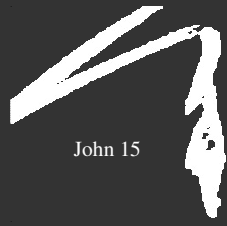


BROKEN BRANCHES

Issue 81

April/May 2011



John 15

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

RIP those human beings who perished in the Christchurch New Zealand and Japanese earthquakes and Tsunami.

(A disaster of unprecedented apocalyptic proportions-TV News reporter).

I'm Still her Father

In a TV news article on Saturday 12th March there was a story which would have torn at the heart strings of every viewer and indeed viewers were warned that the following story would be “harrowing” (there goes that word again). The story was about a photographer who took photos of infants who were born premature or stillborn or terminally ill children (the photographer being a father who himself had lost a child stillborn) and this photographer took the most beautiful, sensitive and haunting images of the baby and her parents. The infant we saw was still born and being held by her Mum and dad and she looked beautiful and peaceful and so innocent. It was exquisite imagery.

The importance of this story was the comment made by the infant's father in the interview, “I'm still her father”

Though this couple had another child since they lost their little girl the father still felt that he was the father of the little girl who had been stillborn.

And this is always the way. A woman who aborts is always a mother and the child's father is always the father of a very small baby except that they are parents to a dead small child and a death brought about by a decision they made.

This is the anguish felt by mothers when they realise what

has happened with abortion, that it wasn't a “bunch of cells” or some “tissue” or a term famously used by an abortionist “product of conception” but indeed their very own son or daughter whom they took to die either through their own volition or by the coercion of others. This is what causes the complicated grief experienced.

“I'm still her Mum”

Please hear the anguish in those words at the realisation of what abortion has meant. It is agonising, and hence post abortion grief and the reason for the malignant syndromes which emerge as a result of an abortion.

Anniversary Syndrome

Recently one of the young ladies in my care seemed to regress, we had progressed to fortnightly appointments and I thought that possibly within a very foreseeable future we could come to an end of our time together. However, she came to her appointment and was really distressed. Very tweepey and wouldn't be consoled, and it seemed like we were back at the beginning.

Unable to explain this anguish, and nothing of note had happened in her life, it left me unable to understand why. Why such intense pain and why begin again to speak about her worthlessness especially as she had begun to speak and look forward to her life and future.

This session left me confused and I even wondered if in the time together not much had been accomplished and she left my office not much better for the coming.

That night as I was still thinking about the case and wondering what I had missed, when the penny dropped.

Name _____

Address _____ P/C _____

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

Send to:

Victims of Abortion, National Office

PO Box 6094, Vermont South, Vic, 3133, Australia.

Email: anne@victimsofabortion.com.au

I looked back through my notes and voilà - there it was! The date of her abortion. It was coming to the date of her abortion and every year during the week of the anniversary she feels sad, weepy unable to cope. And what we understand as the “Anniversary Syndrome.” I called her back immediately and we began again and once she understood what was happening there was the feeling that she wasn’t going crazy again and this would pass.

Anniversary reactions (conscious or unconscious) can be common among some abortive women. These are reactions such as deep sorrow, copious weeping, and even thoughts of suicide. These reactions usually happen near the anniversary of the abortion date or perhaps even the date when the baby should have been born. Something triggers these reactions. And these reactions can happen year after year. Perhaps these reactions can be likened to the anniversary of the death of a loved member of the family and on the date of death a look at a photo of the loved one or even something which belonged to that deceased loved one, can trigger deep sadness and weeping but these reactions are shorter lived because usually there is no guilt involved in the death of that loved one. Whereas with an abortion there is the guilt involved.

With abortion, the guilt aspect of the death induces such a deep pain that self annihilation is seen as a way out and a way to be with the aborted child/children.

Anniversary reactions don’t disappear over time, unless over time the reactions are identified and their strength is weakened.

The grief which is experienced around the anniversary date is profound because the woman has accepted the guilt and reason for the abortion as her own, and this profound grief requires expression and working with in order that it may be dealt with and brought to a satisfactory conclusion as part of the abortion and part of her being a member of the human family and being a woman whose heart and soul bleeds at the death of her infant.

