

# Broken

Issue 62

Feb/Mar 2008

John 15

# Branches

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

Welcome my dear and precious friends to 2008, let us begin the year with a hope that the Lord will bless all our efforts as we work together to gather and return wounded children to his kingdom.

## Fathers and Daughters

In a recent article published on Zenit News 25/12/2007, there was an interview with an author who recently published a book whose theme is "fathers and daughters." I read this short article and hope to get the book when it is available for purchase in Australia.

Why I think it is an interesting and good book is that this author has understood and speaks about the same things that I have understood in my own field. The author has clearly understood and written how important a female child's relationship with her father is for her own wholesome emotional development how important is the father in the life of a daughter.

It has been understood and accepted that a father is really important in the life of a young boy and young man as they are growing. It is vitally important for the young boy/youth/man to be able to have solid attachment to his father from whom he will learn what it means to be a man, or how to be a male. Only a father (male) can transmit to the son that essence called "male ness". It is that special "male ness" that only a man can give to his son, that I believe when absent, can distort the young man's psycho sexual development and this leads to suffering with confused sexuality and a prolonged seeking for that missing or absent something which only a man can give.

In our modern society where the father is most often given short shrift, it is devastating for the future generations and it is not surprising that we have young people with confused gender issues and more confused personal identity issues.

We are seeing what absence of the father does (through divorce especially, or other absence) in the life of and development of the children, and now I believe it's time that we also need to see how damaging and devastating to the psycho sexual development of the female it is when there is an absence of or poor fathering of a daughter.

My experience in counselling nigh on 13 years has clearly shown to me the importance of a father in the life of the child and how totally and completely necessary and important is this person to the life of a daughter.

When fathering a daughter, he has a special mandate to protect, build, encourage, teach, guide and **honour** her. In doing this he helps her to grow into the person whom he has moulded and envisioned. When he fathers a daughter well, a father prepares her not only to love, honour and protect herself against abuse by others, but also to expect the very best for herself.

Her self esteem is as it should be. She doesn't have to live a life of seeking to please others just for the approval it receives. She doesn't need to be bullied because this is what is her "normal." She doesn't reject protection by her beloved spouse because protection, love, honour is what she has known and is normal to her.

When a father fathers well, especially his daughter, she grows to understand that she doesn't

A newsletter of Victims of Abortion

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have to compete against her husband or her God, she knows that she is equal but different. Unique.

A father who fathers his children well designs their blueprint and etches this indelibly into their being. From this blueprint then springs forth and matures the honoured woman he has engendered and has loved and helped to grow.

When a father fathers well his precious daughter, he instinctively protects her burgeoning womanhood and she responds by honouring that same womanhood. When a father fathers badly, especially his daughter, she has as an imprint, of an "Adam" (first male) model, which is one of confusion and negativity and pain.

Having said this, it is important to stress the magnificent influence a father can have on his daughter and how much her happiness as a female depends on a good relationship with her father. It is of course not to say that mothers are not important. It's not what I am saying. That is another story. What I am saying is that a father's nurture is different from that of the mother and is so important to the emotional, spiritual and mental wellbeing of the daughter/woman.

It is perhaps also important to mention the wounds that, a father causes his daughter (and later woman) when he ignores/abandons/ill treats his daughter during the very important formative years. This abandonment/ill treatment gives her the sense that this is the normal with all male relationships. She will keep looking for something to fill up an empty place in her inner being, and continually strives to the quench that loneliness even as a mature adult woman.

I have so many times heard the comment "I have a loneliness which I cannot explain. I am deeply lonely, though I have a family, children etc., and a good life. Why am I so lonely?" These days whenever I hear words along those lines my question is "how was/is your relationship with your father?"

And from there often the "root" of that loneliness can be established.

Perhaps here it is also important to mention the damage and pain which a father causes for his daughter/woman when he violates her. When he intrudes violently into her sacred space. A space which belongs to her, God and her spouse alone. That is her sexuality.

