

Broken Branches

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

Issue 109 – Feb/Mar 2016

Welcome 2016

Welcome dear friends to 2016. This is a special year for this charism of Victims of abortion. This is the 20th anniversary of this work and the registration of the name Victims of Abortion.

Who would have thought! And imagine in 20 years I have never written an invoice! Whenever I say this or make such a statement people look at me and I'm sure they must see someone with two heads but it's true, I have never written an invoice.

From the very beginning I've always believed that if the Lord wants this work to continue He will ensure that the funds will come. He is in charge of the finances. Mind you there have been some really scary moments. Moments when I've even started to plan what I might do with my life after VOA but then immediately the cavalry arrived with \$\$\$ and rescue happened.

The decision not to charge was not made lightly or because I'm angelic but made because right at the beginning of my work I lost two girls because one couldn't afford \$25 and the other couldn't afford \$10 and even though I said to both of them that I would see them for free embarrassment would not permit them to continue. Hence I decided to find a way (newsletter) to support an office and I would do the work.

In this way I would begin to slowly educate public on abortion wounds and bring before the eyes of public the after effects of abortion whilst at the same time have a permanent place to help victims who have already been wounded by their abortion experience and were at the time beginning to emerge speaking about the pain.

I must admit it was experimental and left in the hands of the Lord and He has helped and supported me (through you) as I created and developed a healing journey and programme which evolved and grew more as time passed.

Creating a healing journey for the client so that at the end of the journey a new person emerges, not forgetting...never

Forgetting, but remembering with love and pride and honour the life story of the other, their precious baby. That child who was supposed to have passed by unrecognised, unremembered and unmourned but instead who has made a deep impact and is now remembered and honoured for life.

Over the years I've helped, together with the Helpers of God's Precious Infants, start a Children's Memorial Garden in the grounds of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in South Melbourne. The Helpers installed it and I keep the names of babies (on bronze plaques) being added to it. There's lots of them now.

Imagine every time someone reads a child's name that child is remembered and it has not passed by unnoticed. The help and support you dear friends have given to keep me going has enabled this to continue to this day. There are two more plaques hopefully coming up soon. Two more babies remembered because we all (including you) cared.

Because of your care and support over the years, I know that there are 19 children who were born and today are going to school. 18 of the children and their mums are in contact with me and I love them immensely. I know, because Aunty Anne (me) buys the kids school bits and pieces just to show she cares and wishes she could see them off to school but she can't.

But dear friends because I was able to be present for the Mums when they needed a little support the children were born and are grown up and happy and beautiful and loved and have siblings who are also loved. Oh, and there is another little one in mummy's tummy coming soon. All this because of your support.

Several years ago I was working so hard that I nearly burnt out. I was seeing 23 people a week and all with grief and abuse issues and it was also the time (I didn't know it at the time) when my cancer was making itself felt. But with God's help we all got through it and my girls got through it and the cancer was attended to and the treatments (including many radiotherapy treatments) were attended to and continuing (hormone therapy) for several more years (three more) and I'm really happy that the Lord has

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permitted and blessed me with this marvellous gift of this work.

When I began this work I didn't know where it would lead to but it has led to a much deeper knowledge of post abortion grief and trauma, it has led to the writing of a book on the topic *Redeeming Grief, Abortion and its Pain* and more recently *Hidden Pain An insight into childhood sexual abuse*. It has led to articles being written and published in journals and magazines.

This work has allowed me to be a guest and speaker at national and international conferences and be able to present at some fabulous international grief and trauma conferences.

I remember some years back when attending a conference in Lourdes, France (as a speaker) standing in front of the Basilica and weeping deeply and uncontrollably. I felt unworthy to be there. A stranger next to me asked "are you OK" and I replied, "I don't deserve to be here" he replied "none of us deserves to be here but mother calls us. She has called you here so you should be here" (It turns out he was a visiting Bishop I saw him later celebrating Mass and being introduced...Oh goodness.).

