

April 2005

It is fifteen years later and this past Saturday our Beloved Pope John Paul II has passed away. The more I pray, the more I recognize how influential he has been in my post abortion & healing journey. It was no surprise to learn he counseled post abortive women in Poland when he was bishop.

The story of the image of Our Lady of Czestochowa continues in my life. She became the patroness of all the post abortion work I do with The Sisters of Life and the Friars of the Renewal in our "Entering Canaan" ministry, as well as the work I do at Lumina/Hope & Healing after Abortion.

This past year Father Mariusz Koch, CFR and I led our first pilgrimage for post abortive women to Poland visiting the Shrines of Our Lady of Czestochowa and the Divine Mercy. We also were blessed to go to the hometown of Pope John Paul II and his childhood church and apartment. I also learned that the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa is located on what is referred to as the Luminous Mountain, an echo of the name of my full time employment.

The novena, given to me over 15 years ago is still part of my daily life and, God willing, will continue to be until my death. Our Lady has come through for me many times including the conversion of my dad who was instrumental in my abortion. Before his death my father received the sacraments, and our last words were asking him to hug my aborted son Joshua when he saw him. A topic not discussed for over 30 years.

Yes, this Lady with the scars on her face has become my ally and strength in life and doing post abortion ministry. I have no doubt she has guided me and obtains the graces necessary by interceding with her Son.

Totus Tuus- "I am all yours and all that I have belongs to you, O Most loving Jesus, through Mary Your most Holy Mother".

I thank our Holy Father Pope John Paul the II, for the gift of his life and for his example in allowing Mary to lead us to her son. May this pamphlet increase devotion to her!

Our Lady of Czestochowa, pray for us!

Novena to Our Lady of Czestochowa

Blessed Lady, Mother of the Church
With the choirs of angels and with our patron
Saints we come before your heavenly throne.

For centuries you have granted your miraculous
favors at the great mountain of Jasna Gora,
the source of your mercy.

Hear our prayerful hearts filled with
love and devotion
Help us to live and gospel, fortify our faith
and enkindle our love for the church
Grant us, your children, these special graces
Hail Mary (3 times)
Memorare
Our Lady of Czestochowa pray for us (3 times)

*In memory of my son Joshua, my dad Frank
and in thanksgiving for the many favors Our
Lady has granted.*

— Theresa Bonopartis

For additional copies or for a referral:

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*Our Lady of Czestochowa
Patroness of those post abortive...*



Pray for us...



1990 = Our Lady of Czestochowa

It all began a few years ago. I was attending a Rosary Congress weekend in MA with one of our parish priests and our youth group. Each morning we would go to the local church to celebrate mass. It was there that I first saw her. I remember thinking how strange she looked, this Lady of Czestochowa, with her black face and scars on her cheek and throat. I asked our parish priest about her since I had no knowledge of the icon. He himself knew little about her except that she was Polish, so I vowed to ask a Polish friend of mine about her when we returned home. My friend was also lacking in knowledge except to tell me that the picture had been damaged in a war and that was how the face was scarred. It was not until much later that I learned more about this mysterious image of Our Lady.

About six months later, I went to confession in a neighboring parish. I was feeling very down at the time, struggling with many difficulties, most prominent my battle for healing from an



Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa

abortion I had had while in my teens. Though many years later and deep into my faith, I still experienced times of despair. I couldn't seem to grasp the forgiveness of God, to feel it in depths of my soul. The priest in the confessional had just returned from a pilgrimage to Poland, and as my penance he gave me a 3-day novena to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

After some research I found out various things about the icon. Said to have been painted by St. Luke, the painting is sometimes called the Black Madonna. Many miracles have been associated with the icon, which was moved various times and saved from destruction during the siege of Jerusalem. It was moved by St. Helena who gave it to her son Constantine the Great, who then erected a Church at Constantinople dedicated to the Holy Name of Mary. There it became very famous and many graces and miracles were received by all that prayed before it. It was in the reign of Casimir the Great that the icon made its way to Poland and was placed in the Castle of Belz which was attacked by Tartars. The bow of a tartar warrior entered the chapel and struck the face and throat of the virgin, a mark that to this day remains. Many attempts were made to restore the icon but no matter what was done or how various artists covered the scars, they would reappear again. It was obvious Our Lady was making a statement, and it was then I realized the significance of the icon in my life.

Like the scars on the face of Our Lady, our society tries to cover the scars of abortion. There is a refusal to acknowledge the very real suffering, and even in the best of circumstances the feelings of those who mourn are often not legitimized. "Forget about it", "You are forgiven"; "It is in the past". But the wounds keep appearing and crying to be heard.

It has been a struggle for me, but through much prayer and counseling, and a devotion to The Divine Mercy of God, I have found peace. Healing has been, more than anything, a spiritual battle with Satan, I am sure, trying to keep power over me, flinging his lies at me at every turn, but with a trained counselor, good spiritual direction and endless prayer, healing came. There on



Praying Before the image in Poland.

the cross with our Beloved Jesus I was given the graces necessary, and the only love deep enough to heal the wounds. There on the cross I found peace with my child, God and within myself.

"Jesus I trust in you" must be lived in order to be healed of the atrocity of abortion. He must be clung to in the depths of despair and all the torments passed through in the healing process. You must believe His mercy and love are bigger than any sin you have committed and trust in His promises. He will never let us down. I know, for I am a miracle of His mercy.

In thanksgiving for my healing, I decided to make a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, MA. How could I express my gratitude? When I went into the chapel in Stockbridge I was not surprised to see a stained glass window of Our Lady of Czestochowa. It was then that I realized it was she who had led me to her Son and healing. I also, for the first time, realized that Pope John Paul II had a great devotion to the Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Czestochowa and I cried recognizing how he must pray for us, his children, to these devotions, and that through his prayer unbeknown to me at the time, I myself was probably drawn into these devotions. I thought of the Holy Father's great devotion and my own consecration to Our Lady, and thanked God for Our Holy Father, Our Lady who always leads us to her son, and Jesus who in his infinite mercy took pity on me, and lifted me up to Himself allowing me to experience the depths of His love and mercy...a love waiting for each and every one of us, no matter what the sin.