From my experience this is the worst kind of wound a father can inflict on his daughter. This violation and wound is almost lethal.

When a sexual violation by a father against his daughter occurs, then there are losses suffered at many levels. There is confusion of identity and boundaries. There is a loss of trust and empathy towards family and father and mother and other males. There is loss of innocence. Loss of childhood, youth. There is loss of sense of authority as authority figures are figures that abuse and betray. There is a sense of loss of knowledge of femininity. There is an absence of knowledge of what it means to be "daughter", "girl," "woman," "spouse," "mother," "child of God," "daughter of God." This lack of self knowledge then leads to all sorts of self defeating decisions, actions, relationships.

This absence creates for this girl/woman a blindness in which she fails to recognise her

*"There is loss of innocence. Loss of childhood, youth"*

worth as “woman” and to abuse her own sexuality in a manner which she even fails to recognise as grossly inappropriate. And the manner is always degrading. E.g. prostitution, pornography, abortions, indeed multiple abortions, massive numbers of sexual partners leading to STD’s.

Whilst women have been thought of as the guardians of purity, that is, until recent times when it is the women calling for legal abuse of their body as a “right” (abortion, prostitution), the male (father) has always been considered the protector of that femininity/daughter. There is a difference. It’s subtle but the difference is there.

A father who has protected the innocence and purity of his daughter has demonstrated to her his strength (even unto death) and his love for the very essence of who she is. When a father himself violates that innocence and purity, he imprints into her essence a gross distortion of sexuality. A gross distortion of maleness and fathering. A distortion of power. A gross distortion of what the male thinks of female. He imprints into her being and understanding the idea that sexuality is not precious but a instinctual act, something which cannot be controlled and she has to submit to its power by whoever it is that demands it of her. →

Alternatively, the girl/woman learns that she has a power in her sexuality and she herself abuses it to achieve her own distorted desires.

Whenever I have seen signs of self mutilation my very first thought is “I wonder if she has been abused somehow? Especially in her sexuality. In her femininity?” And very often this is the case. NOT ALWAYS but in a great many instances this is the case.

A girl/woman’s purity, by her design is meant to be veiled against damage and the first and most important protector and guardian of this “veiled” area is her father. He stands like those cherubs at the gates of Eden and protects against entry by illegitimate persons.

A father who has himself violated the “veiled” area cannot then act as guardian from the violation of others. Indeed he opens wide the doorway for the future abuse of his daughter/woman.

When the father fathers well and honourably, he then indeed loves his daughter the way God the Father would love His precious daughter.

When a father honours his daughter’s sexuality/femininity he encourages in her knowledge and practice of sacred chastity and not abuse of her body for the pleasure/use of another

*“A girl/woman’s purity, by her design is meant to be veiled”*

In my work (post abortion counselling) I encounter so much depression, pain in the area of wounded sexuality and I am fearful that the immediate future holds little hope for change. Young men today take their young girlfriend to abort their child. This is a sign of someone who has no thought for her suffering, for her future peace of mind, for her wounded sexuality which the abortion experience itself will leave as an imprint.

Let us all pray for a return of the understanding of holiness of the body as designed by God. →

## **Woman Friendly**

Of recent times I have heard used the term “woman friendly” being introduced in association with pro life activities and pro life initiatives and whilst I understand the innate meaning associated with these two words I really have several real difficulties with them

Firstly, if new pro life initiatives are to be “woman friendly” I would like to know what have we who have been working in this field some for up to 30-40 years been doing? If not being pro woman or “woman friendly” what has it been?

I have personally given 13 years (this year) of expertise, time, love, compassion, counselling, assistance etc to women who have been deeply wounded. I think I have been “woman friendly” though mind you I have been “man friendly” too when the need arose. So I do take exception to the comment “woman friendly.” I don’t think it’s appropriate as pro life words. Pro lifers have always without exception been woman friendly.