Anniversary reactions, especially as most often unconscious and unbidden, can be good because these reactions speak volumes about the marvellous design of the woman. That is, written within her being is the capacity to weep for her

child lost, even aborted children, long after the event. The anniversary reactions ensure that the child aborted is not forgotten and indeed ensures that no one passes by this world unremembered. What beautiful design is woman! What a magnificent creature God has created to help Him continue life through creation.

What beautiful design is woman that deep within her psyche remains the memory of a pregnancy even when that pregnancy was terminated and the most oft need following this termination is the need to suppress this action, the body mind and spirit remember and bring to the attention this memory.

What beautiful design is woman and how much is written into her being. So much so that not one of her children will be forgotten even when the mind tries hard to forget.

Human Dignity

The word “dignity” is rooted in the Latin word “dignus” which means worthy. So when we speak about human dignity we mean human worthiness or the value of a human being.

But then we need to ask worthy of whom? Or even worthy of what? What is the standard that we measure this worthiness on?

Of course many answers are possible and many books could be written to answer these questions but for this moment let me stay very simple (as a simple person am I).

I would answer the worthy question by saying that we are worthy because we are made in the image of God and within the design and Image are encrypted higher order consciousness powers. Further, within these powers the human being who is designed as “worthy” and enfolding this design is dignity, is a being who has emotions, has an intellect and has will power. And these lead the human being to act and react to actions and experiences unlike any other creation and with the essence of almost the divine.

Because of the capacity to think things through, to love, and make rational decisions, the higher order human being has a

design unlike any other of the creation. To love, to care, to remember, is a clear indication of a design which is like no other. A design which has written within it “special”. And the prototype of this “special” and this kind of “love” and this kind of dignity is Jesus. This reminds me of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI’s words in Spe Salve, “It is not science that redeems man. Man is redeemed by love”

The higher order aspect of the emotion “love” heals and redeems the human being and brings Mercy, another aspect of higher order action into life, and from this a still much higher act is given birth, another human and divinely conceived “forgiveness”

Forgiveness an infinitely worthy and dignified act which is only found in the human creation designed in the image and likeness of God.

Human beings have an infinite capacity for love, forgiveness, and honour and in this we speak a language unknown throughout all creation except the human. And again in this we speak words like “you matter to me. You are important. You are worthy of honour and dignity”. This again unlike other creation.

One of the things that our very dear and precious Holy Father John Paul II will always be remembered for is his writings on the value of the human being and his insistence of the dignity of the human person whose rights are universal and unchanging. According to his many writings such as Theology of the Body, Love and Responsibility, His many encyclicals especially Evangelium Vitae and Veritatis Splendour and others, and of course Vatican II document, The Church in the Modern World, a human being is always a human being and remains so even in its darkness. And with this vision in mind it is possible to see the most wounded in society as beings of dignity and worthy of honour, because these beings can love, act, think, create and care, but have for a time been lost and have not known how to find the way back. The Samaritan saw the dignity of the beaten man and stopped to help.

This upholding of the value and dignity of the human being re affirms and recapitulates the words of Genesis 1:27 that each and every human being is created in the Image and likeness of God and this reality affirms the basis of the dignity eternally assigned to the human.

The human creation from its prototype Jesus demands that the human being is assured dignity, love and honour.

What is Love?

God is Love Ps. 103.

Dear Friends,

During a Mass recently a beautiful clear thought came to mind and that is that “God is Love”. What we humans call love and where there is true love, unadulterated love, then God exists there.

In the creation of the human person God enfleshed “love.” That breath of God is a spark of “love” which animates the human being which until breathed into remains earthy matter.

Love makes the world go round, says many a song and indeed it is true. Love or God maintain creation in being in existence and wherever there is an absence of love there violence and death whether it is a slow death or a quick death. Where love is overshadowed by anti love then death becomes the outcome.

If we want to understand God then perhaps we might have a sneak view of Him through love and understanding what Love is.

