

Broken Branches

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

Issue 99 - June/July 2014

Issue 99 mid year

Dear Friends, as I come to write this issue of newsletter it shocked me to see that we are already mid way through the year 2014. Where have the last six months gone? It seems only like yesterday that we came back from Christmas break. And dear friends look at the issue number 99! I have written 99 issues of Broken Branches! Clever little person I am, aren't I! Hope you have enjoyed my writing and the journey that we have both taken. Thank you to all of you have read, commented, sent in ideas and did not cancel because I wrote something that maybe you didn't like.

RIP Fr D Byrne
RIP Senator B. Harradine
RIP Dr Les Hemingway

The Australian pro-life movement has recently lost three of our staunchest supporters in the death of former independent Senator Brian Harradine, the Reverend Des Byrne P.E. and Dr Les Hemingway. All three supporters were great supporters of my work and this newsletter and really staunch supporters of all things pro life.

Senator Harradine stood firm for life in a parliamentary arena not known for many strong supporters or for being devoted to the life issue. Senator Harradine was a man who was absolutely devoted to the cause of life and defence of the preborn and others threatened.

We remember Senator Harradine not only for his will for life and also we now remember his family in their loss.

Indeed the pro life movement has been deprived of a friend, supporter, and colleague and we will miss his support. Thank you dear Senator Harradine for your dedication to the defence of the sanctity of life.

I also remember with much love and gratitude Fr Des Byrne who was a dear friend and indeed I had spoken with him not long before he passed away. I'm so glad I spoke with him. Thank you Fr Des for your encouraging words, for your emotional and spiritual support and thank you for your ongoing financial help. You will be much missed. However now RIP with Our Lord.

And most recently (May 11) I remember with much love and esteem the passing of a strong supporter and pro life doctor Dr Les Hemingway. I had only heard from Verna (his wife) a week before his passing and when I saw an envelope with her name on it I knew even before I opened it. A deep sadness came over me. Thank you Les, thank you for your most recent comment in my newsletter (issue 97). I have appreciated all the correspondence, support and care I have received from both Les and Verna. Rest in peace now dear friend and to Verna and family...love.

A great tragedy

Dear friends, since the last issue of the newsletter went out, and on Easter Sunday, in a real life horror story brought to our screen and news services, we were told of the murder of two little girls allegedly by their father. What horror on a day that should be one of glory.

Bi-monthly newsletter of **Victims of Abortion**

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When I heard and listened stunned and in horror at that breaking news and its details I was reminded of another recent murder of young boy Luke Batty in front of his mother and friends (by his father) of a little girl called Darcy Freeman (4 yrs old) tossed over a bridge (father) to her death, of the 3 Farquaharson children 10,7 and 2 yrs old (father) and other names written in our inglorious history. Why? Why? Why so much violence against the most innocent and trusting and loving? Why?

Have we become so desensitised that it has become possible not to feel? That the first answer to a difficulty is murder of innocence?

And I have to say ...yes.

First of all we have created a society where innocence is murdered legally...abortion. Murder of innocence (abortion) is spoken about nonchalantly and so matter of fact that slowly it has become what I have always spoken about and wrote about and feared "normal." I have said in interview many times we are in danger of making abortion "normal" and following that all death of innocence newsworthy for two days on prime time TV then onto next and newer story. We have made death ho hum, "normal"

We are heading towards a society where innocence sick, elderly, incapacitated can be murdered legally. Belgium legalised euthanasia for children Feb 14th, 2014, "unwanted" life is not tolerated and can in fact be thought of as disposed of at will. We have slowly created a society that speaks of murder using sanitised language and "concerned language" so that no imagery is formed in the mind, and then we wonder why atrocities happen.

Abortion up to full term is violence and nothing other than infanticide and death of a child and legal. Yet the media is deathly silent about the matter.

Euthanasia is violence against another child or adult or weakened person and is now making inroads and in places legal and thus giving this type of "legalised murder" respectability. Why?

Because it is feared or perhaps even thought that the suffering person will suffer excessively. But who is it who will suffer excessively? The ailing one or the one watching and waiting? Like Peter, James and John (Mt 26:40) we want to go to sleep and not wait, watch and pray because it's too hard, so better to "sleep."

Women don't want to give hospitality to a child for only a number of days so it can be born alive and then donate (if not wanted) as a gift to other loving parents who have prayed and longed for a child. It's the "me" mentality" which has changed society and which brings great suffering to all.

Why are we scandalised and horrified when a sense of rage is played out visibly in our society as was the case of the murder of the mentioned children. Only because these events have been brought to our screens and to our vision by the media and so we can see visually the horrors. Abortion and its brutalisation of the child serenely growing in its supposed safe place (mother's womb) is hidden by the same media. I think its called covert compliance.