However, on a more serious note I think that the term “woman friendly” (whilst underlying good intentions) has a subtle potential for deep wrongness and misunderstanding. Please let me explain: Being “woman friendly” means that we support, encourage, praise, assist, enable, and help the woman when in a crisis pregnancy. And of course we all agree on this. However I would not use these words and terms because to be “woman friendly” subtly leaves out her baby separates her from her baby.

In a media interview, a local abortionist has said that the woman is his only patient and not the foetus. You see this abortionist and abortion providers, and pro abortion lobbyists and pro abortion industry also believe that they are “woman friendly.”

This has been the most devious and cunning method of achieving the abortion laws and abortion beliefs and abortions in their millions in our society, because the abortion industry has managed to separate the woman from her child. It was a subtle move but it has worked.

You see a woman and her baby (or foetus) are always interlinked. One cannot exist without the other. A woman, who aborts, may indeed have gotten rid of her baby, but she cannot ever, ever, ever, be rid of the influence of that baby in her life. Even in the shortest possible time in her womb. So this is my objection to the term being bandied or used by pro lifers.

We must never, even in our society, separate the mother and her child, they are interlinked for ever and eternity and we by being “woman friendly” ostensibly leave out the baby. We do what the pro abortionists do. We separate them. **Not a good idea at all.**

We are not “woman friendly,” we are mother and child friendly all the time. Together. Without exception. “Mother care” means mother and baby. We care for the mother and the baby. Nothing else is possible for us. Unlike the abortionist for us the mother and child together are cared for.

*A Precious letter from one of my “girls” I wanted to share with you how abortion affects family. Larissa is not her real name but you are praying for her as she is on the newsletter list.*

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Dear Anne,

Here is my story. I think it is very raw and angry. The personal feelings are very intense even as I write them.

**To my brother, David.**

My name is Larissa and I want to tell my story. My parents came from Italy many years ago. Not long after the end of World War 2. Both my parents were young. Somehow they met and then married. Typical of so many young migrants to the country then.

They set up a home together but in rented accommodation. They shared with others. During these early days my mother discovered that she was with child. Instead of tears of joy and wonderment there was anxiety. What made things worse was that the persons (family relatives) who should have given encouragement and support didn’t. They said things like, "You can't afford to start a family yet, you don't have a home or security." "It's not a child it's a bunch of cells at this stage". "You can get rid of it".

To be told this at a time of vulnerability is terrible. Well unfortunately, my parents followed this bad advice."

I was in my late teens when I found out about this. At first I didn't understand nor comprehend what this meant. I was young and this was my mother

## *A Beautiful Special Letter*

Dear Anne,

Thank you for the copy of your book which you kindly sent to me. I went with interest through your book "*Redeeming Grief*" and I find it, up to the point that I have read a good presentation of your rich personal experience in the field of abortion grief.

I will read it in more detail but my overall impression is that your book is a rich contribution in a domain that many ignore or don't want to consider.

Thank you again you have done a fruitful job. May the Lord Bless your efforts and initiatives.

+ E. Sgreccia  
President  
Pontifical Academy Pro Vita.

*Thank you Excellency, I appreciate your kind words of encouragement. In this work it is easy to become saddened and demoralised, but with words like yours and other dear friends and Bishops and Pastors, I am encouraged to continue.*

telling me that she had had an abortion when she was young and newly married. (The word abortion and the information about what this meant brought a kind of disbelief and horror which filled my mind. I started to realise that a death had occurred in my family, the death of my sibling. This wasn't death as in a miscarriage but death of an intentional kind. My sibling's life had been intentionally taken.

I wrestled with this truth for a long time. I told no-one and kept it to myself protecting my mother and myself. It is only just recently that I have begun dealing with this. I have had a lot of anger over this over a very long time. It has affected me in ways that I hadn't realised.

