

Broken Branches

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

ISSUE 147 – Feb/Mar 2022

Welcome 2022

Please let's pray for a year filled with grace.

Dear friends,

Late last year (Nov 2021) what is known as Zoe's Law was passed

Parliament passed the '*Crimes Legislation Amendment (Loss of Foetus) Bill 2021*'.

Previously there have been a number of attempts to pass the Bill known as 'Zoe's Law' to make it an offence for any action which caused the death of a foetus, or an in-utero baby. This law will recognise the pain which ended the life of a preborn infant and the pain which this loss has caused its parents. Pro-lifers around Australia have supported such a Bill and are delighted at the result.

Whilst this law sadly does not appear to have any impact on current abortion legislation, it however gives some legal recognition of the humanity of unborn baby and gives the unborn baby some legally recognised rights.

Perhaps we can rejoice even just a little because this is a first step which we can build upon which can lead to recognising that all unborn "foetuses" (called in law) are indeed human and those presenting for abortion be recognised as little human beings being taken to die and need full protection of the law.

Dear friends I add this link below because it's a very interesting comment made by a very public person. Elon Musk sounds very much a pro-lifer or even pro children man and it's heartening to read this. For those with a computer and internet please read this article

For those without computer the interview speaks about Elon Musk saying that "Depopulation is a

problem and civilisation is going to crumble if people don't have more children.

What a breath of fresh air to hear such a public person speak like this.

[Elon Musk Says Depopulation is a Problem: "Civilization is Going to Crumble" if People Don't Have More Kids](#)

Church can't just ignore new questions about meaning of life, says Pope Francis

25 Nov 2021

Pope Francis speaking via link to the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture at the Vatican Nov. 23, 2021, encouraged the council in its exploration of the question, "What does it mean to be human?" (CNS/Vatican Media)

The Christian understanding of what it means to be human provides an unambiguous affirmation of the sacredness and uniqueness of human life, but to respond to emerging new questions asked by modern culture and new technologies dialogue and compassion are needed, "The specificity of the human being in the whole of creation, our uniqueness vis-à-vis other animals, and even our relationship with machines are being questioned. But we cannot confine ourselves just to denial and criticism," Pope Francis said in a video message on 23 November.

Pope Francis was speaking to members of the Pontifical Council for Culture who were holding their general meeting online 23 November, after two rounds of small group meetings, to discuss the theme, "*Rethinking Anthropology at a Time of Transition.*"

The discussions focused on the basic question, "What does it mean to be human?" on the way Christians

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used the Bible and ancient Greek philosophy to forge answers that held for centuries and on ways that traditional understanding is being challenged today. In his normal and gentle manner, the Holy Father said that the best response the church can give is not to lash out at those who demand changes and critics, but to enter into meaningful dialogue with them, trying to understand the values they are aim to promote and always finding new ways to explain “our presence in the world in the light of the humanist tradition: as a servant of life and not its master (and) as a builder of the common good with the values of solidarity and compassion.”

“For Christians, he said, a key component of being human is the search for God, a part of humanism that was particularly challenged in the 1960s”. “Today other questions are gaining more attention” he said. Questions like “What does it mean today to be a man or a woman as complementary persons called to relate to one another? What do the words ‘fatherhood’ and ‘motherhood’ mean? And again, what is the specific condition of the human being that makes us unique and unrepeatable compared to machines and even other animal species? What is our transcendent vocation? Where does our call to build social relationships with others come from?”

Now as in the past, Pope Francis said, “the sacred Scriptures offer us the essential coordinates to outline an anthropology of the human person in relation to God, in the complexity of the relations between men and women, and in the nexus with the time and the space in which we live.” Christian humanism embraced “a lofty vision of the human person, our origin and ultimate destiny and our way of living on this earth,” he said.

The ongoing value of that approach must be trusted enough to welcome “the contributions of the contemporary humanistic tradition and that of other cultures,” said Pope Francis.

“I am thinking, for example, of the holistic vision of Asian cultures, in a search for inner harmony and harmony with creation. Or the solidarity of African cultures, to overcome the excessive individualism typical of Western culture. The anthropology of Latin American peoples is also important, with its lively sense of family and celebration; and the cultures of indigenous peoples all over the planet.”

“The key is not to give up a traditional Christian vision of the human person, and especially the essential element of being created by God and for a relationship with God,” Pope Francis said, “but learning how to integrate those other visions of what it means to be human into the European vision.

“Now more than ever, the world needs to rediscover the meaning and value of the human being in relation to the challenges we face,” Pope Francis concluded.

