

Broken Branches

Issue 56

Feb/Mar 2007

John 15

"Take courage! God has healing in store for you; so take courage" (Tb. 5:10)

Welcome to 2007.

Hello dear friends and welcome to another year of battling for life and for the health and wellbeing of woman, man, children and society. I hope that you have had a marvellous festive season and lets together hope and pray that the coming year will be filled with many graces.

As I have said in past newsletters this is a work of grace, healing, love, and in some ways of helping to re write the hurtful emotional experiences of post abortive women, men and others. It is about the journey to "plant" the Cross of Christ in all the places of an individual's life, where any abortion/s or any form of abuse has been sown.

The emphasis of my work is on the need of grace for healing and restoration from the emotional damage of abortion and where there is sexual abuse in that woman's (or man's) life to also help as much as possible bring healing for that.

Healing really comes with the person being in touch with the reality of the abortion (and sexual abuse where it exists). What abortion/abuse exactly was/is and the power that this has had over the woman's life. Facing the reality as awful as it is. Accepting the reality that abortion is evil and damaging and contra the woman's own unique and special design, and working towards an understanding, and then integration of the experience, without ever forgetting. This will contribute to her being able to achieve peace and equilibrium into her wounded and anguished existence. Never quite

forgetting but incorporating the experience and from this, as I often say to my "girls" allowing God to make lemonade from the bitterest lemon/s.

Education.

I have been a post abortion grief counsellor for nearly 12 years, and post abortion grief is a definite reality. The statistics and facts and figures are real and tell a definite story. And more and more we are learning that abortion wounds deeply, not only the girl/woman but males, extended family, friends and society. Abortion does not happen in vacuum. The effects of abortion are like the rippling in a pond, continuously spreading, and we don't know where the end of that ripple is. Abortion means the killing of one's own in utero infant and woman was never designed to do that.

Her psychology/equilibrium becomes disturbed and it takes much to bring back some balance and peace. For over thirty years I have remembered, every single day, my two abortions. And whilst I am reconciled with my children and with my God (Catholic) I long for the day when I can hold them and speak with them face to face. I have other children and love these dearly but I hold a special place in my heart and a special love for the other two (3rd was miscarriage) who are not with me.

I have developed a programme and work with abortive women and I love what I do, because it gives me an opportunity to help someone encounter their infant and move that infant from a place of sorrow and heaviness, to joy

A newsletter of Victims of Abortion

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and restfulness in its Mum's heart. Always remembering, but remembering with love and not anguish.

How can we bring to an end this demon abortion? That's probably a whole new question, or even many questions, but from my experience I believe we need to recognise that "EVE" (woman) is saying NO to God again. We need to recognise, that "EVE" is slowly forgetting her unique role as child bearer. She who has been asked to co operate with God in continuing humanity." Eve" has forgotten this. This post modern "EVE" sees herself in a "commercial" role, where her value is measured in how skilled and talented, and commercially creative/viable she is. Her absolute and unique creative talent (as child bearer) is slowly receding from her conscious memory and is being supplanted by a new and false role/ideal.

Do I think that education per se will fix it? NO. When we made sexuality just another subject which we learnt about, and wrote essays about, we made sexuality just another ho hum topic to be discussed and disseminated ad nauseum. We actually removed the holiness and sacredness which should be attributed to it. The "awe-some ness" was removed. This, together with an over sexualised society, we have removed its mysteriousness, and with the removal of the mysterion (*Gk* at times this is called sacramentum) then the mystery which is "life" has also been demeaned or even "aborted."

Statistics about post abortion trauma and grief, can tell us that something serious does happen post abortion, but in a crisis, the facts and

figures will be forgotten. In a crisis pregnancy, for the person in the crisis, the most important thing is to remove the cause of the crisis. Unless there is a deeper knowledge of how holy is that which is within her, she (most often urged by him) will not have ears to hear about the possible wounds and damage until after the event. Then she will have time and he will often be gone. The education that is needed has to go deeper. It's an education of the soul and with that a reclaiming of woman's right to be "WOMAN" "HAWAH" (mother of living). Do I think this will happen soon? Sorry NO. It needs a human crisis of indescribable proportions to bring this about.