Knowing that a baby brother was aborted and then not being able to deal with it is very destructive. Abortion affects not only the mother but daughters, grandmothers, grandfathers and others related to the mother. It is a tragic loss for all. I have named my sibling David. It is a beautiful name for a brother I never got to see or know.

*David, this is my tribute to you.*

**Larissa.**

## **The Manner of the Dying**

During the so called Christmas break (which never happened) I worked with a woman from interstate. This was intensive work as we tried to meet at least 2-3- times per week over many hours. I appreciated the fact that her time here in Melbourne was limited and that the need was great so we worked as we could as often as we could.

The thing that really struck me with this young lady called Jenny was that she, as with many, many others, was/is stuck in the "manner of the dying." It is possible to grieve over the death and to experience "warm soft tears" (her words) of grief because of the loss, but then there are the tears which are harsh and "crucifying" (her words) which are filled with guilt and it is these tears which are the destructive ones.

As we met often I was able to see the slow change from the “crucifying” type of anguish filled tears to the “warm soft tears” of remorse and deep loss. These soft tears are the tears of love and caress and healing.

For those interested in this area, it is the manner of the dying (abortion, violence, cutting, breaking, and tearing) which halts movement towards healing, and it is important that much time is spent in this area so that the manner of the dying (violence) is superseded by “the dying” and this is what is to be grieved for, the deep loss and not the manner of the dying.

I found that with Jenny it was her image of what had happened to the baby that prevented her from even wanting to move towards self consolation and reconciliation with the infant and with this part of her history.

It is the reconciliation with both baby (naming etc) and her history of this experience (why the decision was made before she realised the magnitude of the pain she would feel) that will lead to healing of her spirit.

For Jenny the journey was “fast tracked” so to speak, because of her need to return to her→

home state, but the journey has been begun and we will continue to journey together so that she can return to a place of some peace. Not as before. That cannot be, no matter who says that it can. We cannot ever return to a place pre abortion. We can continue our journey in life carrying the experience and the child with us but we cannot ever return to a place pre abortion. This is the type of experience which **IS** life changing. This is the type of experience which is encountered at the **Y** junction. At the junction one way leads to destruction, the other leads to wisdom, patience, love, compassion that would not have been there otherwise.

My hope for all my girls is that the positive way is the one which I help them to learn to accept and walk. Please pray for Jenny we have a long way to go.

## Happy News

On December 28-31 I had the marvellous and greatest pleasure to go to Northern NSW for 3 days for the Christening of Baby Bryce and his sister baby Gabrielle.

You have seen both of their photos in the newsletters, issue 59 Gabby, and issue 50 Bryce

*“We cannot ever return to a place pre abortion”*

and issue 41 Sophia’s story their mum.

You my precious readers have prayed for this family since Sophia first wrote her story and the blessings and healing have been nothing short of miraculous.

Sophia and her beautiful husband asked me to be a Godmother to Baby Bryce and it was my greatest pleasure and honour to do so. Please continue to pray for this family, the healing is continuing. To be able to see “Sophia” and hundreds of others like her, so happy and at peace is the reason I continue with this work. →

Sophia’s story is one of sexual abuse/abortion and the work we have done together has left me in awe of her and her beautiful spirit. And I continue to be in awe of God and His marvellous healing ways.

Today Sophia shines. She is a happy wife and mother and the nightmares of the past don’t haunt her on a daily basis. I loved being with her and her family and the friends we shared time with.

Thank you to both of them for the great honour of being Bryce’s Godmother and part of their family forever.

# Letters

Dear Anne,

First of all I have to thank you for continuing to send me your excellent newsletter even though we haven't been able to support you financially. With a large family it is difficult to make ends meet. But dear Anne, I really want to say to you how much we (Darren and I) enjoy reading to and how much you have taught us over the years that we have received it.

I don't remember how we came to be on your newsletter list but we are thankful that somehow we have been put on it.

