

Broken

Issue 57

April/May 2007

John 15

Branches

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

Vatican

Since the last issue of the newsletter I have made a flying visit to the Vatican as I had a meeting scheduled with the Pontifical Council for The Family.

I had not referred to this in the last issue because things were still being finalized so it seemed better not to say anything until definite times and dates were made.

My appointment with His Excellency Bishop Karl Romer and Fr Marc Lalond was in relation to my work and the possibility of help (not financial) from the Holy Offices.

I obviously went with much trepidation as I had requests to make, which I believed would reduce immeasurably the incidence of abortion and hence the incidence of abortion grief which now permeates our society.

Whilst at the moment I don't want to say what those five requests are, what I can say is that the appointment went really well. I was not "fobbed off" and was treated with the utmost courtesy and respect. And whilst it is impossible to say if any of the requests will bear fruit, I can say that they are being given consideration.

My experience when speaking with His Excellency Bishop Romer and Fr Marc was one of total ease and friendliness and I need not have feared as I did.

Needless to say that if and when I hear back→

from them I will let you all know the outcome. I know and understand that the Church hierarchy needs to act for the whole church and not just a sector so I know that what I have suggested must be well considered by many before any action taken. However, I do believe that some fruits will be forthcoming and I believe that these fruits will help stem the tide of abortion.

I believe also that this Office of the Vatican is well aware of the abortion holocaust and will consider anything that might stem this slaughter of innocents. They are aware that it is first and foremost a spiritual war against life, against family, against God and we need to continue to keep drawing attention to this reality. All avenues of attack against this war are important, but first and foremost it has to be seen that it is a spiritual war against the woman. No amount of lobbying, or intellectual debate, statistical figures will stop this war because ultimately it is a war against the woman and her child. This has to be the core for attack. This is where we find the poisoned seed.

I felt very humbled in the presence of such good and holy priests and Bishops who indeed love the church and its people.

Please pray that the requests I put forward will be well considered, not for me as I don't need any kudos, but to help in the stemming of pain in society. As I read more and more of the literature which comes across my desk, I am more and more convinced that it is on our knees and pleading to God, that we will defeat this beast called "abortion"

A newsletter of victims of Abortion

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Recently, the Holy Father Benedict XVI spoke strongly about the evil of abortion and called upon the faithful to defend marriage and the family as it is assailed with multiple challenges. "Life is the work of God, and should not be denied to anyone, not even the smallest and defenceless unborn child, especially not when affected by grave disabilities" (Sunday Blessing in St Peters 4/2/2007, on Italy's Celebrate Life Day). We have much open support by the Holy Father and his Bishops and priests and for this we should be much encouraged to keep going in our pro life work.

I felt encouraged and enthused to continue with this work especially as those I met showed great interest both in my type of counselling and the work itself and the huge need for this type of work.

I suppose that for me personally, the moment that His Excellency said that my work is a "vocation" and he blessed me and my work, was the moment when all the difficulties and struggles and doubts melted away. I felt that he understood why I did the work, and that it was important, and he blessed both me and the work.

I couldn't ask for anything more for me personally. I have always seen my work as something more than a "job" If this were a job I would have wearied of it years ago. I would not have been able to endure the amount of grief, pain, regret which I have listened to over the years. I have been able to do so because I know that the Lord has asked this of me and He also takes the weight of grief on His own shoulders so that it doesn't overwhelm me. →

I also know that over the 12 years The Lord has shown Himself strongly to the women who have invited Him into their lives and He has very overtly shown His favour and forgiveness of them. This is always the journey coming towards the end. He makes His presence and love for them unmistakable.

Post abortion grief counselling is not the same as other counselling. There is much more to this. Without spiritual dimension being strongly in focus there will not be genuine healing because we are talking about life and death, and especially about the death of the most vulnerable creature on earth. To say the Rogerian, Freudian, and other psychological methodologies will be successful without strong reference to spiritual is to invite more pain.