You see I felt I didn't deserve to be there because I had had two abortions and felt I didn't deserve good things to happen to me and then that stranger, no doubt sent to me, assured me that "mother called me to be here" from then on whenever I am invited anywhere I accept and I rejoice and thank Mother and her beautiful Son because I know that I am going to say something that someone is going to need to hear whether it's about abortion, sexual abuse or even pornography or emotional abuse. I know I'm going to speak a word that is going to be needed to be heard and to reach and touch someone's heart.

I no longer feel that it is all my doing but feel loved, forgiven and it's the Lord's doing. I've seen all the miracles not only in my own life (forgiveness, cancer, epilepsy and other health issues) but in the lives of the "girls" whom He has brought to me and together we have helped them through the dark night of pain.

False humility is the devil's domain genuine humility is

acknowledging the great Mercy of God and the great works He does in our life and being thankful and grateful that even in our weakness and sinfulness He is able to love and forgive us and comes after us even when it seems like we "don't deserve it."

And dear friends for these 20 years at your service and the service of the Lord, and for your kindness and your support I and the "girls" you've helped, thank you and bless you. And I do hope you continue to support us. We can't do it without you. So please don't forget us.

Dear friends one of my readers has sent me in this beautiful piece to share with me I have a feeling that I have read it and shared it before but just in case I haven't it's too nice not to share it again. So here goes: (thanks Carolyn)

The Woman

Anon

When God created women he was working late on the 6th day An angel came by and said: "why spend so much time on that one?"

And the Lord answered, "Have you seen all the specifications I have to meet to shape her?"

"She must be washable, but not made of plastic, have more than 200 moving parts which all must be replaceable and she must function on all kinds of foods.

She must be able to embrace several kids at the same time, give a hug that can heal anything from a bruised knee to a broken heart and she must do all this with only two hands."

The angel was impressed.

"Just two hands...impossible! And this is the standard model?"

"Too much work for one day... wait until tomorrow and then complete her."

I will not” said the Lord, “I am so close to complete this creation, which will be the favourite of my heart.

“She cures herself when sick and she can work 18 hours a day.”

The angel came nearer and touched the woman. But you have made her soft Lord.

“She is soft” said the Lord, “But I have also made her strong” “you can’t imagine what she can endure and overcome.”

“Can she think?” the Angel asked. The Lord answered.

“Not only can she think. She can reason and negotiate.”

The angel touched the woman’s cheek... “Lord it seems this creature is leaking! You have put too many burdens on her.”

“She is not leaking...it’s a tear” the Lord corrected the Angel.

“What is it for?” asked the Angel and the Lord said.

“Tears are her ways of expressing grief, her doubts, her love, her loneliness, her suffering and her pride.”

This made a big impression on the Angel, “Lord you are a genius. You thought of everything. The woman is indeed marvellous!”

Indeed she is!

Woman has strength that amazes man. She can handle trouble and carry heavy burdens.

She holds happiness. Love and opinions. She smiles when feeling screaming. She sings when she feels like crying, cries when she is happy and laughs when she is afraid.

She fights for what she believes in. stands up against injustice. She does not take “no” for an answer when she can see a better solution. She gives herself so her family can thrive. Takes her friend to the doctor if she is afraid.

Her love is unconditional. She cries when her kids are victorious. She is happy when her friends do well. She is glad when she hears of a wedding or birth.

Her heart is broken when a next of kin or friend dies. But she gets the strength to get on with life. She knows that a kiss and a hug can heal a broken heart.

There is only one thing wrong with her,

She forgets what she is worth....

Group (Support) work for PAS

During the Christmas break I had an unusual phone call with a request for group work for post abortive women. Do I run such group or would I facilitate such a group and my answer has to be NO to both questions.

For women who have had abortions and are not coping and Want to share their experience. The support groups would meet regularly and talk and share their experiences and feelings about their abortion/s.