While we cant support you with money we support you by spreading the word about your newsletter and sharing it with others. In this way I hope that we can spread the word and help you even get new supporters.

Thank you again for not ceasing to send it to us.

Regards,

Sam and Joe  
(Qld)

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Dear Anne,

When I finished reading your Dec/Jan issue of the newsletter I had to have a lie down!! I was exhausted just reading it. How do you do it?

Please find enclosed a small donation I hope it helps you to continue. I really understand that I am doing the easy part and you are doing the hard part.

Blessings

Marie C.  
Sunbury Vic.

Dear Anne,

Congratulations and well done again. It seems that you have had a busy but fruitful year in 2007. I enjoyed very much reading your last issue and I felt deep empathy for the "Grandmother for 18 days" I have been in a similar situation, though I was a grandmother for 11 weeks. This was 17 years ago and still as I was reading the grandmothers story I remembered my story and wept for my grad child. I always thought that my grandchild would have been a little girl and today she would have been a beautiful teenage grand daughter.

I don't always think about her (I haven't given her a name because I believe that is her mother's task) but there are times when I am reminded and the pain is still fresh and acute.

Thank you for your ongoing work and newsletter, I love receiving it and I get much from it.

God Bless

Sheryl S.

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Dear Anne,

Well done!! Another year and you still sound as fresh as ever.

Keep up the good work,

Regards

Trevor M.  
Mt Waverley.

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***Thank you to all my supporters and letter writers. I love receiving communiqués from you.***

**Anne**

As I come to the end of this newsletter, I would like to thank all of you wonderful supporters. You have stayed and supported me through these many years. Without you I couldn't do it.

It has at times been suggested that I change the type of ministry I do and begin by compulsorily charging those I see, but that would eliminate at least three quarters of them because of the financial strain it would put on them. I have three women who travel great distances by train so there are fares to contend with. I have 3 who travel from interstate (plane) so there are again fares to contend with and there are 5 who are single mothers and on Gov. support, so in effect I would be putting obstacles in the path of their healing.

I think it would also change the nature of what I do. This work I do as a thank you to God for my own forgiveness and healing and as a memorial to my children Miriam and Joseph. Gioia was a miscarriage.

I don't want to change the nature of the work. A dear Bishop friend has confirmed that this isn't a career, this is a charism, and that's how I see it too. But it was good to have it confirmed for me by a representative of Jesus.

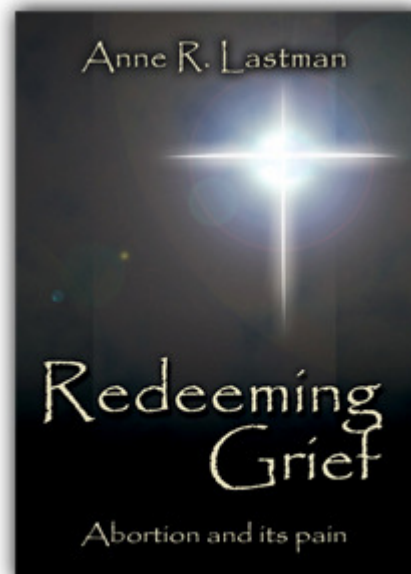
So I rely on your support. If and when it stops then I will also stop the work. I will understand that this is how God wants it. Till then we keep going.

Please continue to pray Melissa, Maree, Jacquie, Derek, Michele, Alessia, Iris, Dianne, Helen, Sophie, Stephanie, Suzie, Kate, Kathy, Clare

Frances, Sarah, Julie, Barbara Sabrina, Angie Leigh, Maria, Casey,(new) Jody, Josie, Dillon, (new) Jenny, (new) Paula (new).

I would also like to say a special thank you to my beloved brother in Christ, Anthony for recent support.

**And please support the sale of my book "Redeeming Grief" It helps!**



**Anne Lastman**  
Counsellor

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# 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](mailto:annevoa@bigpond.net.au) with a request to be added to the email list.