This same media which will make much about these child murders will not bring to vision a dismembered child. This apparently will disturb the sensitivities of viewers and bring into question the "rightness" and "efficacy" and "right" which is demanded re the abortion issue. Will bring into question the lie told that what is growing in the womb is not a child but some unrecognizable bunch of matter or clump of genetic product. And in a society like ours which is supposed so advanced this is bought not because there is no evidence but because it is convenient to believe the lie.

We have a violent society. We have assisted this society to become violent because we have Okayed violence beginning with the youngest to the eldest and those (like Hitler) who are thought to be not “quite right.” We have said that only those of a certain size can be recognized and so the media brings to us to view on screen horrors which they deem newsworthy and not others which are deemed as "rights."

Indeed we have a violent society, one which we have created with our demands, laws, visuals, games and above all loss of God, inner peace, and knowledge of right and wrong. We are reaping what we have sown.

According to Pope Francis, recently “For a Christian, it is part of the witness of the Gospel to protect life with courage and love in all its stages.” (April 11, 2014.) *All its stages and not when the media deem it newsworthy to show us.*

For those of us who are at the forefront of pro life work we need to remember that the media will not help us and we need to remember that each of us is a walking Gospel. Each of us every time we defend a life in whatever way, the Gospel is spoken in word and action. Every time we defend life we speak the word “Amen” as God’s representative.

There is no excuse for being coy and we should not be afraid to call life, “life” because we know that it is life from conception and a spark of God. And we know that so many good people get involved in protection of the animal species, yet the human being in the image of God is tossed away in some bucket or as medical waste or sold as experimental material.

We have no excuse. We know what is happening but choose to remain silent.

Weeping tears of Sorrow and Regret

Since the last issue of the newsletter I have had a visit to my office from one of the girls whom I have helped not only not to have an abortion but have walked with her as she continued her pregnancy.

At the beginning of our relationship together I asked her if I could place her on prayer list and get her involved with others and she said “no please Anne in case someone reads it and knows its me” and so I respected her wishes but you have prayed for her I know.

Well she has had her baby, a little girl some months ago and one day recently came in with her beautiful bundle to introduce her to me and she was so happy and I was so happy holding baby. It was a time of beauty and silence.

During our time together about an hour, we spoke about her coping and family’s relationship with baby

(very happy though when first told of pregnancy told her to abort, now very happy with their granddaughter).

But I could see that something was troubling her. Her voice quivered at times. She looked lovingly at the baby, I was assured she was managing well and baby was doing all the right things. Financially she was OK, so all seemed to be as it should.

But still the “counsellor” in me

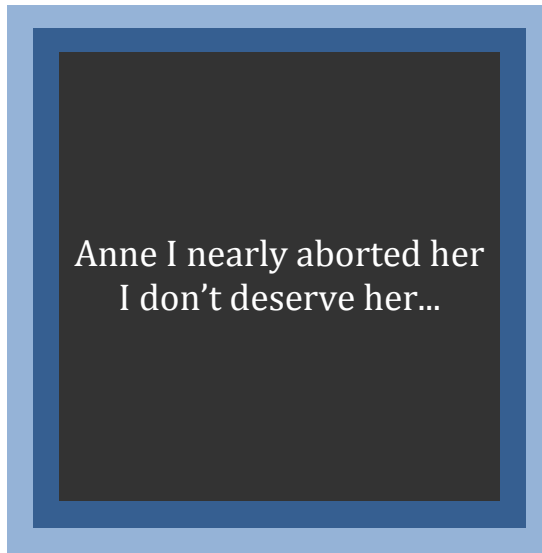
could see something was amiss.

In time the baby needed to be breast fed and she asked if she could do this “of course you can” and as she started to feed the infant the tears rolled and rolled and rolled down her face onto the baby’s face. I was reminded of the Mother of Jesus holding him in her arms dead Son and her tears washing his face.

I waited for a time to let this happen and then asked her what the tears were about.

“Anne I nearly aborted her I don’t deserve her maybe God will take her away from me because I wanted to abort her. I’m afraid to even sleep because what if she dies because I wanted to abort her. I love her so much. I can’t believe that I wanted to abort her.”

And of course I then understood why she came in to my office and I am so glad that she did and I am so glad that she has allowed me to be part of her life and the baby’s life.



We were able to speak about her fears and that they were real but not to believe them, and I was able to assure her that God doesn't work like that. That He has loved her and trusted her with the life of this little one and to fully and completely enjoy all the years they will share together.