I don’t know of such a group but more importantly and I am not sure I agree with them in this case of post abortion matters. Imagine a group of women meeting and talking about taking their babe/ies they took to be killed. When the work of counselling is done well, thoroughly, and complete, the woman should be able return to a normal life. To living. To laughing to caring for their families and

friends. Not forgetting the baby, but returning to life, a new person, more sensitive, gentler, more loving but returning to life and laughter. I’m sorry I haven’t encouraged “peer support” in this area.

It is not that I do not respect support groups but I sincerely believe that it would not be a good this for post abortion issues. Although I do believe sexual abuse issues can support a group. I have always found it difficult to imagine a group meeting to discuss the termination of the life of a child and to have that as the central point of reference for the group

I understand that someone else may think differently but I believe that when counselling is done well a client leaves smiling and ready to meet the world again.

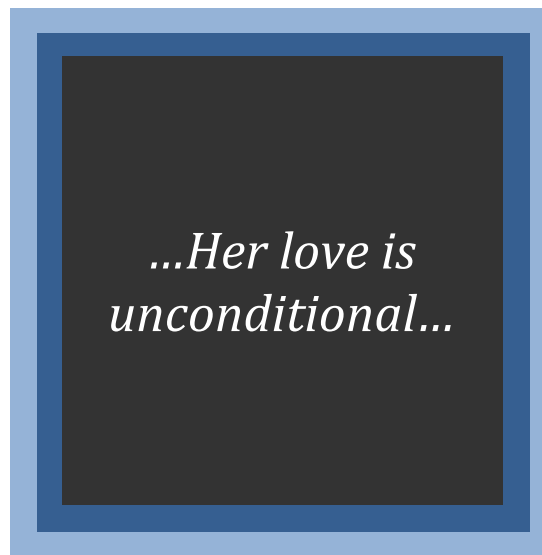
Isaiah 5:20

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil

I am reminded so much of this scripture when reading that David Daleiden and a colleague the prolife investigator who exposed Planned Parenthoods baby selling parts maybe facing up to 20 years jail while at the same time the jury decided not to charge PP with any wrongdoing.

The reasoning behind this is that the charge is David Daleiden who posed as the purchaser of the body parts for research which is illegal (trafficking) but not PP for offering to sell them.

It is with heaviness of heart as I read of this news which



comes out of life news services that I am also reminded of the words of the German philosopher Tucholsky "a country is not just what it does-it is also what it tolerates."

Not only does America tolerate the gross injustices against the babies (Roe v Wade 1973) which Planned Parenthood carries out with impunity and millions upon millions have been butchered but then sets about making a mockery of its judicial laws.

America as with all nations including Australia cannot see that God will not be mocked.

Dear friends at much much request more poetry by Mika Burge

Final

(By Mika Burge)

*There is a certain agony
A woman can only know
When she awakes from an abortion
With nothing to show
For her body was rich with abundant life
And her mind and psyche geared
Towards creating and birthing a baby
Now life is something to be eared
Many women repeat the process
As a form of self-punishment
Avoiding pregnant women and children
As it reminds them of what was sent
Sent, and yet destroyed
There is never any warning
And you're supposed to feel 'grateful'
Yet you panic at each morning
Not wanting to face another day
Hurting, seething, in this horrific way
Personally, my count is four
And though I live to tell the story
The details of my ten plus suicide attempts
You may find all too gory
At my lowest point, shattered and mute
I filled a bathtub to its brim
Sat down in the water, prepared to die
And dropped a live hairdryer right in
Or course I lived, I was mortified
I should have been split like a sausage
Sent back to my maker
I should have died
But the house was new
Had safety switches
But enough of that lonely ride....
These attempts came for many reasons
That were born from losing my babies
Depression, mania, anxiety, psychosis
A disorder for each of the seasons
I willed away life in psych wards
With around at least 50 admissions
Places to hide and cower*

