Often when I have heard the parable of the Good Samaritan I have wondered who I would have been like in this story when it came to helping the man who fell into the hands of robbers and was beaten and left on the side of the road. Would I have been like the priest or the Levite who passed by the other side, or like the Samaritan who took pity on the man, cared for his wounds and led him to the help he needed?

Most likely, I would, at different times, be like all of them depending on my mood or experiences on any given day. Some days I am sure, I would want to ignore his pain and pass him by, others, I would be inclined to help. And so it is now with the “robbed man” of our day and time, he just may look a little different now.

It has been almost 38 years since the 1973 Supreme Court decision of Roe vs. Wade which legalized abortion in the United States. Since then, there have been over 50 million abortions and many wounded lying at the side of the road.

Women and men believe they are alone in their pain and suffering, not knowing where to turn for help. Grandparents mourn grandchildren, and siblings carry the guilt of being born when they know a brother or sister is missing. The numbers of those lying on the road of abortion are endless…only God knows for sure how many there are, but we all know someone.

In an effort to reach those suffering, Lumina is beginning our “Good Samaritan” initiative. Enclosed in this newsletter you will find two of our cards listing the dates of the many retreats we will be holding in the coming year.

Who do you know? Is it your mom? Your wife? Your friend? How about your father, brother, sibling, or co-worker?

We ask that you keep one card and pass one on to someone you know who is suffering. Maybe they do not know you know. Then, mail one to them anonymously. One woman who came to our retreat found our brochure in her mailbox. To this day she still does not know who put it there. She did not come immediately, but eventually she sought out help, found healing and enjoys her life again. She is forever grateful to whoever placed that brochure in her mailbox.

Abortion locks many people into shame and despair. Often they live in a fear of being found out. Many are afraid to come forward for other reasons, or do not know help is available. At Lumina we offer retreats for siblings, women, men, teens and those who aborted due to an adverse diagnosis…no one has to suffer alone, hope and healing are possible.

Keep one and pass one on...someone will be glad you did.
UPCOMING POST ABDATION RETREATS

ENTERING CANAAN MINISTRY
Sisters of Life or Theresa Bonopartis of Lumina
Contact: 866-575-0075 or 877-586-4621

Days of Prayer & Healing
September 18, 2010/October 16, 2010
Contact 877-586-4621 or 866-575-0075

Day of Prayer & Healing for Men
September 25, 2010
Project Joseph “Entering Canaan” Men’s retreat, St Louis, MO
For more information call (314) 792-7565 or e-mail ProjectJoseph@archstl.org.

October 9, 2010 - Bronx, NY
Lumina/Hope & Healing after Abortion
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Adverse Pre Natal Day
For couples suffering because of an abortion due to an adverse prenatal diagnosis
November 6, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Day of Prayer & Healing for Teens
For teens who have experienced abortion
November 20, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586 4621

Day of Prayer & Healing for Siblings
For siblings of aborted babies
March 5, 2011
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Arlington, VA - Day of Prayer & Healing
September 18, 2010
Contact: 703-841-2504
projectrachel@arlingtondiocese.org

RACHEL’S VINEYARD
http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/

New Jersey
Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)
Contact: Michelle Krystofik 732 388 8211
September 17-19, 2010

Cherry Hill
Contact: Stephanie Claudy 866-4-RACHEL
sclaudy@camdendiocese.org

New York - Long Island/Uniondale
Contact: Frank Gariboldi 516-523-0586
October 8-10, 2010

Connecticut - Fairfield County
Local host: Diocese of Bridgeport
Contact: Clarissa Cincotta 203 218 0291
September 17-19, 2010
Website: www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com

Litchfield/Montforte House
Farmington/Our Lady of Calvary
October 29-31, 2010
Contact: Mary Hayden 1-203-882-1326
mmhdfc@sbcglobal.net

What’s News

Silent No More
On Monday, September 27, 2010, New York City Silent No More, will take to the streets of Manhattan once again at 12:30 pm in front of Fox News, 6th Ave between 47-48th Street. Regional Coordinators Colleen Barry and Theresa Bonopartis are happy to report that the co-founders of The Silent No More Campaign, Janet Morano and Georgette Forney will be joining us for the event. Please join us as we bring the message of abortion’s harm to the streets, as well as reaching out to those seeking healing. If you are planning to attend as a person giving testimony or as a support please contact Colleen at 347-245-9476 or Theresa at Lumina at 718-881-8008.

Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance
If you are interested in hosting an “Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance”, a prayer service remembering all those touched by abortion, in your parish this January, a manual with complete materials is available through Lumina. We would be happy to guide you in implementing this beautiful grace filled day! Just contact Theresa at Lumina: 877-586-4621 or lumina@postabortionhelp.org

For a video peak at an Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance, check out the Current TV coverage of our event last January at St Patrick’s Cathedral: http://netny.net/currents/video/stories/healing-abortions-wounds-12210/

Nameless No More
A Journey of Healing After Abortion by Shadia Hrichi
Who would name their child Nameless? I did.
As a scared, pregnant 15-year old girl, I believed the child living within me was nothing but a lifeless mass. The nightmare of my abortion experience left me suicidal, withdrawn and incapable of fully loving another human being. Twenty-five years later, I stumbled upon a child’s name on the internet: Anamika, meaning “Nameless.”

Struck with the realization my child had remained nameless for 25 years, I poured my heart out to God who gently told me, “It’s time to give your child a new name.” In the process, I discovered that the web of guilt, fear and lies I had woven around my heart to keep my abortion a secret had instead imprisoned me. A miraculous encounter at an abortion-recovery retreat paved the road towards forgiveness, healing and ultimately, true freedom. To order this book visit: http://www.beautifulvoice.org/bookstore.html

Day of Prayer & Healing for Teens
On November 20, 2010, Lumina will be having an “Entering Canaan Day of Prayer & Healing” for teens who have experienced abortion. The Spiritual Director for the retreat will be Rev. Peter Pilsner. Teens will hear a witness of healing and get to share with others their age, as well as learn about post abortion stress. For further information or to register Contact Lumina: 877-586 4621.

Adverse Pre Natal Diagnosis Webinar
The Department of Special Needs Ministries in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, will be holding a Webinar on prenatal diagnosis issues Tuesday, October 5, 1 p.m. at Catholic University’s Student Center. It will be a Live Audience Training/Webinar on Prenatal Diagnosis, by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). The moderator of the webinar will be Catholic bioethicist Dr. Marie Hilliard, who just wrote this article: The New Eugenics: Eliminating the “Undesirable” by Prenatal Diagnosis

Following the seminar, a panel discussion will be held at 2:45 p.m. as part of the Archdiocese’s Affirming Life Symposium. Isaiah’s Promise (www.isaiahspromise.net http://www.isaiahspromise.net/), a priest and a physician will be part of the panel as well as Lumina who has retreats for post-abortion healing following an unexpected prenatal diagnosis.

To register visit www.ncpd.org or contact Dr. Nancy Thompson: 319-270-6923 or email nthompson@ncpd.org The Webinar is free as part of an NCPD affiliate membership or the cost is $30 per computer.
I wish I had been stronger as a teen when I was pressured to have an abortion, but the truth is, I wasn’t. What did I know? I was afraid and easily swayed by threats to withdraw love, or of abandonment by my boyfriend and parents. I was too afraid. I had no clue at that age how to even begin to think of raising a child alone.

That inability and my surrender to the pressures around me cost me dearly. It cost me the death of my child. Yes, my beautiful unborn child. A child I have always loved in spite of what some people on either side of the issue may think.

After the abortion, I became stuck at 16. My world stopped in many ways. I turned into a person emotionally immature, running from myself and doing anything I could to flee from the fact that I had killed my baby. I could not bear to be around anyone, especially me, and I could not get away from me. My immaturity manifested itself all over my life. I made poor decisions, picked bad friends, and doomed myself to failure. It took decades for me to grow up and sort through all the feelings I had. There was no help out there then, and it took forever to finally find a place where I could safely address what I had done. Countless times my feelings were denied, as I was told they were non existent and to “get on with your life.” Even to this day, I have to stop to sort and think things through, because I do not trust myself, and sometimes much of what I feel triggers feelings I had when I aborted.