As I have said many times in my office, even when a woman says that she has no religious belief (and this I respect as her absolute right) this same woman is always so happy when she is told that her child is living in God's care. For herself at this time she does not want this, but for her aborted baby she wants this very much. She wants that this child, whom she aborted, will be given an eternal life, eternal happiness. I am reminded of the words of Jesus, "no greater love hath one that he/she lays down life for another."

Vatican Radio Interview

Whilst in Rome I was also invited to do a 45 minute interview on Vatican Radio, English speaking division, and even this appointment

...His Excellency said that my work is a vocation...

and interview was marvellous and definitely a work and direction of God.

It is amazing how God works, because through a marvellous priest friend from England, (Fr Cyril) I got to meet the English Sister in charge, A nun of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate, who is of the English language department and from her came the invitation.

I enjoyed speaking about my work, and I was so delighted to realize how much Sister Janet actually knows about pro life matters.

Throughout the whole interview Sister Janet allowed me "the floor" (or microphone) and I was able to speak about my own experience of abortion and the pain involved and the women who suffer and men who suffer and the reality that even if a little help and support is offered then there is a strong possibility that a baby will be saved and a woman will be spared a life of sorrow and regret

Thank you Sister Janet for the time you gave me to be able to speak both about the life long pain which abortion invests in the woman and the possibility of real forgiveness and healing which always comes from God. →

An Evening with a Grieving Woman

Whilst the main objective for going to Rome was a meeting with the Pontifical Council for Family, I believe there was also another, at the time unknown, reason for the trip and it was to help a dear friend of my host and hostess.

I was introduced to this friend of theirs whom I will call Antoinette and who had been grieving for over 22 years. This dear lady has an abortion and miscarriage history (4 children) and no living children.

We met at the house of my hostess and for over 4 hours we talked and she spoke of her sorrow and her picking up of one of her miscarried children which she delivered at home (dead) and carried him in her hands to the hospital. She looked into his eyes. She saw that it was a little boy. And she didn't cry.....she couldn't cry. And hadn't cried.

As we spoke I felt close to her pain and I could see that she believed that God was punishing

... She didn't cry. She couldn't cry. She hadn't cried...

her for her first abortion, by the death of twin children, and another, and also by not giving her other children.

This dear lady was receptive to what I had to suggest as a memorial to her children and steps she could do to help in the healing process.

These are the times when I know that God acts miraculously and instantly, because I could not see her for other sessions as I would had she been in Australia. I have since returning received an email which has confirmed this. →

I have deleted personal details for privacy purposes. I want to share this with you because I believe this was another of the reasons why I went there, though at the time I didn't know it. Herewith...

Dear Anne,

I was thinking about you today because I realized that Antoinette looks happier now; I mean I really notice the difference!! I decided I would buy a bible for her, so I went and bought a really beautiful one. She really appreciated that. I bought the red covered one, Jerusalem Bible. She was very happy, and told

me that her husband decided a second name for their second lost child, they called him James, (Giacomo), and I thought it was a wonderful name!

So you made a little miracle and I thought that really God guides our lives. In fact if I wasn't working where I am working she wouldn't have met you!! and if .. and if.. So many ifs! But luckily, I mean thanks be to God! At last everything went miraculously good for my dear friend Antoinette.

I feel that getting to know you was really a gift and you really enriched my soul if that has a sense in English.

You know what? At the last Eucharist, on Saturday night, after you left, I was listening to our children of the community praying, and I was really moved and I was about to cry thinking about all those children that never came to light. And look how beautiful were our children... I was so sad. But now I see they are angels and they are happier than us anyway in God's hands.

I will pray for you Anne, it has been a blessing you coming to us. Please come again soon. Love you, Bruna.

Tragedy

My eyes have been opened widely this past year as I travel into the city by train and around the office.