This moment in time we have been blessed with a Pope whose aim has always been to gather in the marginalised. To go out and bring onto the “Barque” those who have been sent into hills and mountains because they have shown signs of leprosy. For Pope Francis, like Jesus, those whose voice been stilled need to be called and listened to whilst still never changing the true belief our faith and our God and our Scriptures. In this instance his care and management of those despised whilst not losing sight of the illumined truth of our humanity.

As I have said not to change a word, dot, an iota of the truth but to listen to the one asking the questions.

Christmas Miracle.

A week before Christmas whilst frantically trying to do the necessities for Christmas I was at a very large shopping Centre here in Perth and something amazing happened. Even for me who sees miracles all the time, this one was surely something from the Lord.

Having spent several hours going from shop to shop, walking and running without even stopping for a cup

of coffee, this because I had left things till late and so I now tried to do all in one day. I was completely exhausted.

After several hours of walking and now feeling exhausted I suddenly got a big right calf and under foot cramp. Indeed, so severe that it took my breath away. I turned around looking for a place to sit and there right at my shoulder was one of those small cafes just very small with 6 tables and chairs and serving nothing but coffee.

I leaned against its barrier and laid my head on my arms which rested on top of the barrier. The pain was excruciating. Perspiration type of pain.

I hadn't realised or noticed that there were three young people sitting at a small round table, a young man and two young girls in the age range of 17-20 years.

The young man asked if he could help me and to sit at their table (he got an extra chair) when I told him about the foot, he offered to massage it but I said No. He was being kind and I thanked him but said no that I would rest and hope that it would ease. As I sat there, I looked at the three young people, so thoughtful and kind. Tattoos everywhere but so gentle and kind. I'll call the young man John and two young ladies, Jane and Jenny, this for ease of telling (not their names)

In due course we introduced one another, and I asked what they all did. One young lady went to university doing secondary teaching course. The other young lady, social work degree, and the young man an apprentice mechanic.

Then they asked me did I work and if so, what did I do. Normally I just say I am a grief counsellor and leave out the "abortion" part. It saves lots of at times negative comments and awkwardness. However, this time I responded "I am a post abortion grief counsellor" It surprised even me.

Silence was now present. Then Jenny said "Jane has just had an abortion 3 weeks ago" Jane sitting opposite me nodded and looked down at her cup.

She then looked up and said "I had to have it because my mother forced me and when I told her she said "you know what you have to do. Or you get out of this house"

"I didn't want to abort my "baby" and my boyfriend (he wasn't present-at work) and his family wanted me to have the baby and they would look after him. But I wasn't allowed to do even that.

It was hard for me because I didn't want to "kill my baby" (she had humanised the baby 12 weeks-and claimed "him" as her own. She even said "I know it was a boy." "After it was done, I guess I realised that mum was right I am too young to have a baby and I have to finish my degree" (these words said with great sadness). "The abortion cost us \$600 and we paid half each. I feel very sad now and the relationship with my boyfriend is suffering and it's not the same and we will probably split up"

Her friend Jenny (sitting next to her, arm around her shoulder) said that Jane cried a lot and she (Jenny)

and her boyfriend the (apprentice mechanic sitting with us) had tried to help Jane but they couldn't.

Then bravely or even defiantly Jane said, "I'm ok now and as mum said it was for the best.". Then she stopped talking and I asked her "how do you feel about it" "well I know it was my baby and it was a boy and I was about 12-13 week gone and I felt empty when it happened but I'm OK now."

Personally, I doubted very much that she was as she said "alright"

because her eyes just looked downwards as if she didn't want to be seen and her voice was subdued into a whisper.

She told me again that her baby was a baby boy. "I just know."

"There you are you already have a connection with him. You know him and he knows you." (Me) "Have you given him a name too?" I asked. "Oh no. I can't because then he will be real and I killed him"

Always when it comes to naming of baby there is resistance and obvious pain because it makes the baby real and human and not an idea and it points to own contribution to his/her death. Naming of the aborted baby is not an early session discussion but much deep into counselling time. Naming gives the infant an identity and a "real ness" as this young lady said. I knew that I couldn't continue because I could see she was getting very distressed so I asked if she'd had

*...I'm Ok now and
Mum said it was for
the best...*

counselling at the abortion facility or seen a counsellor since the abortion and she said no. She doesn't want to talk about it to anyone She'll get over her sad feelings.

I didn't want to continue because I could see her distress but I gave her my card and said that if she ever wanted to talk about it to someone just give me a call even if it's once. Then not wanting to outstay my time there or seem to be pushing (my cramp had gone) I got up to leave and the three of them also got up and hugged me and Jane (mother) whispered "thank you."

