



She Loves Me Like Jesus Does (Eric Church)

... She carries me when my sins make me heavy.
She loves me like Jesus does.

... She knows the man I ain't,
She forgives me when I can't.
That devil, man, he don't stand a chance.
She loves me like Jesus does...

All the crazy in my dreams,
Both my broken wings,
Every single piece of who I am.
She knows the man I ain't,
She forgives me when I can't.
That devil man, he don't have a prayer.
She loves me like Jesus does.

We Love Them Like Jesus Does

Have you heard the song "She loves me like Jesus does" by Eric Church? If not you should, I love the lyrics and it is very popular on the country charts. Just the title brings a "knowing" and a "peace;" the peace of Christ. Christ's love is transforming. It brings us to the dignity of who He meant for us to be. It is this peace that heals the deep wounds of abortion.

Reflecting the love of Christ gives those who have experienced abortion courage to look and to work through what happened honestly. It is His love that lifts someone from the depths of despair, freeing them from the prison of their guilt, shame, and grief.

We are all called to love those who have experienced abortion "as Jesus does." Called to love them in spite of, or even because of, what they have done. Called to forgive them, when they are unable to forgive themselves, to chase away the murmurings of the devil. When they are tempted to fall into despair, we are called to be a sign of the unconditional love of Christ as they travel to knowing Him on the journey of post abortion healing.

**"Nothing is hopeless
for the one who
believes that he is in
the heart of God."**

Once they come to know His love, mercy, and forgiveness they will feel His peace, and "that devil man, he don't stand a chance" because we loved them like Jesus does! TB

ALL AROUND THE TOWN



Retreat Team from “Women’s New Life Center” in New Orleans offering their first “Entering Canaan” Day of Prayer & Healing



Brad with two of our siblings Terri and Renee.



Dave Reardon, Ph.D., Fr. Fidelis, CFR, & Theresa at the Archdiocese of NY Family Life Conference



Albany Press Conference for Cuomo’s Abortion Expansion Bill with Anne Mielnik, M.D.



Filming of “Facing Life Head On show on siblings, with Brad Mattes of Life Issues Institute

...WITNESS *(continued from last page)*

At first Mercy was just a word, an idea, which in my mind vaguely was synonymous with compassion and forgiveness. I heard it in the prayers and blessings at the Gatherings I attended. But, I heard it *constantly*. Every piece of writing from Lumina echoed the word Mercy. Over the years, without my knowing it, the word Mercy became for me a kind of mantra, something to hold onto in the dark. It began to work on me without my knowing it.

In the past three years when I have needed to travel often – alone and long distances – to care for my mother and father in their last days, I unexpectedly found Mercy while waiting in airports and hospital waiting rooms. Absently checking emails, I would be relieved to see emails from Lumina, which, of course, always confirmed the gift of Mercy.

Unbelievably, and slowly at first, I began to accept and to use Mercy as a tangible and practical tool in my emotional life. Sometimes when I find myself overtired or frustrated, fearful or

angry, I am tempted to turn against myself and into negative thinking. But, the word Mercy rises from my unconscious like a dream and stops me in my tracks. I am learning to say, “No, I am not going down a path of negative thinking, I am learning Mercy now, and I choose the way of Mercy.”

I say I am learning Mercy, because it is a process and a journey into the kind of deep love and forgiveness of myself – and others – that I can only begin to grasp. From my beginning, almost neutral experience with Mercy as a simple word, it has evolved in my life experience as a tangible and effective tool, an action verb that I have learned can more quickly than I ever imagined, bring a swift conclusion to the obsessive dark voice that would grind my spirit with self-recrimination and unbelief. *Be gone Satan!*

Mercy is a way of life, and it is life changing. Now whenever darkness calls, I choose Mercy and life.