*But they come with some conditions
Hand over your dignity
Hand over your pride
Let go of your self-worth
And anything good inside
You are now a psychiatric patient
If only you hadn't lied
Lied to yourself
Lied to those who kept you captive
You were only
So lonely
Now show me
How can I ever be healed
For ABORTION IS FINAL
Is death
Yet I had no permission to grieve
Till 14 years after my first child
It's so hard to believe
Now I honour and pray to my children
I've named and write to them too
I've given them significant items
If you are hurting from abortion
You can too
There are people in this world who care
Some, like me, have also been there
Please do not give up hoping
It will keep you coping.*

Away He Went

(By Mika Burge)

*My Grief is a Vine, strangling my heart
Locked in an inaccessible vault.
I can't feel it directly, it's so repressed
But I know that it's there, never been addressed.
It comes out overtly, I'm clinically depressed.
Who planted the seed, which grew the vine?
The devil himself, when he took what was mine
Four babies lost to abortion, dead before their time
Oh, the devil grinned as I gave consent
To have my children killed, I could smell his scent
And he took my joy and away he went.*

Dear friends recently I found myself speaking with someone about grief and it came out so beautifully as I was speaking that I wanted to share it with you.

As soon as I got home I put on paper as much as I could remember because I knew that the words were given to me. I felt it as I was speaking them.

The grief and tears which overwhelms when we lose someone or something loved are tears of love which have a different molecular structure than tears of laughter. Tears of loss are tears for the washing. For helping to let go.

These tears say or do the important work of taking the pain out of the system. They help show how much value we

place on our loss, reinforcement for love, remembering love, imprinting into that love and clearing out so that in due course there will be a time for new "love" and peace to enter or a new investment in love to occur- there is a cleaning of the wound of grief so new investment in love might become possible.

This gentle cleaning permits a memorial of past to be kept and remembered forever and taken forward whilst opening the door to welcome a new future of love. To welcome a new entry into life. The work of tears and grief helps to conclude successfully a past history and leaves the door open to carry it as a memory forward into new love because love is giving and generous and donor and eternal. Love cannot die. Love is life. Love is.

Grief and the tears means that nothing will be the same again. There cannot be a return to a time before grief and the tears.

Grief brings pains unknown before. This pain is exquisite because it is a pain of love. It is a pain of loss. There is even a grandeur about this pain because it is about love and loss and because this is so it changes and creates new and permanent memorials. Indeed one could say it creates whole new pathway ways in brain. Areas which had not existed before.

New adaptations need to be learned and all the while the changes ache more and more and yet all the while learning how to do the new things in new ways because of the grief which stretches you in ways previously unimagined.

A new persona, a new strength emerges.

When the grief work has been done then the work of grieving has slowly been completed and at the other end a new person has emerged.

The tears have washed much until all that needed to be removed has gone and what now remains is the new person a new creation, one changed because of the pains encountered through that journey of pain a journey we each must make alone.

The work of grief and tears is to ensure that we keep the memory of the other alive but also release the one remaining from the ties of past love in order to walk onwards.

Abortion and Violence

Victoria's Royal Commission's Inquiry into Domestic Violence is very important and timely and this societal violence needs to be stopped. Far too many children are being murdered. Too many women. Too many men. There is too much violence. Everywhere we turn there is one more murder. One more stabbing. One more violent assault. The home, the suburbs, the streets, schools, are now a war zone. Why?

We live in a society that is so comfortable we have it so

easy. So why so much violence? And always I go back to loss of respect for life.

Yes indeed we have it easy. We have all the commodities but at the cost of respect for another and above all for life. Slowly respect for life has been eroded and this loss of respect began with the loss of respect for the life of the tiniest infant.

Those who cannot defend themselves. Abortion has become "normal." Abortion means killing another. A little one and if we can kill a little one then as Mother Teresa would say "if a mother can kill her own child what is left for me to kill you and you to kill me, there is nothing between."