What do scriptures say about Love? Love permeates the Holy Word with love The classic “God is Love.” We also have St Paul speak about love thus, “And it is this that remains, faith hope and love, and the greatest of them is love” (1Cor 13:13) and followed by many other references to love. And we

can look at almost every chapter and see the word Love found.

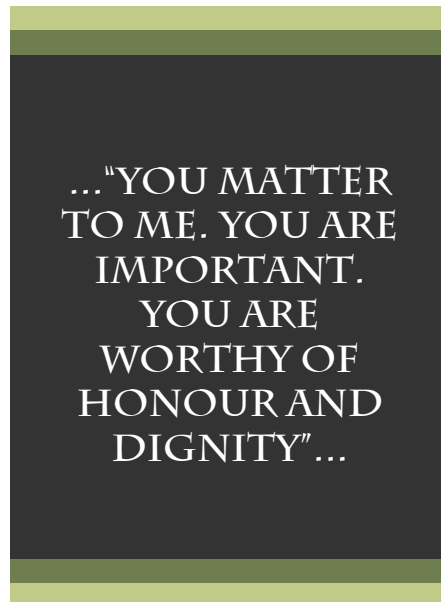
So what is love? What is this mystery called “love?”

Poetry, songs, dramas, movies, love stories have been written, sung, acted out and shown all depicting “love” in its many forms.

It has been described as a feeling, way, journey, even affection.

It has been called a challenge, a passion, a yearning, a desire. It has been sought after, lost, recognised, forfeited, abandoned, found and re found. It has been cosseted, cherished, and it has suffered.

Love in its many shades, forms and ways depicted cannot ever pass by and leave those it touches unchanged. True love must by its very nature change those it encounters.



True love enervates. True love gives of itself. True love gives birth to more love. True love is universal.

Every culture, race, colour, creed, know “love” and have “love” imprinted into their being. “You are my people I am your God” (Jer 31:31-33). He has imprinted a part of Himself into the human being so that He is recognized and can be known by or as “love”

Every culture has its own “love story” Every culture has “love” embedded into its consciousness. Every culture irrespective of its advanced status or even its most primitive status has in its understanding the idea and meaning called “love.” And indeed an idea it can be called, but more than idea this thing called “love” is always a mystery.

Dear friends as I wrote down these words and looked at them and then looked at abortion, euthanasia, and all other anti life mentality/acts that permeate our world today we can clearly see the totality of their anti love. Because none of these have “love” enfolding them and giving of itself in enfleshing these acts.

There is no love in abortion it is only death, even for those left living there is a change. There is no love in euthanasia it is saying yes to death because life and love is not good. There is no love even in homosexuality because whilst those in this milieu believe that there is love it surely cannot be because love gives of itself and desires to see this love extend and grow more and in this relationship there cannot be love which extends itself but a kind of “love” which ends with itself. It implodes and cannot grow. No matter how hard it is tried to make this legitimate it cannot be Love.

There is no love in a culture which destroys millions of children from the smallest (abortion) to older ones through abandonment, drugs, rampant sexuality, and a loss of innocence and knowing who they are.

Love has life, vision and has future and sees into eternity. Indeed it will always remain as mysterious as God.

Dinner for Life

Speakers, Musicians, Prizes, Silent Auction

Life Dinner 2011

A fundraiser for defending life.

Guest Speaker: Dr Patrick Fagan USA
The answer to abortion and euthanasia
Strong Families!

Venue: Aurora Receptions 14th May 2011
149 Donald Street
Brunswick East, Victoria. Melways Ref: 30 A5

Time: 6.30pm.Pre dinner drinks

Cost \$75 for 3 course meal (including drinks) pp
\$50 students.

RSVP 7/5/2011

To Phyllis Restall (03) 98160800 or 0429336053

Cheques to be made to Australian Family Association
(AFA) PO Box 251 Balwyn Vic 3103

Remember dear friends that you can request that a portion of your funds for this dinner to go towards the work of Victims of Abortion and to sit at my table. Yeah! The more attend the more \$ will be sent (portion) as donation to this work.

Special Letter Author unknown.