- Mary Ellen Hancock

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 12, 2013 – Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance

Diocese of Bridgeport, CT

For further information contact: Maureen Ciardiello mciardiello@diobpt.org

October 17, 2013 – The TASTE Program

Laurel, MD

Theresa Bonopartis: “Where Mercy Meets Faithfulness”

For further information contact: info@tasteprogram.com

October 19, 2013 – Pro Life Conference

Meridan, CT

Theresa Bonopartis Workshop: “Reaching Out with Compassion”

For further information contact: Mary Byczynsk, 203-235-6104

December 5, 2013 – Lumina Advent Dinner

Rye Grill & Bar, Rye, NY

Honoring Rev. Mariusz Koch, CFR

We are very blessed to be honoring Rev. Mariusz Koch, CFR at our Lumina dinner this year. Father has been a great blessing to the work of Lumina and the people it serves.

A testimony of one of our father’s will also take place. Please plan to attend to support us, as we continue to bring women, men, siblings, and others back to the heart of Christ!

The Pilgrim Icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa will arrive in August touring North America this year. Fr. Peter West, vice president of HLI for Missions



will be the custodian of the icon during the pilgrimage to the United States. “*As Our Lady of Czestochowa arrives on the shores of North America, she calls all of her children to unite in the defense of life, in an effort to build a civilization of life and love – to remember that God can do what we can’t, to remember our faith.*”

It has been almost twenty years since Our Lady revealed to me in prayer her desire to be the patroness of our post abortion work. Defense of life and healing from abortion

are part of this pilgrimage.

Check out this web site to see when she will be in your area! You can also contact the organizers to invite her into your parish. <http://www.fromoceantoocean.org/>

Our Lady of Czestochowa, pray for us!

Medjugorje here I come...

I will be, making a pilgrimage to Medjugorje leaving September 19th. I would be happy to bring your intentions with me. Email them to lumina@postabortionhelp.org.



Upcoming New York/CT/NJ Post Abortion Retreats

Entering Canaan Ministry

Sisters of Life or Theresa Bonopartis of Lumina

Contact: 866-575-0075 or 877-586-4621

(Entering Canaan Ministry begins with day retreats which we encourage all who can to attend preceding our weekends. Please call for our weekend dates.)

Days of Prayer & Healing for Women

September 14, 2013

October 5, 2013

November 16, 2013

Day of Prayer & Healing for Men

Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

November 2, 2013

Day of Prayer & Healing for Siblings

For siblings of aborted babies

March 8, 2014

Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Entering Canaan Nationwide Retreats

Arlington, VA

Days of Prayer & Healing

Contact: (888) 456-HOPE or email:

projectrachel@arlingtondiocese.org

February (date to be decided)

New Orleans, LA

Day of Prayer & Healing

Contact: Susan Mire

smire@womansnewlife.com

Washington, DC

Entering Canaan Days of Prayer and Healing

English: December, June

Spanish: November, April

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Connecticut

Hamden, Ct

Sept 27-Sept 28

Contact: Marie Laffin 203-631-9030

mlaffin@prolifeministry.org

<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>

New Jersey

Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)

Contact: Michelle Krystofik 732-388-8211

September 13 - September 15

November 15-17

Paterson, NJ

Contact: Marie Ryan 973-777-8818 x264

rachel@patersondiocese.org

New York

Rockville Center Diocese

Contact: Frank and Lorraine Gariboldi

516-523-0586 fgariboldi@optonline.net

Northern NY

Contact: Colleen Miner 518-891-2309

cbm510@roadrunner.com

Visit <http://rachelsvineyard.org> for other Rachel Vineyard retreats

WITNESS

The Spiritual Wound of My Life

Healing the wound of abortion has been, in many ways, the central spiritual task of my life. The conviction that my youngest sibling was a living, beloved human being would not let me go – even in my adolescence and college years, when I subsumed my grief and fear in affirming my parents’ pro-choice beliefs and attempting to secure their approval, love, and protection, which had been denied to my sibling.

The abortion happened when I was in second grade. I was already the eldest of four siblings. My parents were sunk in the turmoil of a young couple facing strained finances, crushing responsibilities, and limited family support. I wasn’t supposed to know about the abortion, but I overheard family conversations that piqued my suspicions.

