

# A newsletter of *Victims of Abortion*

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

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*Issue No 32 –April/May2003*

Welcome to all my friends

Time flies really fast these days and much seems to hold our attention. It is difficult to even think that we are already approaching Easter. It's either that I am getting older or that time is passing a lot faster. Time was so slow when I was young. Serves me right for not appreciating it.

Today as we stay glued to the TV screens looking and waiting for the outcome of this war and war preparations I find myself not knowing quite what to do. I personally feel that I don't know what is right and what is wrong anymore. I can appreciate all the negatives of any war and particularly this war, however, I also appreciate that the world cannot be held to ransom, and I suspect that this is the issue in question. The now infamous day of Sept 11, changed forever the manner in which we live. Terrorism and terrorists seem to have taken control. Do we allow this to continue? I don't have an answer except that if we all fell on our knees and prayed (I mean all of us) then perhaps things might change.

One night during the past week as I watched the mandatory 5pm news I saw an image which really brought home to me what is often unseen reality of abortion. The panning of a camera over military personnel which showed what appeared to be a sea of humanity (to me it looked liked hundreds of thousands) brought home the reality of the number of abortions carried out in Australia over one year and further what would be the number of walking wounded mothers and fathers. A hundred thousand or more mothers, a hundred thousand or more fathers per year, each having consented to terminate the life of their child. This immense ocean of life suddenly ended. It was possible to see or visualise all that personnel lying dead on the ground. That is the amount of infants who lie dead every year in Australia.

The world would be in uproar if 50,000,000 soldiers, airmen, sailors died in this war, yet this many babies die every year worldwide and there is not even a whimper in their defence. 50,000,000 mothers succumb to an abortion every year and there are some of their "sisters" who insist that there should be more. Yet there is not even a whimper of a noise made. Leaders of nations debate heatedly about the pros and cons of war (also considering the trade agreements) and yet these same leaders do not ever make a whimper against their own national holocausts. Is it any wonder we live in such dangerous times? Wars are the result of despots, inequity, loss of respect for life and loss of faith. When you have these elements in place then all manner of atrocities become possible.

BROKEN BRANCHES



John 15

## ABORTION AND DANGERS TO MARRIAGE

Today as we peruse the climate, marriage appears not only weakened but maybe even doomed. It is a sad reality that less and less people have a desire to marry and if and when they do the chances of the success of the marriage appear diminished. Whilst statistics show that young people still do want to have a “wedding” the reality is that when the “wedding” is called to become a “marriage” the pre requisites for marriage are not found within the couple.

Perhaps many reasons can be posited for this. However I would like to offer my understanding as to why “weddings” continue to happen, but “marriages” do not.

Over this past year I have encountered ( in my offices) many couples whose marriages have collapsed. As I listened to their stories the single most often quoted difficulties have been “depression” “sadness” “lack communication” “different ideals” and in all the couples whom I have seen, violence **AND ABORTIONS**. Abortions of their own child or abortions (both husband and wife) in past relationships on both sides. I have one couple who between them have aborted 5 children including one since their marriage. Indeed with one couple that are still with me, the husband originally called to seek help for his wife whom he had “assessed” to be suffering from abortion grief because of her abortion 9 years earlier and he felt that everything wrong about her was related to her abortion. However as I continued, it emerged that she’d had several abortions (he only knew about one) and he had 2 abortions “but that’s OK I don’t feel anything about them. They happened when I was 17 years old so we did the right thing. I am a bit sad that we aborted our first *fetus* but we weren’t financially ready at that time” (they now have an 18mth old baby). These were his exact words. Note the word *fetus* not baby. Nobody speaks about his or her wanted baby as a *fetus*; only a baby that is to be disposed of is called a *fetus*.

As I listened I think I was overwhelmed with horror that neither of them was even remotely concerned about the 5 babies they had aborted, although the woman exhibits a pervasive sadness. Her tears are always present and her grief (she says its because her life is so unhappy in this marriage) is profound.

Today as I read about the statistics, which speak about broken marriages and the short duration of said marriages I am not surprised that marriages are failing. I know that the desire for union between man and woman still exists and the desire for marriage still exists, however, the baggage, which is taken into marriage, weakens the possibility of endurance, sacrifices and perseverance in the face of life difficulties.