This, dear friends is not the first time I have heard the same words spoken or seen the tears flowing over the baby. These tears are the tears of healing, the tears which led me to call my book *Redeeming Grief* because these are the tears shed in sorrow not even over what was done but even over what was momentarily considered. Indeed these are the redeeming and healing tears. These are the tears of regret and sacredness.

It has been suggested that if a woman continues to weep over her aborted child then she is "not healed." This is utter rubbish (its been publicly said of me too). We weep because of affectional bonds which a mother has to her baby/ies (like miscarried/stillbirth who are never forgotten) and even to think that she might have harmed her little one brings the tears, this shows how deep the bonds are etched into her heart. Confirming the words of Is 49:15 can a mother forget the baby at her breast?" Even if this was possible and God says no it is not possible, then He will not forget the child.

Even when a mum has to stand by when her baby is sick and she feels helpless and would rather it was she herself was sick. So too when a mother has aborted her baby or even thought about aborting her baby then the memory of the thought causes anguish. When a woman aborts her baby she cannot forget what's written in her being. She has aborted "mothering" but not her being a "mother." Or "motherhood."

For this mother in front of me the thought that she tentatively considered at the beginning of the pregnancy that abortion might be an option, now looking into the face of her beautiful baby brings an ache unknown by another unless they have experienced the same. This is a Mum's right to feel. For me seeing these tears and being able to be of help is the great joy of my work.

Dear friends what led me to write about this event is a letter I received and which is printed in letters page. It's beautiful and confirms what I know and have seen, and what needs to happen is to try and encourage all health professionals not to think "abortion" as a first option when an inconvenient pregnancy occurs,

because even the word has the power to come back to haunt.

I have in past issues of newsletter written about abortion for foetal abnormality and my heartfelt desire that abortion is not offered to the hurting parents. To offer alternatives. To encourage the parents to hold onto their child as long as the child lives. To tell it a million times how much it is loved and welcomed. To do all things in a short time given to them so that that child's journey in this life will have meant something.

The option for abortion simply says to the parents of a disabled and dying child and child short to live that their child is not worth much and to dispose of it quickly. For whose benefit? The parents will grieve either way. So why not allow the infant to be born and with great dignity and love have his/her life story acknowledged and recorded? And a burial worthy of a human being from heaven be given.

Perhaps the reason we cannot do this is because we have become a disposable society. We dispose of what is inconvenient and unwanted including human beings.

We have much to answer for.

Activism v Counselling

Dear friends, I have often been asked why I don't make more political statements, make more political comments, take political stand. I have thought about this and my answer has to be that I am first and foremost a post abortion grief counsellor. I deal with the aftermath of the event of the abortion. I cannot wear two hats, that is activist and counsellor, that is, a qualified counsellor, I need to stand back and help to heal.

Where possible I will make a comment, write letters to editor (though never published) write submissions and even when the abortion laws were being proposed for reform in 2008 I sent submission to the Law Reform Commission and wrote to key parliamentarians but it is not my better work. The best work which I do is to work slowly, methodically, gently to change the belief and outlook of one who is hurting and believes after abortion that she is "worthless" and That I think is my work.

I also believe that the Lord is sending me different kinds of clients which frighten me a little, those with early childhood sexual abuse in their history. This frightens me because no one wants to hear about such

A disgusting topic but with marvellous gentle work, non judgemental work, non rushed work, even these wounds can be healed. I have seen that with the Lord nothing is impossible.

I speak about this because it has been suggested that I should be doing more to help pro life politicians and get out there and be "loud" because I know the reality of what abortion does. I have taken this criticism on board and still I think that my best work is the one where I have seen someone come to me broken and leave saying thank you Anne I'm ok.

There are others who are marvellous political activists and I am not worthy to tie their shoe laces, but frankly I wouldn't send a fly to them for counselling even for all their good intentions. We have a need to know what we are called to do and then allow Him to use us with the gifts and talents he has given to us.

My heart looks into the heart of a hurting one, even deeply into years past and be able to see where the poisoned seed lies and slowly extricate this seed without causing further hurt. If I tried this with politicians I am sure they would think I need some help myself. Mind you there have been a few times when I knew I could help several of them. ☺

I have been able to write a near 200 page book on sexual abuse of children and the after effects because I have sat and listened for years at that pain, the words, and behaviours.



REDEEMING GRIEF

ABORTION AND ITS PAIN

ANNE R. LASTMAN

REVISED EDITION

FOREWORD BY HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP BARRY J. HICKEY

NEW REVISED EDITION!

REDEEMING GRIEF is a reflection of over 17 years of counselling 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 1500 personal stories and listening to the expressions used by the women as they speak 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, and 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.