Through healing I have claimed my child as my own and have come to know only God has all the answers. I have brought my child into my life. She is my daughter and I am her mom. I sometimes feel like the sides of the debate wrestle her from me. Some continue to condemn and judge, others get mad at me for saying abortion is wrong. For me it is not about an issue, but about a living child. My child.

I am not a teenager anymore, but I do know the impact my abortion had on me as a teen. I also recognize the confusion teens face today when it comes to the abortion issue. Not much has changed. Yes, abortion is certainly more out there, and more easily accessible. You are more likely to know someone else who has experienced abortion, and less likely to be judged by peers, but the thing that stays common is the teens today suffer much the same as I did. They find out the hard way abortion is not the answer.

My heart goes out to them. I know they have a long road ahead of them, but I also know there is hope. TAM
WITNESS

His Mercy Endures Forever

It is good to be able to tell the story of Jesus Christ and His Loving Mercy toward me, because He rescued me from total self destruction. This really is the story of His saving Love and Mercy, the power of intercessory prayer, and the Hope there is for everyone in Christ. I am assured He wants me to share my story knowing it’s the last thing I would ever have wanted to do, but also knowing Jesus wants everyone to know of His love and mercy for each one of us.

When I was fourteen I was raped. Worse still, when I told someone, the person blamed me and said, “You should not have let that happen. Now you are a whore.” I made a decision that day that I was a whore. This was the beginning of my acting out promiscuously. If alcoholism hadn’t been so devastating to my family, my mother may have been more available for advice at the time. This was not the case. As the ninth of eleven in an Irish family, whore was never something dreamed of for my future.

A false sense of morality took over and it was decided, by me, that if you’re in a “relationship”, it’s okay to have sex. By the time my sixteenth birthday rolled around I was pregnant, scared and pressured into my first abortion. The lady at the clinic told me it wasn’t a baby, just a clump of cells and gave me a drug to calm me because I was shaking. When the “Dr” examined me, he sexually assaulted me. The downward spiral began; drinking and drugging to numb the pain. At eighteen still in the “relationship” we ended the life of our second child, more drugs, more drinking, the “relationship” deteriorated and died. Another “relationship” came and another baby died when I was twenty.

Then, what seemed to be the worst thing that ever happened turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. My mother was killed by a drunk driver when I was twenty three and I cried out to God. My mother had been a faith in action Catholic and I knew she was going with Jesus. At her funeral when the incense rose above the casket it drew my attention to the fact that there is an eternal life and that someday we would be with our loved ones if our lives are right with God. For me, some things were going to have to change. A month after her funeral my pregnancy test failed, but abortion was simply not an option for me anymore, praise God. There was this overwhelming sense that my mom, being with God now, knew everything. Ultimately over time it was realized that it was God that my conscience would not allow me to offend any longer, especially with another abortion. I began to go back to church.

Help came through the prayers of my mother, united with God, and from my friend’s mother praying to the Venerable Fr. Solanus Casey for me, interceding. She enrolled me in the Seraphic Mass Association and gave me holy oil on a cotton ball. I began to bless myself saying one Hail Mary every day. Then, Sr. Helen Therese, a Franciscan sister who had the gift of healing came into my life. She told me something Jesus wanted to tell me. Abortion affects a person on so many levels and being terrified of Jesus was one way of thinking that permeated my being. The thought that He would never forgive me haunted me. Most of my time was spent trying to hide from Him, from intimate relationships, from the truth. Much energy was wasted trying to pretend everything was okay. Sr. Helen prayed with me, loved me, helped me grieve the loss of my children, name them, embrace them as a part of me that will remain with me for all eternity and the Holy Spirit came in power. Jesus said, ”When the Spirit of Truth comes He will glorify me because He will take what is mine and reveal it to you”. (John 16:13,14) Jesus took me into His Mercy and forgave all my sins and revealed the truth of who I was in Him, not a whore, but a friend. The story of what He has done for me is not my story to keep. It must be told for His Glory and to let others know they are not alone.

– Eileen M. Craig