Abortion breaks bonds. Abortion breaks covenants. Abortion destroys innocence. Abortion takes away from women and men their assumption

that they are “good.” Abortion stands as an accuser in marriage. It removes the dignity of the human person. Abortion removes the adhesiveness of the glue in marriage, which is motherhood and fatherhood and children. Abortion is so contra covenant and so contra human that the foundations of humanity and society are rocked dangerously when “man and woman” turn against their offspring. Especially when “woman” herself turns against her child. Abortion means that a mother has refused to give hospitality, welcome and nourishment to her child. Abortion cannot but destroy marriage. The desire remains but the reality cannot find firm foundations.

There is inscribed within the human person a “yearning” a “vocation” a “calling” which begins long before it comes to fruition. This yearning or call is strengthened as a sign of the differences between the male and female and any disturbance of this “vocation” (eg abortion) must by its very nature corrupt the finely tuned, intricate design, which is the human. Within each person, male or female is inscribed fruitfulness, which cannot be fulfilled except with the grace and donation and permission of the other. It is at this place which abortion wounds. Abortion enters into this secret place and steals dignity, leaving behind emptiness unlike any other.

Today we have weddings, but not marriage. Marriage calls for sacrifice, dignity, and reciprocal love. Abortion, sexual abuse (more widespread than previously thought) immorality, violence, drugs, etc etc ensure that marriages do not become solidified and unless marriages are strengthened and rebuilt even one by one if need be, then all the work in the world, against abortion, against euthanasia, against drug addiction, against the very evils which endanger society become only bandaid. In our rush to fight “all ills” the thing which most needs healing and bandaging and nurturing “marriage and family” is left to whimper and stumble along. I have seen the damage that not only abortion but also other abuses in family create and because of the damage, then the next generation, where they are allowed to be born, are forced into living a life diminished and impoverished.

Impoverishment in marriage occurs not only through abortion, though this I would suggest is the greatest poverty, but also impoverishment through neglect of the any children allowed to be born. Where parents leave the child in the care of others there is always abandonment felt by the child.

An infant doesn’t understand “quality” or “quantity” time, it simply understands time away from mummy or daddy or family. Irrespective of the goodness of the carers, (and there are some marvellous carers) the child feels “left” behind. The necessary foundational basis for the wellbeing of the child, that is, sense of firmly belonging, sense of valued self, sense of parent’s and child’s roles leading to a right sense of “authority,” the transmission of values, of rules to be lived with and obeyed, the formation essential to the dignity of life, these become compromised and where there is compromise to do with life, then obviously we encounter death.

## CHALLENGED MOTHERING

In a recent study published in the *Journal Of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2002; 43 (6): 743-757, has found that children whose mothers have had an abortion or have an abortion history tended to have less emotional support leading to possible behavioural problems, than those whose mothers did not have an abortion history. This of course should not be surprising because children born after an abortion and especially those born immediately following abortion act as permanent reminders of that abortion, thus inducing guilt.

Added to this, it should further not be surprising because unacknowledged abortions also mean unacknowledged grief, unresolved grief, and disenfranchised grief. This kind of grief is pervasive and it adversely affects all those in the range of the person suffering grief. Depression coupled with grief equals unhappy, sad person whose coping skills are challenged and who constantly lives in a state of anxiety and dread. The dread occurs because mothers who have aborted children and who have not reconciled themselves to their decision always live in an unknown fear. A fear that something is always about to happen. A fear that G-O-D will do “something awful to my other children. He’ll let them die just to punish me.” Abortion creates a fear within the inner being of the woman and robs her of her natural inclination towards her child. Even where there is no perceived grief over an abortion, pervasive/passive sadness, a withdrawal, an aloofness is in place and this guards against an unknown “something” which might break through.

In the distance created between a mother and her child, it is clearly evident that the relationship between a mother and her child is challenged, thus creating a new generation of difficulties. Children not mothered well or “mothered smothered” through fear of loss go on to repeat their lot. In the field of trauma and loss studies, it is a known that often a trauma will be repeated and repeated until the original trauma is understood. In the area of abortion this means that grief must be acknowledged, the child mourned and then released, unless this occurs trauma is not only repeated but also passed on so that next generation cannot know anything but traumatic relational behaviour. Abortion is not simply a once off, quiet gynaecological procedure without side effects; it is a procedure that will not allow itself to be forgotten.