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(Nearly ready for publishing...yeah). I have been able to write *Redeeming Grief* because I have sat for years and listened to abortion pain but I don't have the verbal skills to spar with ill willed politicians and those whose heart has gone cold. These I leave to others whose verbal and political knowledge and skills outshine mine and those of the politicians.

An End to Abortion

Dear friends for those of you have a computer this link below is of great interest. For those who do not use these mechanical little terrors who have a mind of their own, the article has a sentence of wonderful interest.

This article is about the incremental closure of abortion facilities in USA. The sentence in question says "These incremental laws are part of a greater strategy to end abortion in our country," she said. "It's part of it, and one day our country will be free of abortion."

It appears that challenges to Roe v Wade are being successful and closures of abortion facilities (please never use clinics, clinics are for healing people) e.g. Texas more than a dozen facilities have closed.

Planned Parenthood Federation also weighed in with "we are deeply concerned that women in a vast stretch of this country are in real danger of losing the ability to access legal abortion safely."

Dear friends perhaps with more hidden prayer warriors and more, much more fighters, we will see the day (I hope in my time) abortion will be a thing of an aberrant generation, a thing that others of the future will look back upon with much shame.

Today we look back on Hitlers, Stalins, and all the other despots and their works with shame. A moment of madness perhaps there will come a time when those who come after us will look back and also see what we have done of our past and make reparation for our terrible sins.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/22/us/politics/new-bill-spreads-abortion-limits-in-south.html?hp&r=2&assetType=nyt_now&assetType=nyt_now.

A New Research

Recently (Thursday May 8) in one of our daily papers a very small article appeared deeply embedded within this erudite tome. The article spoke about scientists confirming that not only does a baby attuned brain exist but it really and truly has a purpose! And guess what? This brain, according to psychologists (who by the way for the most part, don't believe that post abortion grief exists) changes during pregnancy in order to help mothers to bond with their baby.

How strange, humanity has been in existence for millions of years and mothers have attached to their infants and protected their infants for millions of years (except maybe for the last 50 years) and now we have a research which confirms this?

Perhaps it's a good thing this research because it affirms what we pro lifers have been speaking about and drawing attention to and for my part speaking about and saying that abortion hurts women because the brain which has been activated by pregnancy begins to change in order to recognise and welcome its child and when an abortion occurs then this goes contrary to what the brain, heart and mind of the mother knows.

Apparently this study's spokesperson from London University, Dr Victoria Bourne, says of their findings

"The results suggest that during pregnancy, there are changes in how the brain processes facial emotions that ensure that mothers are neurologically prepared to bond with their babies at birth,"

The right side of the brain, dear friends is the side which is involved with the non verbals, with perception, emotion, sensation, facial expression, instinctive survival responses, and *emotional and sensory memory*.

During pregnancy this is the side of the brain which is strongest and strengthened in order to be able to be attentive to and prepare and bond with the new baby. The body and mind and heart preparing for the arrival and so it makes sense that after an abortion there is pain because the part of the brain which is involved with emotion and preparing for birth is suddenly made to confront something which it cannot be attached to...separation and death of its child because it has been preparing for a different outcome, a bonding.

Ps 8.. reminds me that we are so wonderfully made, this bonding is another sign. Why have we lost this knowledge?

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/276446.php>.

Letters

Dear Anne,

Please find enclosed my cheque for a donation to assist you in your great and necessary work on behalf of the unborn, terminally ill and those suffering post abortion grief.

I have read your writings in AD2000 and elsewhere and as a defender of life myself, I find your words and work very encouraging.

Attached is a copy of signage to be adhered to the back window of my car and I have used an expression of yours from your book *Redeeming Grief* "A baby dies. A woman suffers" (then some private info).

Keep up this good work and be assured of my thoughts and prayers in your endeavours. Go bless you and those you love and those you serve.

Paul S (NSW)

Thank you dear Paul for both your donation and lovely words and support. Anne

Dear Anne,

I keep thinking that you can't get any better with your God influenced writings?

Wrong again, AL, and glad that I was proved wrong again!!

God Bless

Errol & Alison xxxx

Hi Anne,

Thank you for the articles you sent through

I have also read part of your book; I especially loved reading Leigh's story. I'm in the middle of writing about my story at the moment. I had an abortion when I was 19 nearly 8 years ago. I have named my baby in the last month her name is Sophia which means wisdom and I really am excited to one day meet her and give her my love and hugs.