I have seen the most wounded young people on earth. The youthfulness of them overwhelms me with grief. The waste of young lives (drugs) and hopelessness. One morning as I got to my office about 7am I found sitting on the outside step of my building a beautiful young man who was so spaced out it was heartbreaking. When I said "excuse me may I pass please" (to open door) he looked up at me with the most beautiful bluest of blue eyes that were clouded, and gave me a weak smile, he then slowly and faltingly got up, picked up what must have been his earthly goods (in a→

plastic bag) and staggered away.

I wondered what happened to this beautiful young man. Cleaned up, hair cut (it was long and straggly and matted and filthy) and dressed in clean clothing, and fed well, what he could have done with his life. Why hasn't anyone loved this young man? Why such a wasted life? Why is he not important to anyone?

Then on same day I saw another beautiful young woman 18-20yrs being propped by two swaying young men equally filthy, long haired, slurring, but the important thing about the young woman, her body was the size of a 9 year old, straight up and down, and fitting into size 5 she is wasting away!!!! Her eyes were hollow and her "self" was absent.

Why wasn't this young woman loved? When will someone pick her up from some gutter dead? And then at her eulogy she will be spoken of with roses. I have seen the most awful sights in the past year, which I never thought possible and then I realise I do a good work, because it means that those who leave me, and are well, (read Jacinta's story previous N/Letter) will never become like this young woman though she was heading that way. She was destroying herself because of her guilt over her abortion. She was not into drugs, but drinking herself into oblivion weekly and endangering herself and baby, and everyone about her. Now I KNOW she won't.

For this young woman and young man on the streets, I felt so much love. I wanted to pick them up and tell them are loved by God and not a mistake or a waste. Please pray for them and all street children.

Sydney

Since last issue of the newsletter, I made a flying visit to Sydney (Australia) at the invitation of Family Life International, to speak to some doctors (Gynacologists/Obstreticians) on abortion and more specifically abortion for foetal abnormality.

Letter from Pregnant Jacquie

Dear Anne,

Sorry I haven't contacted you lately. I've been wanting to, but worry about what times are convenient for you. I don't like to call on week-ends coz you need your rest.

I've been very busy of late, working (bit too much) and shopping (for baby stuff). I've also been to have a scan at 22 weeks a couple of days ago. It was wonderful. Everything is looking good.

We found out the sex and of course you were right again IT'S A BOY! I'm so delighted. My sister came with me for the scan as Paul couldn't get away from work.

After we found out we went to tell mum. When I walked in she said "hows my granddaughter going?" (wink, wink). I said "how about your grandson?" I think Mum was taken aback because she is used to granddaughters so she thought it would be another granddaughter. I think she screwed up her nose at first and I just had to laugh, Mum's just hopeless!!!!

After she apologized (though she didn't have to) my sister and I drove to a baby shop and I bought the cutest blue baby outfit complete with a bib that read, I love my daddy. I wrapped it all up so I could present it to Paul when he came home from work, as a way of telling him what sex it was. Oh! Anne you should have seen his face when he opened the package. It was just beautiful. He was beside himself and of course beamed from ear to ear and announced he was a legend because he had produced a son!! Ha ha. Paul is so happy and I just have to keep pinching myself. I can't believe it's really happening. I keep having these 'light bulb' moments where I say to myself "oh this is the way its suppose to feel" or "Oh this is why people are so happy to be pregnant". It's really weird in a good kind of way. Now that I'm over being so tired and nauseous I actually found myself happy being pregnant. I never would have thought I'd be saying that!

Paul is so very pleased; you can't wipe the smile off his face. He is a complete blessing to me. I'm so very lucky. He even insisted on naming the baby. I had chosen to name the baby after my dad and brother (Daniel) But Paul decided he needed his own individual name and has named him Bryce. Paul rarely disagrees with my choices but this time he was adamant and who am I to get between a father and his son??

I'm just happy he's happy ... and I'm having the most wonderful time of my life,

Hope all is well with you and your family and you are not working too hard.

lots of love

Jacquie.

Thank you darling Jacquie for this ongoing news. You my readers have read Jacquie's story in the last several issues.

