

# Broken Branches

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

ISSUE 153– Dec/Jan 2023

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## And So Again We Love and Remember.

Well dear friends we have reached that time of the year again. How quickly it seems to have passed but we have seen some differences this year although perhaps not as much as we might have.

These days it seems that time runs so fast and it's time to set up the Christmas tree, think about children's presents, and maybe even a few adults, what to cook for Christmas and even for most of us the celebration of the birth of Our Lord. And think this year I'm going to buy a Happy Birthday card for Him. I've never done this and yet it's His birthday that we remember with joy.

Every year I love watching Carols in the Park or Carols in the Domain and the magnificent singers and the celebrations of that night and watching children sitting with mums and dads holding candles and the imagery which this evokes. The stars on an extra bright sky just over 2000 years ago and the special singers then. And when I see and think this, I realise that this is why the Lord doesn't do something we wouldn't like. Because there are those "twenty people" of Abraham fame (Gen 18:26-33) and because of them he won't do anything. There is a great sense of joy and holiness and belief that there is something magnificent which we don't quite understand intellectually but only with our hearts.

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## Group Work.

Dear friends, I have (strangely twice in same week) been asked why I don't do group work in relation to both sexual abuse and abortion. I may have, half million years ago, written something about this but I don't remember so here goes again.

Whilst I appreciate very much those who believe strongly in the benefits of group work, I'm sorry but I don't. I have thought much and deeply about this and it would be easy to begin with a small group and continue to build on it. I have the room both in my Melbourne office and my Perth office but I don't like group work in these particular mental health areas. I don't believe it's such a great idea.

I understand that bringing together other individuals who've had the same experience (abortion and sexual abuse) is thought to be beneficial but I don't want for those experiencing these to have between them and their relationship the violent experience that they both lived through. This is not something which should bond and bind a relationship but the relationship is to be nurtured because of mutual likes, loves, hobbies, lovely experiences, to form a lifelong (maybe) friendship based on heart to heart and not pain to pain.

I would hate to know that there is a relationship which developed because the "new" friends took their baby to die (intentionally) or that they had been sexually abused by any number of others.

I've read that friendships are flowers we pick for ourselves and flowers gives us colour, fragrance, pleasure, love and even happiness. A bunch of roses speaks to us a beautiful language etc. Friendships brought together with trauma, pain, shame, etc does not do this.

As I said earlier, I realise that there are those who are fully committed to group counselling of both sexual abuse and abortion and that's their work but it's not mine.

Both of these traumas, require slow, long term, understanding of the nature of trauma, self-intent, understanding of woman, her design and the resultant after effects of abortion and where there is sexual

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abuse whether within the family, strangers, intentional, rape, grooming, this take so much time and energy of both the victim and the counsellor in order that the end result is not a forgetting, or suppression because that can never happen. We cannot erase such a traumatic, horrible experience but what we can do is help to integrate this into their life experience and help with the understanding that this painful experience has occurred and perhaps find the why. There is often in both experiences self-blame. There can be mental health issues. There can be wickedness. And step by step we enter into the experience, together, and take out the poisoned seed so that it cannot grow any further.

We all know that deeply embedded fear, pain, (here's that word again) trauma, intention, deeply suppressed do not simply stay there and continually live happily ever after. These negative emotions eat away at the conscience, the "I" the person who is "me" and these are affected with the slow erosion that these negative emotions emit.

With abortion, there is the need to see what brought the need for the abortion. Obviously, there is deep regret otherwise there would not be need for counsellor. Regret that begins at times before even the abortion and can continue till end of life. Abortion grief requires looking into what led to the decision because no one gets up on a Tuesday/Wednesday etc morning and say "today I'm having an abortion" so it must be discerned. Where there are multiple abortions that must be delved into deeply because there is something more sinister going on there. Why so many abortions if it is possible to contracept instead of keep getting pregnant and then aborting. What has caused his pattern of intentional life and death.

At the beginning of my work, we had thought that maybe multiple abortions were a need to be pregnant again and replace the first aborted child but the same difficulties still existed and so another abortion.

Because I didn't know any different, I went along with this theory but as I kept thinking more and more about this it became obvious to me that that was an excuse. That Reason was not quite it. There was still further to this.

One of my clients, one day, illuminated the possible reason for this. She said to me that she'd had the abortion and then went straight to a big department store and bought a whole baby layette for the next baby which she would have. But that was the last I heard from her.