Over one generation we have gone from abortion for difficulties to abortion on demand to abortion to full term, to infanticide. In less than 30 years. We are talking legal death of birthed babies!!! (allowing aborted babies born alive to die without assistance).

We are talking about mothers taking their viable babies knowing that they would be killed in a cruel way. We are talking about fathers taking their sons or daughters to be killed intentionally.

And then we ask the Royal Commissioners to investigate domestic/family violence. I wonder if the Commissioners would ever think that an abortion could be the very start of violence between previously happy couples. I wonder if the Commissioners would consider that the violence experienced by a child in an abortion is a similar or replicated version of violence committed during murder of an adult. Or do they think it's different?

We now know that there are psychological sequelae to abortion. The woman experiences life long after effects whilst the male is also affected but differently, generally through his sense of impotence in the matter. For the male who is affected it is often the sense of helplessness at being unable to do anything to protect his child and this anger is then turned inwards to self-punish, by you guessed it, fighting, aggression.

Prior to the birth of the baby the father has absolutely no rights in respect of the child. He cannot do anything to protect the life of his child and if the mother of that child does not want to keep, or give birth to that child then there is no one who can prevent the abortion from happening.

No-one, including the state, because the state has purchased into the argument by legislating that the life of that new individual whilst in utero is a nonentity, and therefore dependent upon the whim of the host body.

Legislation has not decreed that the relationship between woman and infant is symbiotic but at the same time the infant is independent and deserving of the utmost respect. It has in fact decreed that the life or death of that infant is dependent upon the vagaries of the stronger of the two parties.

Letters

Dear Anne,

Thank you so much for sending me the book *Hidden Pain*. Great work and very inspiring. Keep on the good work and your great apostolate you are doing. May God bless you always.

From Padre Manuel Adami MSSP.

Dear Anne,

You are a rally lovely saint who is "one out of the book" I am in admiration of what you are ad do. I may race you to haven and if I do so I put a good word for you, I would like you to put in a good word for me if you beat me getting there.

What would we do without you? Your "other children" (in heaven) must be proud of you.

Wishing you every blessing

Yours affectionately

Fr Leo.

Dear Anne,

Enclosed is a small donation to help you in the wonderful work you are doing. I enjoy reading your regular bulletin as I can no longer at 84 do very much in the physical way to help. I used to occasionally pray outside the abortion clinic. I hope your health benefits from the break over Christmas and may God bless your and keep you going for as long as He wishes.

Wishing you and your family a blessed Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Sincerely in Christ

Mary R.

Dear Friends

I want to write a whole letter from a priest friend of mine I am sure he won't mind its beautiful. So here goes:

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your newsletters it gets better with each new issue. I have a friend who is 88 years of age and has been blind all her life. She is a convert to the Catholic faith for nearly five years. I read to her each edition of the newsletter. This time as I read to her over the phone I knew she was crying. She then told me the reason for her tears.

Her grandson and his wife had their first child a beautiful little girl. They have just learned they are expecting a brother or sister for her. That morning my friend had been told that they had viewed the ultrasound. The little mite was waving her arms.

(Some private information follows which I won't print)
Continuing...

Yesterday morning I was celebrating Mass at the home of a mutual friend. After the Gospel reading I had a sudden thought and I asked "have you got Anne's latest newsletter? She had, but because of illness had not opened it. I asked her to get it and I read the poems by Mika Burge to her. She was very silent as we made the journey from attempted suicide to a dawning sense of the almost incredible love of God for the sinner who turns to Him.

Dear Anne, please assure the writer that her poetry is really touching people, including me.

My friend sends her small donation included in mine. Be assured of the prayers of three of us. Our friend who is very poor said four rosaries for you and the work you do yesterday afternoon

Every best wish and prayers for you and the work
Fr John.