In a society which espouses abortions not even as a need but as a "right," I believe that we need a crisis of huge dimensions in order to awaken us to the horror of what is being done to 40 million human beings a year. Every year. Twice the whole population of our country Australia dies yearly, (globally) through intentional abortion, yet little noise is being made in protest. There is protection for trees, seals, whales, elephants (rightly so too) but for the human child in its most vulnerable time there is no voice, just a whimper, of protest.

Please pray for a renewal of the heart of "Eve" and that "Adam" will love her truly, and together welcome the fruit of that love.

Sexual Abuse

During the Christmas break (or at least the break I was supposed to have) I have had to deal with several phone calls and then face to

"We need to recognise that "Eve" is saying NO to God again."

face sessions of counselling where I not only heard about the abortion of the two women that I saw, but also more devastatingly a sexual abuse history within their life. In both cases I have spent quite a few hours with the women just giving them space to talk as they needed. To this date no firm dates have been made for ongoing counselling (children at home from school) but I hope to begin work with them both in the next several weeks. Please pray for Evelyn and Sandy.

What is Sexual abuse? And why is it so damaging?

Sexual abuse is the crossing over of an invisible barrier, by an adult, into the sacred space of a child who is usually dependant on that adult, with the resultant loss of all that is necessary for the health and well being and strong emotional growth of that child. From this invasion or crossing over a certain barrier, results a confusion of personal space and boundaries. This confusion of boundaries occurs, I believe, because the child is forced to comply with the abuse which then leads to loss of sense of knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. What is *her* right and *her*

wrong. A loss of trust, a premature sexualization of her being, and a sense of the grossest abandonment. For a child who is sexually abused her sense of "who" she is, is gone, and I am reminded of a wanderer without a place to rest. A place of safety, love, comfort and peace.

In future action/decisions, even those relating to an abortion decision, there is the sense that there is no idea of what is right or wrong. Her sense of "definites" is either absent completely or has been confused.

This loss of boundary clarity also leads to fear for her own life and her own future. This crossing over of boundaries also leads to the child being forced to lose trust in the ones she is supposed to love and trust most of all, and helps to develop in her an insatiable ongoing need to become "visible" to the world. Seven abortions (in one woman) to me means someone crying out to be seen, to be taken care of, to be helped to feel ok about her life and to be helped to make sense of that life.

The wounds which are caused by sexual abuse of a young person actually help to set the groundwork for that child to self destruct, and

"... 7 abortions to me means someone crying out to be seen..."

sabotage every aspect of her life. The reason for this is quite simple really, because incest/sexual abuse is recorded on *the tabla rasa* (blank page) of the child's emotional life, psychology, spirituality and history. It is like the first writings on a blank page and this writing making a deep imprint. Or even a tape-recording of events on a new tape which then is played and replayed until someone switches the tape off. Thus constantly repeating and reopening the wounds long after the abuse has even ended.

The constant replaying of pain, anger, hatred and violence of self and others, especially

others in the family, who appear to the victim as complicit in the events of abuse, erodes the bonds which should naturally exist, and from this, follows a deep sense of abandonment. Abandonment is a core life experience. It is an inner experience. Its presence prevents "connection" or possibility of a bond to form.

Indeed the abusive "other" is inadvertently given permission to control the abused one's life, and continuing to perpetuate the abuse by the constant replay (in the memory) of the trauma. In this way the pain is re enforced. Recalled, re experienced. The spirit is re wounded. And in this re wounding there is the

groundwork laid out for all other types of abuse to be accepted as "normal."

Forgiveness is the key which stops the tape from playing. This begins to remove the permission to keep the replaying from recurring. However, forgiveness is a long and very painful journey and it's not easy to embark on such a journey, mainly because it even sounds wrong and absurd. But forgiveness when properly understood, allows the journey to be taken so that healing may occur. Without forgiveness it cannot happen and it is the journey, first of all to discover what forgiveness means in the context we are discussing, and then to understand its importance for the severing of the mental videotape and recordings of pain.