Thanks for sharing and the work you do with women makes my heart fill with hope and purpose, these women like you and me need hope the most. love and his unrelenting grace

Linda

Dear Anne

Just to let you know I am happy to receive further newsletters by email instead of mail. Thank you for the newsletter. I appreciate and admire the depth and breadth with which you consider this whole issue- for the individual and society at large. This was very evident in *Redeeming Grief*.

I have not gotten around to writing previously but there have been a number of issues of the newsletter where I have thought about writing to you to show support- particularly where you have touched a raw nerve for other readers who found what you were saying was distasteful.

I did love the last newsletter with the letter from Tendi to her baby Ishmael. It was very moving and showed how much work she had done with you to have reached the point of expressing herself with such love and clarity amidst the pain.

I did want to mention to you a story of someone I know who was very distressed at having considered abortion for her baby who had a terminal illness. The mother was pressured- by family and her doctor - and for 2 terrible days she did consider aborting (she was told to "set your religious beliefs aside"). She decided not to abort. The baby's illness followed its natural course and he did die in utero some months later. The thing is in spite of her natural distress that her baby died, when she told me her story, the overwhelming focus was her trauma and shock that she had even considered abortion. Doctors actually need to be aware of the impact of even suggesting abortion to a patient as this could have longer term ramifications even if the patient does not go through with the abortion. I have not seen this aspect of the topic discussed elsewhere but I am sure it is an issue as there is pressure on doctors to offer patients "options". There is also probably very little permission for women to express their dismay or offence at being offered such options.

As a newly trained counsellor, I am very pleased to hear that you are giving talks at conferences etc as I think changing the culture amidst the counselling profession is another arm of cultural change on this whole topic.

May God continue to bless your work and those who engage with you in the courageous process of coming to terms with the impact of such a life changing choice in their lives...

Fiona

Thank you Fiona.

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your continuing to send me newsletters I have enjoyed them so much over the years and your vast knowledge is to be commended. However dear Anne I have to ask you to remove me from Newsletter list as I am going into care and I am almost totally blind.

Be assured that I will continue to support you and pray for your ministry.

Enclosed I enclose a \$... for stamps. Were I am going they receive your bulletin so hopefully will continue to keep up with you.

God Bless you dear.

June K (NSW)

Thank you dear June I have appreciated your care for me. Anne

Crying After Abortion.

In a Recent discussion with a midwife who has worked in a hospital where abortions are carried out, the question was posed to me “Anne why don’t the women cry before they go into? Why do they burst into tears when they are roused from anaesthesia? Why didn’t they let us know before that they don’t want this to happen?”

My answer had to be “because before the abortion (for whatever the reason) they were holding on to their very breath. They couldn’t let go because for them to be there had to be something urging forward to have the abortion. Something or someone making her abort even if it was her own choice for career or other functional purposes, she had to hold onto her “self” in order to be able to proceed with what she thought had to be done.

After the abortion it’s almost like exhaling. It’s done and suddenly the reality hits home and a turning into a foetal position and wanting to be left alone. This is a normal. I have heard it many times. The “foetal position” is simply for her a return to her own need for comfort for infancy, curling, because she is hurting.

What this requires of those attending to the girl/woman is gentleness because at this moment she feels the most terrible pain possible.

For those girl/women who say “problem over” this is the ambivalence often spoken about but this is temporary. It’s a realisation that whatever issues the pregnancy would have caused are suddenly gone but then comes the night time, the alone time, the thinking time. So for this woman for whom all seems now problem free, also gentleness please.

Dear Friends as I come to end of this issues of newsletter please, please, please don’t forget \$\$\$ support it has been so poor only about a dozen individuals have kept me going. So please.

Life Dinner

Don’t forget pro life dinner moonlight receptions 14th June 7.30pm \$80 pp ask to sit at my table. It helps me financially. Please ring Phyllis 0429336053. Or (03) 9816 0800. Love to see you there.

Before I come to the end of this you may notice that I have used a larger font, this is because of requests by my more senior supporters who have difficulty reading the smaller font so please smile and I love to have them as supporters.

For Fr Leo and Fr Paul, and others who have requested information about my cancer treatment...the answer is one day good another not so good. My hair is falling out! Not fair!!! Just what a female needs! Good for males not attractive for females.

Please continue to pray for me and my usuals Chris, Christine, Kerry (new) Marlene, Chloe, Greg, Jayne, John (new) Jessica, Susan, (new Anna-urgent and serious) Amy, Mary (new) Melissa, Sarah, Tendi, (new Anna) Jade, Marilyn, Barry (new) Tara. Please continue praying for Andrew whose story you have read in October newsletter he needs prayer, and pray for a very special person called “Joe” more on him later.

Thank you to three anonymous donors.



Anne Lastman

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Broken Branches – By email!

Dear Friends,

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