Dear Anne

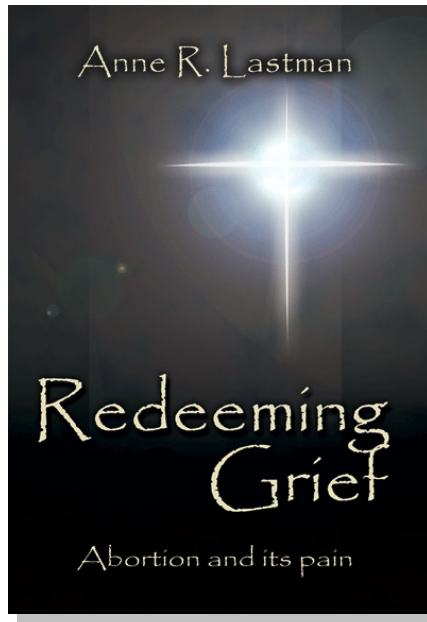
I am writing this letter to share with you an experience that I recently had when talking with some priests and others. I mentioned your work and your newsletter and asked them to share their thoughts. Their response was that they found your newsletters very confronting, even harrowing, and it disturbed them to such an extent that they did not want to read it.

I was quite concerned by their reactions and so I told them of an experience that I had with a mother of two children. When she discovered that she was pregnant for a third time she received all sorts of confusing advice. So she and her husband went to a family planning clinic where she was advised that if they wanted to fulfil their life dreams and maintain their good standard of living, then they should abort, and in their confusion they followed this advice and had the pregnancy terminated.

I encountered this woman whilst doing a shift at lifeline as a phone counsellor. She rang in and was in a hysterical state, crying and was inconsolable. I could do nothing as she could not hear me through her pain. What followed made it a very disturbing event for me. This poor woman rang in five times during the time I was on duty and it seemed to me she was becoming more and more hysterical each time she rang. I felt totally unable to cut through the grief and touch her.

I reported the case to my supervisor who told me that he was aware of her and that she was under full time care and her own counsellor was advised.

I told my priest friends that your newsletter may be confronting and harrowing to them but these events are life's reality.



Redeeming Grief is a reflection of and study of abortion grief, which is experienced by some women who choose to undergo this elective procedure. These reflections are the result of listening to over 1000 personal stories and listening to the expressions used by the women as they spoke about their decision to abort the life of their child. These reflections then attempt to reconstruct the meaning that this procedure has had for the aborting woman and how this one procedure has been the catalyst for life changes.

Redeeming Grief looks at abortion trauma and grief from the spiritual and the psychological perspective. Its influences on the individuals involved and society. It is hoped that the language used is reader friendly and the concepts (both spiritual and psychological) are also reader friendly.

AUD\$29.95 (inc GST)

Plus postage and handling

To order your copy of *Redeeming Grief*, please complete this order form, detach, and send with Cash, Cheque or Money Order to:

Victims Of Abortion,
PO Box 6094,
Vermont South,
Vic, 3133, Australia.

Name _____

Address _____

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Telephone No _____

Email _____

Number of copies _____ @ AUD \$29.95 each

P+H (per book) AUD \$3.45 (within Australia)

OR AUD \$8.70 (Asia Pacific)

OR AUD \$12.60 (Worldwide)

Total AUD \$ _____

I was hoping that they would see that confronted by a woman in a totally distressed state you are face to face with a human being, suffering a pain and anguish that is soul destroying and that they can see no end to the pain and suffering and believe me it is at times very harrowing. I don't think it's of any help to anyone if to save ourselves from a little discomfort that we put the newsletter back into the envelope and not read it and so we can ignore the plight of the poor souls.

My personal encounter with only one wounded soul has left me with recurring thoughts that will not go away. When she comes into my thoughts unannounced, I am compelled to pray for her.

Anne, humanly speaking I do not know how you have continued to do this work, confronted each day with such deep pain and suffering of these women.