A sort of answer was given/came to me some years later when a youngish (35 yr. old) lady came to my office for "grief" difficulties. She had miscarried 2 babies and she was grieving deeply and couldn't stop the tears, and the anger, with herself and others. She couldn't stop the dreams about her miscarried babies (2 boys) and she believed she must have done something to bring on the miscarriage. She didn't know if her going shopping. Her putting out washing, her having walked too much. Something must have caused the miscarriages and "it was my fault" As I listened to her, I could hear the pain and self-blame

I next asked her to tell me a little about her family. She had 2 living children, 2 miscarriages AND 11 abortions!! And voilà the guilt and shame and self-blame I was hearing.

I asked her why she mentioned to me how hurt she is because she miscarried two babies but aborted 11 does she feel pain for those babies and she gave me an

emphatic no. "My two miscarriages I had no control over but my abortions I had control whether to keep them or "get "rid of them," and there was the answer. Control situation.

There must have been a time when she had no control over her body and she determined it would never happen again. With the miscarriages she had no control with their going, but the other pregnancies she had control and exercised that control.

I asked permission to have a look at her earlier life, family life etc and the reason emerged. forced abuse in early life 8-11 yrs. (by older brother) with threats if she told anyone. No control over her body and the fear of something happening to her loved one if she told.

Once I discovered this, the work could begin not only helping with early life pain but starting from the beginning, history of family life, letting her slowly tell me about sexual abuse, and her determination never to let this happen again. She never recognised these pregnancies as her children but as "bits of men" punishing men and the abortion as punishing them and killing them.

With this knowledge and more to come we began with these early horrific life experiences (long time) and got to the miscarriages, and finally towards the abortions.

All of this work could not be done in a group situation. It's not a matter of discussing the abortion/s and then dealing with this because temporarily it might make her feel better because she has been able to speak about the experience (one client told me she'd carried this pain for over 60 years without telling anyone, now she needed help because of a serious diagnosis) but it's not long lasting.

The work of grief has to be slowly addressed and then slowly integrated into one's history.

That is, making peace with one's own history and integrating that experience into one's life just like one will integrate another painful experience e.g., broken leg. Painful at the time but when healed it becomes part of one's history. Something which happened in life, painful at the time and healed and forgotten from

conscious memory. remembered temporarily if a trigger (fall and hurt knee) but not retained as permanent experience. The scar remains but the pain forgotten.

With a client who has other traumatic experiences with the abortion as another painful experience added to the others, it's the uppermost experience, the abortion, which will be remembered as the cause of the pain.

Domestic violence, sexual abuse, abortions even causing an accidental injury or even death, these cannot be treated in group situation even the sharing of their experience. There is always the fear that "someone will tell my story to another" and those who do not want to share.

*...not children  
but bits of  
men...*

I'm a fortunate, because I love studying and reading and pondering. And so, all my reading and pondering is related to these topics. I don't read fiction science or otherwise but I do read and try and understand what causes pain, why is pain caused. What is disturbed which causes such pain. Why do women experience more pain in the area of life and life creation than men? What is it about woman which makes her feel a "different" kind of pain? And so, I then look into creation of woman and her charism as woman and what it means and

why abuse and abortion are so damaging to her feminine self.

As I said in the beginning of this short article I don't particularly like group work because of all these and more reasons. However, for those who believe in it and works for them, and helps some of their clients, well and good anything which helps woman and at times man, and their particular pain is good.

Just as we have recently seen the overturning of Roe v Wade and have rejoiced at such an event.

I never thought it would happen. But I have my doubts. All that really happened was removal of law from the American constitution and passed law making onto each individual state. It's great, anything which helps to reduce and even eliminate abortion is wonderful but when I started this work in early 1995-6, we in Australia had limited abortion. Yes, it was there, but limited gestation, mother's health, rape,

incest, hard cases however in 26 years we as a society globally have watched abortion or killing of in utero babies at all gestational age.

We have watched the “post birth abortion” (baby left to die if born alive following botched abortion) Laws were supposed to be in place which “respected” some life, but slowly all those laws were revoked and yet even the reversal of R v W has its very good merits. It shows us that there are good people willing to try and reduce or even maybe prevent abortion. But still the abortion train continues undisturbed.

Yes, we use all opportunities to fight this scourge and use all methods which work for us but for me and my understanding group work is not for me.

I believe that we have concentrated too much on laws. Its “woman” who has opened the door way and accepted the taking of her baby to be killed. It’s woman who has accepted that she takes a toxic “pill” which not only damage her own biology but also opened the door to random sexuality and slowly when pregnancy occurred abortion became the new “pill” preventing the baby from being born even if it means killing it.