Jacquie has 3 children living in heaven (abortions) and she was afraid to be pregnant. Today Jacquie beams as you can read in her letter to me and she and her husband Paul will make wonderful parents.

This is the type of mercy and love that God has for the most sinful and wounded people; he rebuilds their lives with love. He recreates their history with a foundation of love and forgiveness. He never gives up on them.

Whilst the numbers were a bit disappointing, those who came I believe learnt something from me and I from them. It was also important because it appeared that the right people were there.

I think they must have been interested because whilst I had a nagging suspicion that they would up and leave, believing that what had to be said was of little importance to them, the reality was that we went over the 2½ hours and nobody seemed to want to leave including the doctors themselves.

And what is better is that we were asked for a return in about 6 months time for another educative encounter. I think that hearing about the difficulties of post abortion, and the complicated nature of the grief, was important for them to hear.

I must admit that I came away feeling more "care and concern for the doctors" and the threat that they constantly live under. It must make their life very difficult and

it must make their career seem more and more different than what they originally intended.

I have to thank Gail Instance, and her co workers, Donna, Wanda, Deirdre, Paul and the rest of the crew. And it was sooooo lovely meeting up with Fr Linus Clovis, the Spiritual Director for Family Life International. We had actually caught up both in NZ and in Fatima Portugal, so it was lovely to meet with him again and hear him preach mightily.

These days actually do for me so much good because they help me just get away for a short time and come back re energised.
Thanks Gail and team.

Men Cry Too

It never ceases to amaze me that when I speak to people about the fact that men cry when a tragedy befalls them, they don't seem to think that this indeed is so. They seem to think that men are muscular, strong and are hard of heart and they can control their emotions. The truth is that many men do cry, but it may not be visible to the eye, because they cry inwardly. It may only be visible in their body language or→

by their behaviours and reactions such as intolerance, violence or short temperedness.

Why do I tell you this? Because over the last 20 years or so, counsellors involved in post abortion counselling have become aware that men are also seriously affected by the after effects of abortion. This of course should not surprise us because men contribute 50 percent of the DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). DNA is like the hard wiring in a computer; it determines who we are and what we are. It pre programmes us with our traits such as eye colour, hair colour, whether we are Caucasian or Asian or Negro. In total disregard of this fact, men are ignored in the situation of abortion. Somehow it seems that the only rights that exist in the abortion debate fall to the woman on the basis that it is her body that is of concern only.

This short article is not about the arguments for or against the abortion debate. This article is about the effects of abortion on men who seem to be the silent and forgotten people in this debate.

The Father of post abortion research related to the male was Arthur B. Shostak, Ph.D. who

...Men's reactions to abortion have been ignored...

himself was a victim of the abortion industry. He was against his partner aborting his child and tried to seek redress in court, to have a say in what was to be the abortion of his own child about twenty years ago.

It seems to be that about half of the women seeking abortion are accompanied by their husband/partner/boyfriend. Dr Shostak has done the first and extensive research on the effect of the ignorance of the man accompanying his wife/partner/girlfriend to the abortion clinic, and also the long-term effect of abortion grief on the man. For example it was discovered that approximately 70% of the→

males who wish to offer love and comfort during the 15-minute abortion procedure are commonly barred from doing so. Those 90% percent or so who wish to offer comfort during the hour-long post-procedure recovery period are commonly also told "no."

Also, the long-term loss and grief is as prevalent in males as in females. Dr. Miriam Grossman, a psychiatrist at UCLA's student health service wrote, "Men's reactions to abortion have been ignored" by her colleagues in the mental health field. "There is a significant number of people who do have those scars and that painful," she says, "and if we are going to be open to victims of every

Letters

Dear Anne,

Thank you, a BIG thank you for putting me in the picture with some back copies of "broken branches" issues.

Most grateful for your advisory words to priests; several I found as impressive, but one sentence HAD to be the Holy Spirit in your pen (issue 47, p6)....I know that some will hear of Love because they have come to see me...."

Wow! I hope and pray, I want to be able to say that some day.

