen- the seriousness of what it all involves!!

Over the past 4-5 months, my wife has been preparing for death! Having had a Hysterectomy operation early this year, and the discovery of a bad case of spreading ovarian cancer, all looked gloom and doom. The situation had no real possibilities of cure because it was too late. On the 24th May (at Calvary Hospital here in Adelaide) the Surgeon was able to defy the odds and remove all cancer visible in a marathon operation. He said, “something had to be working from above, as it was beyond my expectations.”

A mountain of prayer was offered through the Adelaide Catholic Diocesan Centre, where I work, and from so many friends and acquaintances. Just a further example of THE POWER OF PRAYER!! Let us all continue to support Anne with her inspired mission of saving life and helping those who are involved with abortion- and realise that God simply re acts to our efforts and good works accordingly to our choices of free will. We are either “in or out of the trenches.”!!

With all God’s blessings

Errol P Duke

Thank dear Errol for the kind words,. Please continue to pray for Joanna and Errol and their son Aaron. Some people have high mountains to climb.
Anne

Request.

The documentary “My Foetus” is to be shown on Compass on August 8. This will help make aware the horror, which is abortion. However, I am in two minds about showing this programme, there could be possibilities for good (showing what abortion does) I fear that there may also be possibilities for great damage, especially if young people (youthful abortees) see this. The young who have had abortions (most of the abortions today) and who

have been in denial over foetal development may have an adverse reaction. I would ask any teachers, principals, priests, pastors, and those in the care of youth (and others) please make available time to help anyone that is in need. It is one thing for us pro lifers to shout, "look we were right, we kept telling you it was a baby." But Mercy and justice demands compassion on those who have already been there and cannot undo what has been done. Remember the mental health of someone who had an abortion is already weakened, so please take care. Could I also suggest that teachers and youth workers make possible a time to talk about the programme but also about life matters. This film can be a life giving opportunity or wound inflicting opportunity. It can also be a flash in the pan or it can be a *Kairos* moment (a decisive moment) when things began to change, when eyes were opened and the truth was seen.

Thank you's

Thank you to those who responded to my call for funds, again it appears that it is the usual small group (15-20) people) who responds. Thank you to the 3 anonymous donors. Thank you also to those who sent cards, flowers and called and wrote on hearing of the death of my father. I have appreciated your care for me. Please continue to pray for those on my care list. Louise Sarah, (1) Edward, Vesta, Simon, Jamie, Cathy, Jodie, Victoria, Julie, Melissa, Jason, Kerrie, Marie, Margaret, Susan, Libby, Sarah (2) Darren, Donna, Sally, Ellie Plus Silvia and Toni, June, Naomi (new), **I continue to need your loving support.**

Nicholas wishes to tell his loyal fans that he will write a masterpiece for the next issue. He tells me he has been busy with uni and exams and work (ho hum! as if he is the only one working) But I will hold him to his promise.

God Bless



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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