I did see a glimmer of understanding in one of my priest friends who said that he knew of an elderly lady (in her 80's) who was still deeply troubled by the abortion she'd had as a young woman and the pain was still with her. Her comment was always "the pain never goes away"

I must confess that I too find your newsletter very disturbing and confronting but I believe that I can help in some small way by trying to listen to and share their pain and praying for those who are suffering that God will extend His healing mercy and love.

And I give thanks to God that He has called you to serve the needs of these women in such desperate and painful situation.

May God Bless and help you to do His work

(Please allow me to remain anonymous).

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter and sharing the story of your experience with a post abortive woman in pain.

I know that most priests don't read the newsletter because most cancellations I have are from priests and religious and mostly those who do not cancel put it aside. Though of course there are my marvellous beautiful exceptions.

It has been said to me that I am too "confronting" which seems to be a word of the moment especially for priests and religious. But this work is not a stroll in the garden type of

work.

It seems that I am not "compassionate" enough or even "melodramatic" (a words used by a pastor before cancelling) and "over the top."

But what you dear writer have written is how I begin all my sessions with new women and men and I see this daily and I hear their voice filled with pain daily. I journey with the girl as she sobs and I hold her gently as she calms down.

And slowly through the many sessions the weeping stops and we can start other work of recovery. But first the mourning, sobbing and weeping is important without many words needed.

These types of sessions can take up to quite a few sessions of pure sobbing, and that's OK. That's why I don't charge a fee for any counselling I do. Imagine introducing the topic of \$xx please for holding you while you weep.

I have often said that post abortion grief work is different than all other counselling and grief counselling because of the nature of the grief involved, and it requires a deep knowing of what it feels like and not the usual people skills of reflective listening, assertion skills, paraphrasing, reflecting back words spoken and reflecting back meanings and conflict resolution. The skills learned when studying counselling. Whilst great for generalised counselling, for abortion grief perhaps not so adequate.

These skills are good for a time in the future but the immediate needs of the woman who has aborted are much much deeper. Her needs are more intense and require much love and something more, just being and giving her permission to weep and weep.

The tears of this woman are not manipulative but indeed are tears of heart pain and these tears are not measured in sessions and duration of session.

Often it has been asked "how do you do it Anne?" My answer has to be "I don't know but I suspect that it's all the prayers offered for me and the work." For sixteen years this year.

That some people do not respect my work or me, especially those with pro abortion/pro choice beliefs is understood and I have to accept it as part of the work, and part of everyone's freedom. But sometimes I do find it painful especially when the criticism is personal and the response is loss of support.

Today I only see people who have been referred and are known and not others. Word of mouth and personal referrals do keep me well and truly busy. I don't do phone

...I HEAR THEIR VOICE FILLED WITH PAIN...

Letters

Dear Anne,

Hold on now! In your latest issue of “Broken Branches”, with your hinting that maybe in Australia’s recent natural disasters our God the Creator somehow is having His say to the world’s statement “God you can keep your most wonderful gift of Life in that unborn baby, and we are saying and seeing that refusal in hundreds of thousands in fact millions throughout the world.”

Anne, you’re going backwards into Old Testament thinking, viz, that God punishes evil or the sinner. Sure! That somehow He is having His say..Includes all the fine, even minute innuendos of evil, hurt, suffering etc and we too quickly think God can’t create bad things. That He saw all of His creation and judged it good. Let’s leave all that smart philosophy (and theology! Ok OK) aside for a moment, and allow the possibility, even, that God is somehow *behind*, permitting an influence on all disasters.

My thought (and yours too Anne) is, so what’s wrong with going backwards into Old Testament thinking? Jesus did, so many times, couldn’t help Himself (pardon the heresy!) soaked in it from birth He was and so are we! Anne, ever read the Eucharistic Prayer No. 1 of the Mass, where we Catholics recall, renew and INCLUDE Abraham, Cain, Abel, Melchizedek stories? If there is TRUTH anywhere in the Bible, Old or New Testaments, that Truth belongs to Our God of Love, and if Love needs be tough.....well.. the rest is God’s wisdom.

Another word for this message is, DISCIPLINE. God our Father’s disciplining His wayward sons and daughters. (another discussion for another time)

Hence, Anne, you may just be on to a message, a lesson from our Love-God, in your questioning, wondering if our natural disasters could be a divine message.