I'm not sure that she will contact me, though I hope she does, but she wants to put the experience away because of the threat to be thrown out of home and her need to finish her university course.

I think she also believes that if she doesn't speak about it or even think about it then it will go away as if it never happened.

I also understood just a little why the response of her mother. It was cultural and an unwed daughter who's pregnant would create such shame on the whole family.

It's of course never a reason but this poor child was caught in the middle. Culture, Mum, university and her wanting the child.

The reason I thought that this was a Christmas miracle is because of all the places in a huge shopping centre to get a cramp was at this particular place where a young one had experienced a coerced abortion 22 days earlier and was trying to convince her self she was OK. It's my humble opinion that she is not coping and is managing by practising denial strategies.

And perhaps further, the miracle in this was because I first needed help with the pain in my leg and foot in order to stop and sit at that place because a young person had pain in her heart.

Indeed, God goes before us.

Naming of Baby

Another recent objection to the naming of aborted infant led to desire for me to explain why and how this is so important in healing of the abortion grief.

Indeed, pre-natal death always leaves behind many questions and even where there is an understanding that there was no "intent" in the death (miscarriage/stillbirth/SIDS) I have found that psychologically there is in the woman a sense of "what did I do wrong?" "What did I do today that was

different and made my baby die? "Did I do something to cause baby's death?"

Having recently begun counselling (zoom) a woman with 7 miscarriages the ache in her heart is palpable. From the first moment, first words which she uttered from the discussion it appears that there are no medical reasons why she should "lose" her baby/babies when reaching 10-13 weeks gestation.

This referral to me was from someone whom I had helped several years back and completed happily.

On listening to her story, and after some gentle prodding it transpired that there had been an early life loss? (17 yrs. age an abortion) which she had not spoken about to anyone and had carried the weight of guilt, regret, and isolation all these past years on her on her own,

Now happily married and wanting a baby with her husband but was afraid to tell him of that long ago decision "just in case he leaves me because he's so prolife" she believes that God is punishing her for her act those years ago.

Our first session, as usual, was simply listening to her story or as much as she wanted to share at that time. After her life story she did casually mention "that time"

At the end of the session, I felt she was comfortable with me because she spoke briefly about the abortion experience, though I think that was because of her friend's satisfaction with her experience with me-so (Mary-not real name) also felt it was OK to mention her own abortion of many years earlier.

As we concluded the session, she made a new appoint for following week (zoom) and I in parting said that when she returns, we might begin first to deal with the abortion and lay that baby gently to rest with love and with honour before we begin to look at the miscarriages and the possible reasons for them I gave her little "homework" which she promised to do I don't usually like dealing with naming etc in early sessions but with time limit and the other miscarriages I started with an idea to get her permission to speak about abortion as I thought that this was behind her continual losses. As she left, I was unsure whether she would return for other sessions because of how terse her voice was when I suggested we deal with the abortion first before we speak about the miscarriages and explained the reason.

When making this suggestion I don't just say "we'll name your baby, or talk about your baby". I gently explain what we're going to do. And be at peace if nothing happens and we will discuss it at the following

session. Normally the client is happy to comply with the request and instructions but this one I felt wasn't going to.

She come again (Zoom) the following week but I sensed a hesitancy. When I asked her, why? she responded that she doesn't want to speak about aborted baby or name "it" because it was "too tiny to know if it was a boy or girl and couldn't be named, and anyway it wasn't a baby at 12-13 weeks pregnant it was still a mass of cells. It wasn't really a human yet"

I allowed her to talk about whatever she wanted to talk about (her past week) and then gently led her back to the reality of the abortion and bring to the surface and undo all the years of denial and the denial I saw was where the problem lay but she can't see it.

As she continued, she opened up a little about the abortion and it was interesting how clear her memory was about everything which happened that morning. Indeed, she remembered the facility, Drs name, time, cost, what she was told by abortion facility to do before going in, telling her older boyfriend about the pregnancy and then the abortion and his need to drive her there and wait for her while it was done and then to take her back home. Interestingly she remembered listening to talkback radio station and the long silence between and her boyfriend both on way in and going home.

Although there was a difference on way home because tears were rolling down her face but her boyfriend didn't say a word. At home she got out of the car and didn't look back and he drove away. That was the end of that relationship I suspect that an inner vow had been made with herself that she would not remember, think or speak about this experience and refuse to remember that she had done such a thing or that it even happened.