When a generation is forbidden to cry and ritualise its loss (as in abortion or sexual abuse) those who survive are entrusted with the task of passing on their feelings to future generations, so that it may not happen again. I am reminded of the Holocaust and the Jewish people's insistence that it must not be forgotten, so future generations may not repeat the atrocity. And perhaps even in some ways the future generation can be trusted with the task of completion of mourning and grieving for the past and wounded and decimated (aborted) generation. The generation that was forbidden to mourn its loss. As with the Jewish holocaust, so too the mourning and grieving needs to be done in lives that have been sexually abused and or abortive.

The past forty years there has been an escalation of abortion, in dimensions previously unknown, and there has been an unspoken belief that with this type loss there is no need to grieve. This is the ultimate lie. This is a disenfranchised type of grief. It happens, but not permissible to be expressed in polite society.

This grief and mourning has to be expressed because if it is not, then, it has the potential to distort the individual and society. And this distortion is what is being seen today. In loosened sexuality, in loss of respect for life, in

the self destructive ways of the young, the drug culture, the culture of death.

The collective unconscious of a society ensures that it retains in its memory, the memory of grief and loss undealt with and unexpressed. Today we know that there have been some studies which present clinical samples of what is known as "anniversary syndrome" where within a family, a trauma/event is repeated on or around the same date and continues to be repeated through the generations, until it is dealt with.

It can also be that anniversary symptoms e.g. anguish, sadness, weeping with what appears no reason is experienced around the time of an abortion or what would have been the birth of the child. This experience is well known in pro life/post abortion circles.

Other studies also show that "family secrets" can return encrypted in one particular person in a family in a future generation (or as it is called a posterior generation) through his/her symptoms which speak clearly and loudly about that which once was unspeakable and unthinkable before e.g. sexual abuse and abortion.

Past generations of women could not speak of their abortions or sexual abuse. It was so taboo. Today these same are played out as a "right" (abortion) and still ignored and not understood or dealt with sexual abuse.

When childhood development is "interrupted" with adult information, experience, data, it is disastrous because it frustrates, ceases, and interrupts the full flowing of the childhood stage-leading to the next stage of development and maturity before the full-blown adult human. When deep, alien, foreign, unprocessable pain is registered in the psychic fabric of the child, it wounds the whole of the individual's life because the psychic nature (soul) is as real and true as bodily development, and from this, mental illness can develop.

Mental illness can be understood as a crisis of personal meaning. There is incongruence in the individual's personal meaning which has no

Congratulations

*Congratulations to Centrecare
And the Caroline Chisholm Centre for
the funding granted to them in order to
be able to carry out pre abortion
counselling.*

*We thank the Government for the
confidence it has shown in these two
Catholic organizations.*

*It is hoped also that now at least the
women will be given all the facts
surrounding abortion, including
material help being made available
where that is the problem, and in being
able to offer all helps and with God's
help, and good will, many babies will be
saved.*

*We cannot ever take away someone's
freedom. Even God gives us that, but at
least all the facts about abortion and its
after effects will be given to the woman,
and where indeed it is a problem which
can be shared and therefore lessened or
removed, so that she is free to have her
baby, then this also will be made
possible.*

*I do thank God for this blessing, and
whilst I am not affected by this
funding (I still fly absolutely poor) I
am so glad that these two excellent
organizations have been chosen.*

"Well done good and faithful servants."

explanation. In that personal meaning is found lots of shame, guilt, loss, fear. Lack of love, and because love is the origin and therefore necessary for life, its absence causes an enormous vacuum.

I would like to conclude this by saying that nothing of the old history is lost. Through Christ centred counselling, the old order (the history of the individual) is retained but it is organised in a different and healthy and loving manner. It preserves the important things and re connects these together and begins a new journey upwards. This type of ascension slowly raises a life, higher and higher, to a place where it should have been in the first place. Though now it carries with it the scars of its lived "life" and suffering.

A Christmas Thought

By Rev. Fr Brendan Dillon,
With permission from Fr Dillon.

As we face at least another three months of heat following Christmas and rightly fear for the safety of those brave men and women who are already tired from fighting monster fires, we do at this time thank God for the Infant King and Saviour who came that we might have life.