It's woman who we need to help to find ways to help her understand that she holds life in her hands and her womb was created for such a task. Only the feminine can do that work. Within group work this is not possible.

As we counsel grieving women, we remember that she knows she has been wonderfully made but the noises of society have told her otherwise and she cannot hear this voice anymore.

As I conclude this, please do not read this as a criticism of group work but it’s not my preferred way of doing this work. I have found that other demons are at work and these must be expunged before we can really start the work which ensures that future abortions will not occur in the life of our client and when she leaves us, she leaves still remembering her baby but without pain.

We help her keep the memory of her baby alive but without pain. We can help her understand that this has been a *Kairos* moment for her. A moment which has changed her life and hopefully for the better.

## Quote:

*“Tolerance will reach such a level that intelligent people will be banned from thinking so as not to offend the imbeciles” (Fyodor M Dostoevsky)*

Dear friends this quote was sent to me this past week and I looked at it quite stunned. I am reminded of the times which we are living in.

Tolerance will have reached such a level that intelligent people will be banned from thinking so as not to offend imbeciles.

I imagine that even the last word is also non politically correct and there would be much trouble using this word and intelligent people are too afraid to speak because we will be considered “racist” “leftist” “far right” “far left” “intolerant” and so forth.

“People will be banned from thinking so as not to offend the imbeciles” We cannot think, express an opinion, disagree with the politically correct, the woke people, the cancel culture, the feminists, the death pedlars. The new anti-life-anti faith, anti-free speech. Indeed, those of us who disagree will expect to be punished. To lose jobs, to be sued, to be banished, to even be punished by law.

How has it become possible that the “hate-speakers” can demand to be listened to, to be accommodated but those of us who have a different opinion be shut down for fear. How come that Whoopi Goldberg can say “women need abortions to get rid of that “toxic thing” inside of them?” but I can’t say that that “toxic thing” is a human being with inestimable value and not to be killed” Why has she got the right to sprout abortion but I don’t have a right to “sprout LIFE” Why am I banned from thinking and saying what I think without fear of “offending the imbeciles”

[Whoopi Goldberg: Women Need Abortions to Get Rid of the “Toxic Thing” Inside Them](#)

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Recently had an experience which has left me both wounded and “fed up.” I was asked to give a presentation to mental health providers and I of course was delighted. It was/is important for me that others in mental health area recognise abortion grief, sexual abuse grief and abortions as a result of sexual abuse and how to work these who hurt. It was left in the hands of the one who asked me and we even spoke of dates early next year possibly February and all I thought was well.

Well within a day I received an email telling me that she had read my email address and noticed the word “victims” and she understands what this means (that I



am pro-life) and so if I am going to speak about pro life I must also speak about "pro -choice." According to this female it's the way it is to be.

Well of course I refused. I had a sense before she emailed me that she would look me up and find a way to disinvite me. She didn't need to disinvite me because I wasn't interested and later as I thought about it, I thought what a great disservice she did to those mental health workers and a great injustice to me.

I have spoken at many conferences, groups, medical groups, church groups, life groups and other mental health groups and spoke in a way that all would go away having got something without being upset with anything I said. For secular groups I simply spoke about symptoms and what to look for and how to help the one suffering without adding more hurt.

To groups with a faith including all different faiths (largest Catholic/Christian) I spoke about symptoms, what to look for, is the guilt religion related (means conscience awake) and stop being afraid that God has abandoned them and will not be coming to look for them and has not abandoned them etc. I usually help these mental health practitioners to work with the faith of the victim (not practitioners' faith) and encourage them to help their client understand that yes it has been a mistake but God has loved us and always comes looking for us.

I have helped the practitioner with not only the counselling aspect but at the end a saying good bye ceremony. Not a ceremony of violence but one of peace and spoke to them about who to contact for these ceremonies and at times ceremony within nature. I don't speak about being pro-life or that they (client) should be pro life or that the practitioner should be pro-life. I speak about the pain that this decision has caused to the one sitting in front of her. Indeed, my work is to reconcile the mother and her baby. To acknowledge (or own) that decision where it now, but should not to be carried on her shoulders for the rest of her life.

I don't push religion at the client. If she has a religious belief, it's so much easier but if she doesn't then I don't want to violate her own conscience.

I believe that I plant the seed of another life (baby gone to a beautiful place accompanied his/her "angel to be with Jesus or God)- they love to hear these words even if not religious. They absolutely don't want to think that their baby has been dismembered or felt pain. And I know that if they weren't affected by their

abortion, they wouldn't be with me. And I have much trust and hope for them. As I said, I plant a seed of another life (God) and I believe the Lord will send other labourers to water and nurture that seed. That Mustard seed.