Dear Fr John and two friends thank you for your words and I will show Mika the words and to your friends who prayed the Rosary...Wow... thank you!!!

Anne

Dear Anne,

Your last few *Broken Branches* have been so good- especially the issue with the poetry. It touches deeply the heart. There is so much pain expressed and in some moments also understanding. That young girl has experiences very much and writs about it well. One can feel her pain in the words as she writes them.

Dear Anne Have a good break and find enclosed a small donation to help with your work and to keep going.

Marilyn K
Vic.

Thank you Marilyn I have had so many comments, calls, emails about Mika's poetry it has touched many hearts. I hope we can do something with her all her poetry.

The violence we are daily fed through all forms of media is symptomatic of the “just below the surface” violence within the community. There is a tension, which must be released and will not evaporate without leaving in its wake a disaster.

Just as we see a tension beneath the psychology of some men and women after abortion. A tension which explodes into violence. Both self-harming and other harming violence.

Perhaps an explanation (mine) of the response to abortion may shed some light on this episode. Since the onset of the culture of the “pill” and “me-ism” (sexual revolution) the woman has progressively taken control of her fertility and her body. And indeed to be able to understand her body and to guard and protect her body as inviolate is a good thing.

However, this is not what has happened. The woman has demanded control over her body in as far as her fertility is concerned, and has removed from her husband/partner any rights and responsibility towards an act which has resulted in a conception.

This, whilst ostensibly “good” as far as some men and women are concerned, has ultimately failed all. Today, whether he chooses or not, a man can walk away from his responsibility towards a child he has engendered. Conversely should he choose not to walk away from the responsibility it can be forcibly wrenched from him so that he cannot do anything to change the situation.

The removal of responsibility has not spelled equal rights, as has been suggested, but indeed unequal suffering. The woman suffers lifelong anguish. Yes it’s real. It happens even for those who blithely believe that it hasn’t affected them. The man suffers loss of something of his essence, of his fatherhood, of his fathering. Of his manhood. He forgets how to be man.

For the woman, in her very being there is a rupture unlike any other. There is a grief quite unlike any other. The kind of wrenching grief which is the result of guilt. The kind of grief which is the result of the intent behind the loss. The kind of grief which says, powerlessness, hopelessness, utter despair. That is the kind of grief which abortion leaves in its wake and is the legacy for the woman and man (either short term or long term) who have acceded to the abortion experience.

For the state and nation which has decreed that the killing of its future citizens is lawful, there is to be other losses which cannot ever be recouped. For this state or nation the beginning of its end is in sight. Citizens begin their life as zygotes, embryos, fetuses, babies, young ones, adolescents, youth, and mature citizens. A nation to be successful, progressive, it depends on its citizens. A nation needs to be able to sustain itself and to replace itself. The birth of each child in every nation should be a celebration and an acknowledgement that a future is assured because our children are born. Abortion says otherwise. It says death. And again as Mother Teresa would say “it is the greatest destroyer of peace.”

Dear friends as I come to the end of this special newsletter I take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has helped me over the many years. Thank you to Peter and Paul B. and families,(thank you so much you kept me going) thank you to Tim H.(my hero) thank you to the many who have answered my call for “help” thank you to Peter W.(for picking me up when I wanted to stop) thank you all those who have sent in your donations faithfully. Thank you Maureen W. Thank you Fr Leo. Thank you, thank you thank you. Thank you to several anonymous donors. Thank you to all the donors over the years you know who you are. Cathy H. Margaret G. Too many thank you’s. But please know I love you.

I would also like to say thank you to those who responded to my Christmas appeal. I appreciate your care. Goodness the biscuit tin was sooooo empty it was ready for the scrap heap.

Before I close I would like to tell you that I am now recognised as a *Clinical Counsellor*. After a bit more study and over several thousand recognised hours practice I’ve been awarded this. It helps in the work.