When Jesus said that He had come for this reason, He did not mean natural human life-His hearers already had such a life. He was speaking of a share in the very life of God-an almost incredible concept, but one on which He dwelt and one He developed in the course of His public ministry. The second form of life, however, can only be bestowed upon those who have human life. Thus the gift of human life is the basis for sharing in the supreme gift of eternal life that the Saviour came to give. So if for no other reason (but there are many other reasons), the Church insists that all human life must be respected from the very beginning, and scientific evidence points to conception in a mother's womb as that moment. In matters legal and logical, it would seem paramount that unless you PROVE we are

not dealing with a child in the womb, we must act in a manner that safeguards the life of the helpless and totally dependent infant.

On the following page a cameraman relates an amazing story. Read it, reflect on it. Then remember that only a few weeks ago the Greens in this State went to the polls on the platform of sanctioning abortion right up to the point of birth, and there is pressure on both of the major parties from within to follow suit. If we want God's blessing on this nation, the time has come for good people to insist that the selfish irresponsible citizens hell bent on pushing for decriminalisation are a minority to be denied. They want to continue to kill 100,000 unborn children each year, without the stigma that should be attached to such action.

When a woman knows that she is "with child" she is just that. Friends of mine have a little girl now in primary school who was 500 grams when born prematurely. Mrs. T. D. (of our parish) has a grand daughter born about 2 months ago at 600 grams. Whom are we kidding when we suggest that infants within the womb are "fair game?" It's as though as long as you can't see them, they don't exist and are dispensable.

I conclude by referring to the *Herald Sun* of December 12th 2006, where medical reporter, Kate Jones, tells us that international adoptions have tripled in the past 25 years (now more than 400 last year) while Australian adoptions have fallen BY 94%. The 100,000 children aborted each year would have made a difference! How can the Greens put possums before children?

Happy Christmas

Fr. Brendan Dillon.

Isn't my Parish priest fabulous? Told you he was. I reckon he is Bishop material, but I don't want to lose him.

Pregnancy Counselling

Much angst has been voiced in all the various news mediums over the awarding of funding to two Catholic Organizations (Centrecare and Caroline Chisholm Society) for pregnancy counselling. At times it felt like all hell had

"...How can the Greens put possums before children?"

broken loose. And yet this should not have surprised any of us.

The pro abortion movement has had a number of "wins" over the past several years, with the RU486, the cloning, the MAP debacles I suppose that they had become used to the idea of winning. I suppose also that the thought was that to complete the agenda, the whole funding to go to the abortion providers and be done with it.

God does work in strange and mysterious ways.

However, we as pro lifers also need to be really careful because with the acceptance of this funding come many temptations.

And for me perhaps the biggest temptation that I see is to become so politically correct that the Catholic ethos of the organizations is lost. I and pray this never happens.

Another concern that I have is the idea of being "set up" Since the announcement of this funding, I have had 4 "strange calls" and these calls actually destabilised me a few days. They also got me thinking that I am glad that I am not involved in huge money schemes (I'm constantly poor) and funding, and that I have kept going for 11 years with just donations which usually cover my expenses even when I travel. Thank you to those who hear my call.

Letters

To Dear Anne,

I'm writing this letter to you to try and express my gratitude at the time and love you have given me over the year of 2006.

It is so difficult to put into words the work you do and the impact you have had on my life.

Your genuine love and support that you gave me is inspirational! You always had time to talk to me no matter what!

I feel healed and free from guilt and anger over my abortion, and you did tell me that at our first meeting. I must admit I didn't believe it could be possible to be free from that pain. I had tried to get help over the years but they didn't understand and thought I was crazy. You however made me feel the truth with

compassion and understanding which is all I was looking for. I just wanted someone to understand. I was a young girl feeling pain and sorrow over a choice made for me six years ago. It was hard to let go but it is true you can be healed and I was. The plaque was a huge turning point for me. Recognising my little one through a plaque has been amazing. The plaque is such an important part of the healing process and I thank you for arranging that for me. I now have peace that I've accepted and moved on to now concentrate on the important things in my life like my son.