## THE BODY ALWAYS REMEMBERS

One of the most amazing things that I have discovered ever since working in this field is the fact that the body remembers. I have thought and rethought about this and have wondered and continue to wonder what it is that assists the mother’s to “know” what gender their aborted baby was. With the exception of maybe half a dozen women who appeared not to know the gender of their aborted baby (although I think that they did know but could not bear to vocalise the knowledge), the others when asked do they know the gender, the response is **always, always, “yes of course I know what it**

**was. It was a boy” or “it was a girl.” “I always knew.”** Yet this is the answer even when the pregnancy was of short duration and the abortion was carried out under full sedation.

Many of my “girls” actually ask me do I know how she/they could possibly know such information and why she was so sure considering that her abortion was done when she was 8 weeks pregnant and my only answer to that was simply that her consciousness and heart were alert at that time, but her body was asleep. Indeed there is a line in Scripture, which seems to speak similar words, “I sleep but my heart is awake” (Song of Solomon 5:2) It is the heart and consciousness which are fully present to the abortion and which in due course must bear witness to the horror which they have been subjected to. The heart, body, mind and spirit were present at conception; surely they knew what gender the new creation was. Every cell, every bit of DNA, every gene, every molecule etc was present and recorded the event, as indeed every cell was present when abortion happened. Awareness informs our beings and “we know” perhaps more than we want or should know.

It is in this intimate knowledge that human beings discover the interconnectedness of all beings. Grief for an aborted child is correct response because grief is the correct response to loss of someone special and important to our very existence. Whilst we know that consciousness informs matter we also know that mind, spirit and body are not separate “things” but realms of the human being. All awareness then, whether, mind, body, heart, cells, DNA, molecule etc becomes one bodily thing with its inscribed inner knowledge of life. To me it seems very simple and understandable that a woman would “remember” what gender her unseen baby was. It would seem to me that this is also what God meant when He said, “If a mother should forget her baby” (Is 49:15). It would seem impossible for this to happen because consciousness has informed her being of the marvellous new event which has occurred.

### **NICK’S COMMENT**

*I have let Nick off this time from writing his usually witty ‘masterpiece’ (his thought) because he is trying to settle into his university studies, which are very demanding this semester. He has to start every morning at 8.30am (lectures) and it takes 55 minutes (car) and 2½ hrs by public transport (we have so far taken him) to get to the place. He has also a part time job so all in all he is really tired. Hopefully by next issue (if there is one) he will be settled.*

*In his place is a little article by Gerralyn, a young person from my parish youth ministry.*

*Anne*

## **LETTERS:**

*Dear Anne,*

*Your newsletter is great and you do a terrific job. However, I was concerned that in your issue No. 31 Feb/Mar 2003 you implied that those who concentrated on the abortion-breast cancer link might not be truly pro life.*

*As a women's organisation, we have publicized the ABC link because there are two victims in abortion, the baby and the mother, and all the right to life groups have focussed mainly on the baby. Breast cancer also kills, and pregnant women have a right to be informed that the abortion may also kill them, a few years down the track. Breast cancer is a major killer of pre-menopausal women, second only to road accidents. Breast cancer is also a major killer of postmenopausal women, second to heart disease.*

*The incidence of breast cancer has arisen sharply since the de facto legalization of abortion, both in Australia and in USA, and some of this is undoubtedly attributable to induced abortion. I agree with you that love of God and respect for life should be ideal motivation in preventing abortion, but fear of hell-or breast cancer-can also be powerful motivators.*

*We need to study our opponents, the abortion providers. They are far more agitated by publicity on the ABC link than they are of pictures of aborted babies, because they can censor these in the media by claiming such pictures are offensive or obscene. Although they have tried to censor the ABC link, they cannot censor medical information indefinitely.*

*With love*

*Babette Francis*

*(Endeavour Forum-National & Overseas Co-Coordinator)*

**My contention is not that ABC and other abortion related issues should not be stressed and highlighted my contention is that the ideal should be the first and foremost reason to end abortion.....A BABY DIES EVERY TIME and we should never tire of saying this. The ABC link possibly even shows us that our "women's" reproductive areas are turning in on themselves as a result of refusing to fulfil our covenantal role of "woman."**

*Dear Anne,*

*Congratulations on yet another wonderful edition of Broken Branches. Your section of "What does it mean to be Pro life" really got me thinking-all these thoughts may spill over in an article some day*

*(other personal talk...)*

*Please give my admiration and congratulations to young Nick on his latest "comments". You won't mind if I say It's my favourite part of the newsletter.*

*God Bless,*

*Jane.*

**No Jane I don't mind you liking Nick's "comments" I love them too and so do most of the readers. He has such a huge head now!!!**

*Dear Anne,*

Thank you so much for all your help and support and love over the past year. Thank you for arranging the Mass for my babies and me.