The experience must have been very traumatic for her and the trauma suppressed, though today we understand that abortion trauma, irrespective of when the abortion was done, lives on not only in the land via suffering of men, women, children, but also in cellular memory of those living and those to come in the future generations of who have experienced this.

For "Mary" whilst she vowed and willed it into oblivion, the reality is that the memory was imprinted in her being, in her cells and this cannot be consciously controlled and this imprinted trauma will have its moment of attention.

For "Mary" to be able to be helped not only with the abortion but also the many miscarriages, she needs to want to be helped and mostly the woman usually

doesn't want to speak about hidden abortion for fear of what will happen to her and the shame which will be exposed.

For trauma to be beaten it must be revisited, confronted and surfaced so that it does not remain hidden where it's in control. We are reminded what scriptures say about what is done in darkness must be brought to the light.

It needs to be visited, looked at, and remove its stolen control over her. The secret which controls cannot remain secret but be brought out so that sense may be made of it. Control be regained by the victim and healing very possible. Traumatic memories not only harm mind but also the nervous system. Immune system, causing all manner of health issues.

In "Mary's" case the memory of that day has held her captive and in control and she vowed that she would never be in a situation of being with child so that such a thing could happen again. And whilst consciously it has not happened again, at subconscious level it has been occurring through the loss of her wanted pregnancies. That vow she made that no pregnancy might end like "this" so before it ended like "this" she willed for it to go.

Today we know of the strength of relationship that is between the mind and body and its connection so that it is not surprising when vows are made the vow is kept.

Over the many years of my work in this area of wounds in the life principle, in sexuality, in conception, I have learned that to be able to help I have to be able to delve deep into the person's humanity without injuring further but to slowly surface the cause of pain and help the victim retrieve that piece of herself still left behind at that place pain. Bring her missing piece of "self" home to join the rest of her. To make her whole again. The pain has a good purpose to help regather what is lost.

The care offered is one which speaks of life, death, hope, even sadness but ultimately renewal and healing. The dimension of "care" which counsellor brings to the relationship also speaks of a dimension of dignity and integrity.

For "Mary" not only was/is dignity needed and extended but also dignity for the aborted child, and then individually to each child which has also passed away in the 11-13-week range and with each passing a bringing to memory of another child which needed to be remembered with all its dignity restored. Human beings are so delicately and intricately created that not one can pass by without being acknowledged. Without its presence remaining unknown.

Letters

Dear Anne,
Hi Anne

A great Broken Branches Newsletter, issue 146, has been my pleasure to receive this last day of November, dedicated to the first Apostle, St Andrew.

There was a strain of sadness throughout, the year that has been of unfulfilled personal advancement, that interesting experience which, I too, felt that this was a woman testing the waters, and, as you wrote, my antennae were raised.

But the sunshine burst through a difficult year as we all have experienced it, with your opening article on "Our Children living in the Lord" with a quote from Joshua, and the nod to Augustine – even Saints can get it wrong – as the Holy Spirit guides us and the Church along the paths of life.

Your beautiful letters, with at crème de la crème line: "You have been a guiding light and a mother figure and confidant to me." Print that and frame it above your study and bless God for it – it is true!

Finally, you Letters concludes with a ringing statement and plea:
"A change of heart by our society is needed!"

Br. Chris.

Dear Anne,

Thank you for another excellent newsletter I have enjoyed and learned so much from you I share your newsletter with friends and they enjoy reading it too.

Have a better year this coming year and I hope your health improves.

God bless dear,

Ann K (Vic)

Dear Anne,

Just let you know how much I enjoyed reading your December issue of the newsletter and I particularly loved the coloured printing. You should do all your newsletters in full colour. No matter however they come I am happy.

Enclosed please find a small donation to help you with stamps

God bless you dear.

Karen L.

*Hi Karen, lovely hearing from you again.
Yes, the December issue with colour was lovely, wasn't it? I would print all issues in colour but its far too expensive
Anyway, lovely, thank you for your kind words and look forward to meeting when I can fly to Melb again*

*God bless
Anne*

Dearest Anne,

As always thank you for your bulletin, its so good. Thank you for having kept us informed all these years. You're an angel. Do you know that?

Keep going strong dear. Praying for you and hope your health improves.

God bless you
Bev C
Perth

Thanks Bev and thank you for your lovely gift to me I restrained myself till Christmas morning!!! Amazing in itself.

*Love
Anne*

I don't know if Mary will hold onto a conception, I believe so but that is for a time to come.

Mum's Brain changes after a birth:

Meeting with friend for lunch during Christmas break I learned something from her which delighted me and which at some level I must have known but not thought about.