God’s love to you Anne,
Fr. P.K. Anonymous. (Vic)

PS Over to you Anne, but I do reckon it’s about time someone brought God into the big public picture of the happenings and not just our private little ones. He has been carefully omitted for the last good few years.
Fr PK Anon.

Thanks Fr PK for your support I appreciate your care for me and your other (truck) support.

Anne

Dear Anne,

May Jesus and Mary be praised!!

Enclosed is a donation to help with your wonderful work. I am asking St Mary of the Cross, Mary McKillop, to pray for you personally as well as for your work. Some holy people would say you are “under attack”. A sure sign that your work is being too successful for Lucifer and his cohorts.

God Bless you.
Sr. Marie (NSW)

Sr Marie thank you. You have hit it right on the head about attack Lots of prayers will be good and helpful.
Anne

Dear Anne

I have just finished reading your article in the latest Helpers newsletter. It was inspired and inspiring - thank you. Be assured of our continuing prayers for your work and for you - that God will sustain you and nurture you, as you do for others. His strength will be made perfect in your weakness.

Love
Kerrie

Dear Anne,

Enclosed is a donation for your wonderful work. Your thoughts about all the world disasters being nature’s way of responding to the evil of the killing of innocents is very thought provoking and powerful. It certainly struck a chord in my heart.

God Bless
Frances NSW

Thanks Frances I have appreciated your ongoing support.

Dear Anne,

Congratulations on your wonderful work. You are an inspiration to many.
Kind regards and God Bless

Fr Ian. Mc I(S.A.)

Thanks Father for your encouraging words I don’t feel like an “inspiration” right now.

counselling. However, by being able to speak to callers over the time I have been able to save 6 babies from death. One of them is now my beautiful and precious and much loved Godson Bryce. Love him and his sister and they are gorgeous and so are their parents.

Since I returned to work this year I had in my office a young Miss (Angela...Yeah right!) whom I agreed to see but was unsure about her even as I made the appointment. Her language was cold and sterile for an abortive young woman. Her language included words like “ambivalence” “Post Abortion Syndrome, anniversary symptoms etc” No genuine grief wracked woman refers to herself as having post abortion syndrome. Her symptoms were classic textbook regurgitations. However, I still went ahead and kept the appointment with her and sure enough the experience was difficult. I knew I was being set up, so it made it easier to sit back and give nothing away.

What was hoped to be achieved I don't quite know but I suspect it was to see whether I charged, after saying that I don't charge, whether I said something incriminating, whether I had permission form signed. I don't know but it was an awful experience. In fact I could use the same words as those priests in the above letter and say it was “harrowing” for me.

Since the legalisation of abortion in Victoria it has become more difficult and I'm sure that the knives are out for those of us who work in the life field. That is why we have a need for so much more prayer and support from friends and supporters and our various denominational pastors. We need these to support us and not to turn their backs on us because it's “too confronting.” Evil exists both before the abortion and after the abortion and this evil takes no prisoners.

Dear friends I appreciate your care in whatever way you can offer it and I appreciate the letter writer and his/her words of understanding, comfort and support.

Anne

As I come to end of this newsletter, I want to thank an anonymous donor who wanted to remain so, thank you, and to the other supporters you know who you are. I appreciate your care. Thanks also to Graham D. I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

I don't really like to ask anymore so thank you to those people who remember. Again I appreciate your care.

Please continue to pray for my people on this list and pray for me also. It is getting difficult.

Debbie, Sarah, Allison, Barbara, Natalie, Shirley, Julie, Heather, John, Roger, Anna, Patsy, Jacquie, Carol Joann, David, Koreol, Maggie, Rose, Bianca, Charlene, Linda Stephanie

RIP Margaret McManus

A dear friend and supporter who I had only spoken to just a little while ago, and she said she hadn't been well but her death came as a shock.

Rest well with the Lord, beautiful young lady.



Anne Lastman

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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 anne@victimsofabortion.com.au to be added to the email list.