Life takes so many twists and turns but the journey is so amazing. I thank God that you came into my life. I have been fortunate to have met you. My friend Melissa (NSW) is not finding any assistance or solace with her counselling and I wondered if you could help her. She has seen all that I have worked through with your help

and is keen to talk to you. Please let me know if you can help her. All the best with the year ahead and all the best with your book. I look forward to purchasing a copy. Take care and thank you for helping me to become a better person I am grateful for all that you have give me.

Love Sally.

**Thank you to all of you my readers who have prayed for Sally over this past year. Sally is recovering from much sorrow (4 aborts and other abuse).**

Dear Mrs Lastman,

Do you think you might like this article? I am trying to speak about the sacredness of the human body and the respect due to it.

The book of Solomon uses sensual poetry and song to convey a tender intimacy shared between two parties. On the one level it speaks about God's gift of sexuality, which we are meant to express only through commitment to one another. On the other hand it tells of God's undying love. The desire for physical unity is natural and explains why even babies need to be held and caressed and others need to feel close to another human being. What I don't approve of however, is the exploitation of the gift of our bodies and sexuality.

Increasingly secular society does not emphasise the sacredness of the body and that from conception a new life is formed. A gift lovingly given from God. He need not give life but He chooses out of love to do so, therefore the responsibility to remain faithful to Him rests with us. We need to look after and protect our own and each other's bodies because this life is a blessing and not to be taken for granted.

While some types of physical contact are healthy, it can lead to issues of chastity, which are not only a state of mind but also a state of being.

The majority of my peer group freely "get it on" and as long as they think that they are not fornicating there is little risk involved. What we have to realise is that things we do physically have an emotional impact. This is why I am personally very tentative when it comes to physicality, especially with the opposite sex. I believe its important to be conscious of the other's feelings because I respect them, as I would like them to respect me. Sincerity and integrity are important values and how we act towards the "other" reflects our relationship with them and God. It is important that we do not take advantage of our relationship with the "other" instead to cherish its uniqueness and holiness.

**Gerralyn**  
**Aged 16 ½**

As I conclude this issue of the newsletter, I come to this stage with a heavy heart both for the situation overseas but also for this charism of Victims of Abortion. I feel that I have to say that I am near the end of the line. You see the last three issues of the newsletter have not been at all well received and the response to the call for funds has by and large gone unanswered. I have **just barely** been able to make the newsletter production payments, which include, stamps, envelopes, printing, overseas postage, and then 3 phone lines and other office expenses. I have a desperate need of a new computer for the office (the last one and printer were bought second hand and while its been of some use it has always had difficulties and now its dead). The response for funds so that I could ask several of the girls to work

with me 1 day each went unanswered so I am unable to continue with that idea.

While I know that I do good work, the reality is that I depend entirely on the generosity of you good people, as I am not affiliated with any group or religious denomination. I do counsel both from a psychological perspective and Catholic/Christian counselling. It is important especially where sexual abuse and/or abortion are concerned, that a healing or even an initiation into a friendship with God is effected, so the work that I do is slow, at times wearying, a lot of times rewarding, taxing, and always utterly necessary but so are funds needed to keep going. I make this plea to you to respond if you can....if there is little or no response I am to presume that the Lord is saying "No more Anne" so I will close down the operation. I don't think this is the case because we have a wounded womanhood, and the calls, especially husband and wives keep coming...but it may be...So its over to you.

I thank those 18 people who responded after the last issue of the newsletter (I sent out close to 1400 copies) and especially to Carol H. Paul M., Catherine H, Fr John C, who rescued me and encouraged me to keep going, however it really has been very difficult.

Thank you also to Fr Faruggia for a beautiful Mass of the Resurrection for Sally's babies called *Alistair, Maree, Angie, Damian.*, and for Linda's baby *Grace*. These children were never meant to exist; yet today they have a plaque with their names and family who has acknowledged and accepted and wept for their passing. Thank Fr Victor you are marvellous.

Please continue to pray for Sally as she goes overseas, pray for Michelle, Valdo, Ann (new) Margaret, Marie, Jason, Melissa (new)(-NSW) please much prayers for this girl there is much sorrow in her life. Rachel, Sarah, Megan, Robert, Donna, Jane.

May the Lord bless and keep you.



Anne Lastman.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ P/C \_\_\_\_\_

Donation/Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes/no, I would/would not** like to be on your mailing list.

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