Please continue to pray for me this year especially for health and those in my care. Viola, new (lots lots lots) Christine, (new) Christine, Bette, Roger, Anna, Frances, Lucy, Anne, ,Marlene, Nadine A(difficult) Sandra (new) Cameron, Kerrie, Mel, Diamante, Clare, Elizabeth, Yvonne. Rebecca (Please).



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.



REDEEMING GRIEF

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.

AUD **\$20.00**

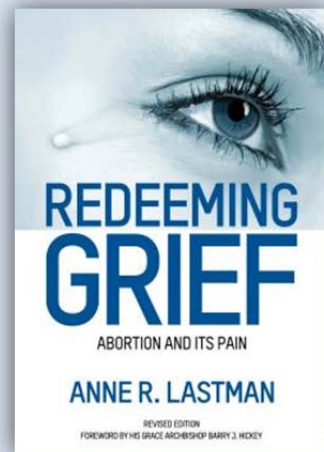
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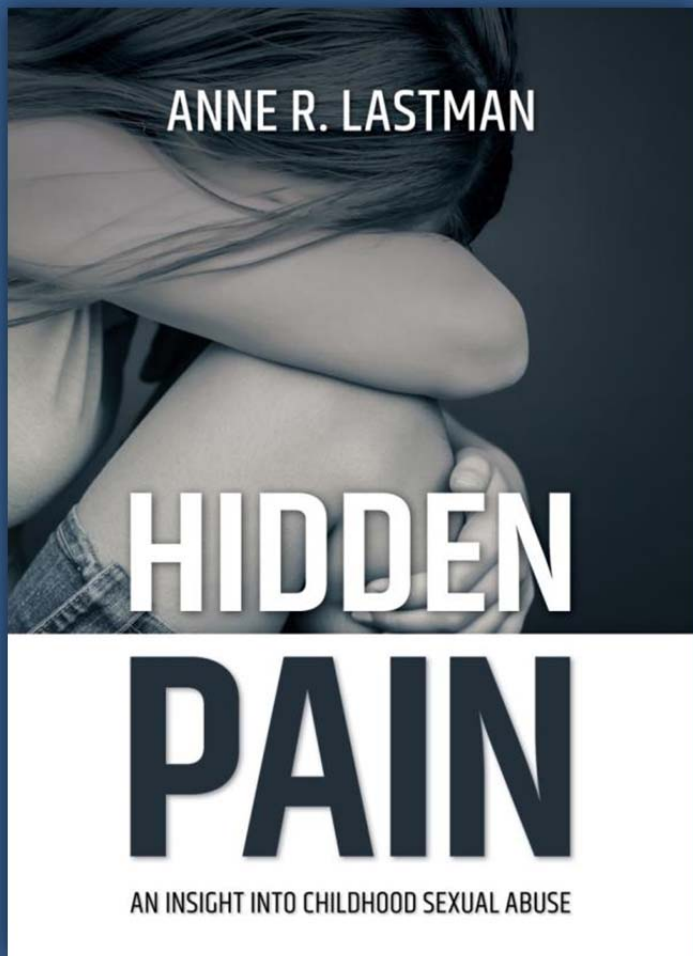
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NEW BOOK – HIDDEN PAIN



HIDDEN PAIN is written about memories which are hidden and cannot be spoken out loud. It is a book about shame, pain, sorrow and lives which have gone wrong both for victims, families, and perpetrators. Sexual abuse of children is common in all communities, in all societies, and yet it's still one of the last remaining taboos. It is something which cannot be spoken about because it's so awful, so inappropriate that it cannot be discussed. Yet discussed it must be, because the children are crying and pleading to be helped.

This is not a step by step guide to dealing with abuse. It is the result of my engagement with those who have come to me originally for post abortion counselling and on further investigation it was found that abuse (especially in cases of multiple abortions) existed in their history. It is my hope that *HIDDEN PAIN* can be of help to those who read it and more so be vigilant and not to turn away when a child is suffering.

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