Keep up the good work and if ever you are in our vicinity be sure to look in.

God's love, more to you and yours

From, Fr. Paul

Thank you dear Fr Paul for your encouragement and kind words. You know something,? I never quite know what is going to be written when I start a newsletter but once I start it is usually finished within a couple of hours, so I really believe that I have "up above help"

Dear Anne,

Thank you for February/March issue of newsletter. Its quite uplifting to read of the love and consolation you are able to get through to the girls who come to you. Of course they do see in time that its Jesus working through you and what a joy that must be, and you are giving that gift of generosity.

I have many grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Your Isabella looks peaceful and for Amy's sake I hope that continues.

May Jesus and Mary bless you

In His peace,

Bridget and family.

Thank you darling Bridget and family for your ongoing care for me. And congratulations of the many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Please continue to pray for mine.

Dear Anne

thank you for your excellently composed newsletter, indicative of intelligence.

You are now a face to after having see your interview with Steve Mosher on EWTN.

There is certainly a great need for the work you do. What a commitment.

God Bless

L.M.

Dear Anne,

I saw you on EWTN recently. You are so much younger than I imagined and you speak so confidently and you appear to love what you do.

Well done and keep going strong.

sincerely

Joan K.

Mt Waverley, Vic.

Dear Anne,

I saw you on EWTN being interviewed by Steve Mosher, of the Population Research Institute.

My only complaint is that your interview was so short. I was hoping to hear you speak on abortion and its aftermath.

Why were you asked about reproduction matters rather than post abortion matter?

Never mind it was good to see you in person.

Now when I read your newsletter I know who is talking to me.

Blessings,

Kate R-S,

Richmond.

Dear Anne,

Congratulations, on another excellent newsletter. You are amazing and your newsletter always arrives on time.

Enclosed a small donation to help with rent.

God Bless

Steve M.

Carlton.

sort, then we in mental health need to be acknowledging them even if they don't advance a particular ideology."

In fact, commenting on his research, Dr. Shostak has suggested the professional counselling community adopt what he calls a "pro-couple approach to the abortion challenge" that can help those who have abortions recover from "an experience from which they are never quite the same."

So the question needs to be asked, why is it that the male is left out of the abortion question? Why his pain, his grief, his sorrow, not recognized? Why cannot he have a say in the life of the child he helped to create? I think the time has come to give a voice to the voiceless man who is not listened to and comforted in his loss. It is time to wake up to the reality of what is happening and say, no more.

Cornelius H.

Thank you Cornelius for this short article. Cornelius is very interested in the male aspect of post abortion grief. Perhaps we might be able to do something together in the future.

Big Thank you.

I would like to say a huge thank you to my host Mauro and hostess Bruna in Rome. Bruna and Mauro are engaged to be married, and I stayed with Bruna in her apartment for the whole duration of my stay in Rome.

Mauro, her fiancée, would call in every morning before work and have breakfast with us and spoilt me with delectables too yummy to

describe. They also spent much time driving me from place to place and picked me up from the airport and on the last day took me back to the airport. All this kindness from a couple whom I had never met before I arrived in Rome but who when asked by another, offered hospitality.

I am hoping that both of these lovely young people (married by then) will be able to make it to world youth day to be held in Australia next year, so that I can meet up with them again.

God Bless your marriage (June 9th 2007) and may your lives be filled with many many little and big joys.

As I conclude I ask again for your support, I am enthused and firing again after some recent sluggishness and I know I do a work of love and Mercy and it's a good work.

Please continue to pray for Melissa, Jacquie, Carlie, Hamish, Maree, Andrea, Michelle, Elissa, Iris, Greg, Dianne, Helene, Phillippa, Stephanie, Anne, Sandra, Eve, Sue, Grace, Derek, Joanne, Clare, Tania (new) Silvia (new) Antoinette (for pregnancy please), Nancy, Leonie, Michelle (2) Tran. (new) Jade (new)

A Happy and Holy Easter is wished to all my readers

The Lord is Risen Hallelujah...



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.