Christine, (her name) has a new baby 8 months old and like nearly all mothers is besotted with her baby. Before the birth of the baby when we met, she used to lament all the things she wouldn't be able to do once the baby was here. Some of things like going back to work after maternal leave couldn't come soon enough because she loved her job and the people she worked with. She loved being among people and talking about all things.

She loved the shopping and having money to buy whatever she wanted. She loved the going away weekends with her husband and even skiing and sport and the never-ending list of things she loved doing and wanted to get back to as soon as possible.

I must admit that times I wondered why she was pregnant but of course didn't say anything. Life continued, we met about once month for coffee or lunch or even just a sit and a talk and maybe occasionally a cocktail.

The last time we met before Christmas break where we had lunch and time to talk, I was left inwardly laughing and my heart could have burst.

When I asked how bubby was going, (now 8 months) you know the usual questions about new baby, teeth, crawling, sleeping etc, she responded with "all is so great Anne, I love him so much and the three of us are so happy" and the next words floored me.

"I hate the idea of having to go back work when my maternal leave ends. I don't want to leave him for whole days. In fact, I don't even like going out with friends at night and leave him even for just a couple of hrs. I know he's safe coz he is with his daddy but I miss him even for the couple of hours. And while I'm out I keep thinking about him and wanting to go home."

"My brain seems to have changed so much. When I look at him, I'm so in love and I don't want to be away from him and I want protect him and not even miss little time with him. What's happened to me Anne?" With a huge grin on my face said "You've discovered there's someone more important to you than the going out, and all the things you were doing before and which gave you pleasure. Now this little bundle looks at you with love and you return the same love. Unconditional. that's what this love is called. This is the unconditional love that God has for each one of us. What you discovered is what is also called "mother love" the rarest kind of love on earth.

And yes, it's true your brain has changed it has now been flooded with this love which was not in your experience before. It's something so precious.

Dear Friends, I have come to end of another newsletter I would like to thank you so much for being with me these past 25 ½ years where we worked together to bring comfort to the hurting. I would also like to say thank you to those who sent me cards and little gifts for my Christmas tree I really do appreciate your care. I did work some emergency work (counselling a new young lady recent abortion) and two other abortion grief clients.

I also want to thank those who sent a donation towards this work and enough to do this newsletter and its expenses. It was a bit disappointing as my call for \$\$\$\$ help went largely ignored (except the regulars) and I have wondered if the Lord is posing questions to me. Just wait a while a see. Also, I want to thank those who purchased book.

Please continue to pray for me (health) and for Fran, Sarah, Mel P, Judy, Sylvie, Chris, Michelle, Alisha, Thea, Belle, Sharyn, Carmine, Josie, Alex. For now, I wish for you all a happy and covid safe new year and many blessings wished for you. God Bless.



Anne Lastman

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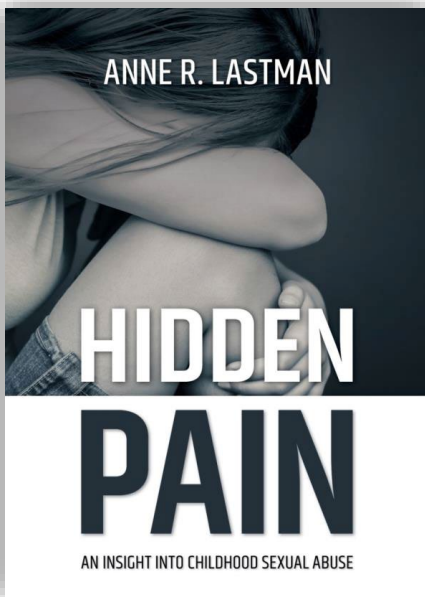
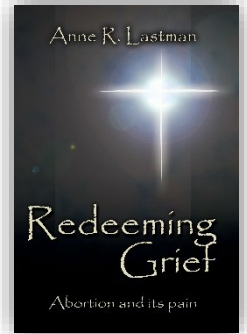
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If you or anyone you know may be interested, please pass this on to help me clear them.

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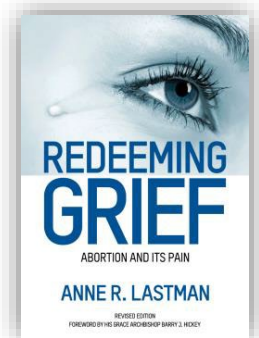
This is not a step by step guide to dealing with abuse. It is the result of my engagement with those who have come to me originally for post abortion counselling and on further investigation it was found that abuse (especially in cases of multiple abortions) existed in their history. It is my hope that **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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