These are the things I speak about, differently (according to group) but the same when I give presentations. Where possible I also give example and when necessary (only when necessary) I give my experience as an example.

As I said the person who asked me and then thought it necessary to uninvite me did a great disservice to her colleagues and an injustice to me. After 26 years I think I have an idea how to speak and am able to gauge the climate in the room where I am speaking. I felt so upset and even sad that I wasn't able to share with the others my experience and whilst I know that there would be some who would disagree or even walk out, I am capable of dealing with these also.

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Recently, 29/10/22, I attended a Right to Life Healing Seminar here in Perth, this is the second one I have been invited to and they are well attended and organised by Steve (President of RTL WA) a man of huge vision for the life movement and so supported by Parish Priest Fr Pavol Herda. He is so involved and so openly pro-life. It's so heartening to see such support from a priest who not only offers venue and refreshments but is involved and is interested in post abortion grief. Both times I have been invited as speaker.

This time however, was a bit more interesting. Anti-life protestors 30-40 with noise makers and usual "get your rosaries of my ovaries" "misogynist church" "its my body Ill do what I want" etc. you know the usual things were present. We had been advised that posters had been put out by them around universities and other busy spots (30-40 for such advertising? Not encouraging for them!)

They tried to stop cars coming into the carpark. They stomped and kicked cars as they came in.

They actually damaged some cars and there was such a rage in these young people. And they ranted and I was surprised that young men 20-22 yrs. of age were also ranting "it's her body" I naughtily answered "yes it's so that you can have sex with her and no consequences" I thought I did my dash but nothing happened.

# Letters

Dear Anne,

Thank you for your continued writing of your bulletin, I love it very much and look forward to when it comes and reading it from cover to cover. I keep praying for your health. Blessing for Christmas my Dear Anne.

God bless  
Rita L. (WA)

*Thank you, dear Rita, I appreciate your care for me and my work and as we discussed in New Year maybe we can have lunch or coffee with decadent cake together.*

*I also wish for you and family a very happy Christmas*  
Love  
Anne

Dear Laurie H. Thank you so much. It helped lots.

Anne

Dear Fr Brian. C. Thank you for your Kind words and I will answer your question that you couldn't come up with any particular reason to.....it must have been Holy Spirit whispering. 😊  
Dear Fr B.

Thank you, also lovely speaking, with you do it more often.

Anne

Dear Frances, Dee, Laurie, Margaret G. Tim, Paul, Mrs. Mun... Carrie, Kathleen, anonymous, Don, anonymous.

*I thank you all you helped me very much.*

His Grace Archbishop Emeritus Barry Hickey was also there and with me and he went outside the gate to speak with them but they shoved him and surrounded him and I was afraid for him. I went and linked arms and he went inside. They were so disrespectful towards him I couldn't believe that they would treat not only an Archbishop but an older man with so much disrespect. Have the young of today not been taught any respect for anyone? Its no wonder we're in such a mess and these are to be the leaders of the future?

I actually got to say a few words to one of the older women who had a card saying "the church is anti-women and Taliban" I looked at her and asked "what do you mean anti women and Taliban." "They hate women" was the spitted out reply. "But the Holy Father has appointed many women to positions of importance in the church" "it doesn't matter the church hates women and priests' fiddle with children"

I shook my head and thought this is another story she is starting because she has nowhere to go with the abortion issue and "Taliban and women hating church" "OK darling" "I'm not your darling" she responded. "Of course, you are" and left. She said no more and I left to go inside because the conference had started and I was third speaker.

This is the third time I have been at a conference where protesting was a feature and I must admit it's a bit frightening. Yesterday wasn't so frightening. Lots of security and four police who really got involved when the car damaging began. They managed to move protestors away. We went from hearing screeching to blessed silence. The rest of the conference, a church hall completely full and some sitting at back on steps!! But this is because the priest, Fr Pavol, bless him, is so involved and believes in Life. Bless Polish priests and all other priests and clergy who give their lives for souls.

The rest of the speakers including, His Grace Archbishop Hickey, a very pro-life politician The Hon. Nick Goiran MLC., Another political speaker, Ms Maryka Groenewald, Mr James Parker a man with so much knowledge about the issue of pornography and its after effects, yours truly, Mr Steve Klomp (RTL) a dynamo for life, a speaker with personal story and experience Ms Anouska Firth, and Fr Pavol, speaking on St John Paul II's words on life. Beautiful. And thank you to Mr Darryl Budge (Coalition for the Defence of Human Life) for the opening address which set the scene for our time together.