Anne you are someone sent from God to help those just like me see the light and not hide in shame and darkness anymore. You have shown me what it is like to have God in my life and what it means to be forgiven. I thank you.

Your support and guidance has allowed me the opportunity at 30 years of age, begin a teaching degree which I never believed possible. Lachlan and I are eternally grateful to you for what you have done for us. I know that Lachlan is especially because he now has his mum and he is so happy!

Thank you Anne and I pray and pray that your good charitable work will continue because there is no one else like you.

I love you very much and keep up your amazing work.

Lots of Love and Prayers

God Bless you and your family.

Jacinta

Thank you for this beautiful letter darling Jacinta. I am going to miss her but I am happy for her. I am always happy to see my "girls" grow up and go into the world and be happy. With Jacinta I know that she is and I know that she will be a great Mum to her 2 year old son Lachlan and a most fantastic teacher of little ones.

When my "girls" leave me happy, I shed a tear for their going, but I am happy because I know that she and I together with Jesus, we all worked well and the outcome of course is marvellous.

Hi Aunty Anne.

Here I am resting very happily. I have one hand on my chest the other is stretched out above my head. Can you see?

My mum shed lots of unexpected tears when the doctor saw the bridge of my nose.

Seems that means that I don't have something called Downs. Mum was very happy.

The doctor said I looked perfect to her and that mum could leave her rooms feeling very pleased. Mum said she as VERY relieved and would have a good sleep tonight. She also said thank God for all the people who have been praying for me.....

Don't know what she's talking about!???

See ya soon.

p.s. Mum said she would call you on Sat, if that's okay?

Thank you darling Bubs in Jacquie's tummy. I would have loved to put here an ultrasound picture of this young one but I was told it wouldn't print well. Just be a black blob.

So please meet Jacquie's little pride and joy. Jacquie has been with me for just over a year and she is so happy and now after 3 abortions looking forward to her first baby.

I also am looking forward to this special baby being born. Please continue to pray for Jacquie and her bubs and her husband Paul. As soon as I have photo will show you. Jacquie's story was in last issue of newsletter.

One of these callers especially was quite obnoxious and demanded to know why I don't charge. When I reeled out my degrees she went silent and apologised. This was what I had hoped for because it gave me the opportunity to speak to her about my own abortions, healing, God, Mercy, love and all those good words and I don't get to charge. I told her I don't advertise and girls come to me via word of mouth.

I even had the cheek or was it presence of mind, to suggest that if she knows of anyone (read meaning her) who would like to come and talk to me for a while I would be happy to see her. She promised to keep that in mind. When I look at this in hindsight it's not so frightening but during the experience I felt "bullied." Please continue to pray and support what I do. It's getting harder and harder.



Please meet my beautiful granddaughter Isabella Amy and her equally beautiful mum Amy.

As we come to the end of this first newsletter for the year 2007, I want to thank those who remembered me for Christmas. Thank you for cards and gifts. I appreciate your care.

I also have to mention that I had a huge problem with the last issue of the newsletter. I had returned about 180 of them without envelopes. I realised that I must have bought a bad lot (envelopes) where the adhesive didn't quite do its job. If you are one of those who received an empty envelope, or none at all please contact me and I will send you the last issue also. Sorry.

Please if I might ask that you continue to support me in anyway you can. I know its getting harder. I for my part will keep going as long as I can.

Please continue to pray for Melissa (issue 41) she is pregnant again (she is baby Bryce's mum) Carlie, Hamish, Maree, Andrea, Tori, Darren, Adam, Michelle, Elissa, Iris, Greg, Dianne, Liz, Helen, Phillipa, Stephanie, Jacquie, Rachaela, Anne, Sandy, Evelyn, (new) Sue, (new) Grace, (new) Derek, Joanne, Clare, Michaela, Cassie, Alicia. James, Tara.

May the Lord Bless and keep you.

Anne Lastman

Broken Branches - By email!



Dear Friends,

In an effort to help reduce the costs and time put into preparing each newsletter, I am now able to email it out to you in Adobe Acrobat format (.PDF). So if you would prefer to receive Broken Branches electronically, please email me at annevoa@bigpond.net.au with a request to be added to the email list.