When I was 11-years-old, I asked my mom if she had ever thought about having an abortion. She very gently and honestly said, “Yes.” We were in the kitchen. I remember I had to leave the room. When I was away from my mom, my feet fell out from under me. I began sobbing silently and uncontrollably. I loved my three living siblings with my whole life; in many ways, my identity centered on them. I could not understand why my mom would assume that I might not love my aborted sibling just as much.

In the pre-internet days of my late childhood and early adolescence, I scoured the library for books about abortion: pro and con; clinical studies; confessions of women who lauded or regretted their own choices to abort their children. I remember searching urgently through these books for some hint that my grief and anguish for my lost sibling were not strange or unfounded. I can see in my mind the two brief paragraphs in one book that described siblings’ “survivor guilt” – but the commentary was limited and gave no indication that this was a common reaction, or that there was anything to be done about it. I assumed my pain was an anomaly. It was not until my I read Toni Morrison’s novel *Beloved* that I encountered a very personal story of a girl haunted by a baby sibling who died at their own mother’s desperate, grieving hands.

Years later, a good friend told me she had heard about “sibling survivor” retreats, and I was viscerally relieved to know that there was a name to describe people like me, and that these people had the courage to grieve and receive God’s healing for the loss of their aborted siblings. But I wasn’t brave enough to seek out the retreat. Doing so would have required me to face the fact that my grief was powerful enough to estrange me from my family members, who, when my sadness rose to the surface, continually said to me: “Why does the abortion matter so much to you? You weren’t the one who had the abortion. It wasn’t your choice.”

Facing my grief’s power meant facing the fact that I, like my aborted sibling, was vulnerable to my parents and family—not vulnerable to the point of physical death, but vulnerable to the point of rejection on the grounds of my obstinate obsession.

The Lumina Sibling Survivor Retreat was a turning point in my life. The day’s gentle, intent pace; Eucharistic focus, and intimate setting allowed time to stop and expand, encompassing both the pain of the past and hope for the future. Father Conrad and Theresa stewarded us with very gentle paternal and maternal care: a beautiful counterpoint to the gender enmity that spurred the abortions in our families. It was so strange and deeply comforting to be in a place where the central spiritual wound of my life was acknowledged and soothed, not idolized, but transformed through a call to acceptance, forgiveness, healing, and celebration of my youngest sibling’s brief life on earth and eternal life in Heaven, where she or he now intercedes before the face of God for the healing of my whole family.

Now I know that this wound I bear is becoming like Christ’s wounds: welling up with God’s love so that everyone – my mother, father, all my siblings, and the generations before and after us – may be drawn to Him. – A

Choosing the Way of Mercy

In the summer of 1973 I had my first abortion. My doctor told me I was pregnant with twins and that an early, DNC type abortion would cure that condition. I cannot remember how my boyfriend and I arrived at the decision to terminate my pregnancy, but I was a lost, impressionable, young woman, addicted to alcohol and an abusive boyfriend. I did not know I had a choice. We were living in the heart of darkness, and, as is typical of the chain of maladies that tend to rule the activities of the realm of darkness, the early abortion left me yet pregnant, and my doctor encouraged a later and difficult abortion. This memory chills me even now. I want to reach into this story and say to myself as a young girl, “No! You can say no! Just walk out of there!” But, I was effectively alone, and I said yes to a destructive event that would haunt me for nearly forty years.

But life is not only darkness, and, sometimes moving into the light is as simple as making a choice. Over the years, I found addiction recovery in twelve step programs and therapy, and my life began to blossom. Even so, a secret grieving held me captive, and it expressed itself most readily in thoughts of guilt and self-recrimination that weighed on me and would often shake me to the core. And then one quiet September day in the Bronx, I began an amazing journey into Mercy.

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Donations to Good Counsel’s Lumina Program are tax deductible. Your gift today can be multiplied many times over in bringing those hurting to the healing mercy of God.

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