I know that it can be said we preach to the converted but on this day, there were many new faces and my hope and our hope is that they get an opportunity to speak on behalf of life even once in their lifetime.

## The year that's been.

Well, my dear friends, we've come to the end of another year and I must admit that it's been the hardest year since I first began doing this work. 26 yrs. ago.

It's been an insecure year. A year of ups and downs. Covid of course didn't help. I have done several of the things I had wanted to do but not all. I have written a few articles which have been published and its good because it helps people understand.

I've attended two conferences overseas (Thanks Fr J. for money for fares and accommodation). It was so good being with two Catholic organisations and hearing the life work being done overseas and also hearing of the same difficulties which they also experience. Especially those of us who work in this "Life Vineyard" It was also so good to meet up with people I have known for a long time. The networking was also encouraging.

This past year I have spoken at several smaller groups. I have spoken at 2 Right to Life healing seminars (thanks Steve) have attended meetings. Attended Counselling Association meetings, have attended workshops to accumulate my 25hrs yrly of ongoing Professional development and 12 hrs of personal supervision with a more senior counsellor, a requirement for personal Indemnity insurance.

Went to Melbourne couple of times to see both my clients over there and my children. Both were wonderful to see.

I have counselled 11 clients here as one or two offs, and 5 longer term and a new one this week. One who will be long term. I will probably need to speak or see her during break.

I have done as much as it was possible to do in the work area However, it has been very difficult financially and if not for about 5 permanent and

several semi-permanent donors I would not have been able to manage. I know I always have my husband to fall back on but I don't think it's fair as he does everything for us so that I am free to do this work. He believes and supports the work in all ways.

Even up to this stage of the year I am not sure what to do. Whether to continue or to close down. I've thought about this very very much that perhaps my readership is tired of supporting a charism which doesn't really change much except that I help change the life of woman and her baby but I suspect that maybe it's not enough and the thought is that this abortion and abortion grief will never get better. It will always be there.

I won't ask for donations now; I will leave all of this in your hands and how the Lord directs you. If there aren't donations it must mean that the Lord wants me to close down. So, I leave this in your care to do as you are guided.

I still have clients both in Melbourne and in Perth and have discussed with them referring them to other counsellors but all without exception have said that they want to stay with me. Or they won't go to anyone else.

I ask that many prayers be said for me and for clients and especially one particular client (sexual abuse) called Josie who is so very very traumatised and so ill, and feels lost and confused. And I also ask for prayers for my new client who I have only counselled twice and will need to do so even during break. (Sarah L).

Prayers for me please for help with health issues and also to know what to do for the best. And course I wish for you all a safe, happy and Holy Christmas with loads of presents and love and if God permits will return at end of January/early February.



**Anne Lastman**

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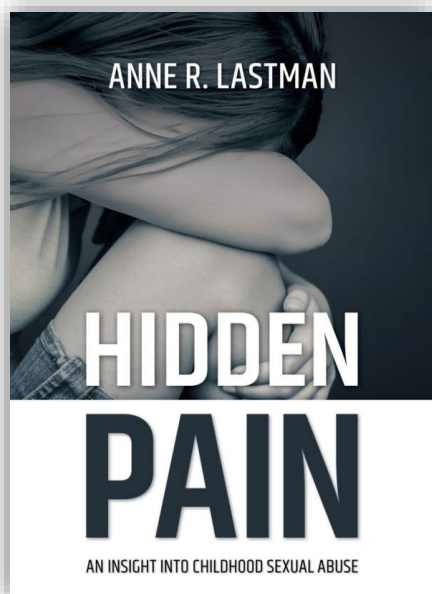
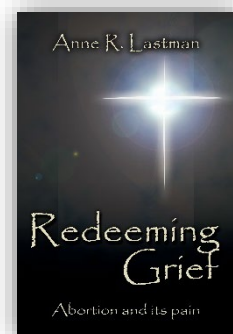
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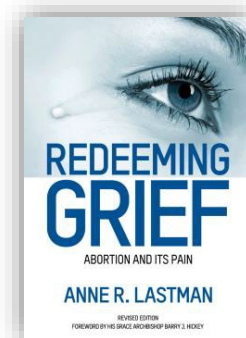
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This is not a step by step guide to dealing with abuse. It is the result of my engagement with those who have come to me originally for post abortion counselling and on further investigation it was found that abuse (especially in cases of multiple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