

BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED

I have come to learn that God's ways and His timing, most times, are not the same as mine. He is gentle and heals us in layers, always leading us to His love, the only place we have the courage to look at our sins. He knows what we can handle and when, so he does not make us look at everything all at once. Sometimes it may take years before things are revealed.

I must admit, it has been over thirty years since my abortion, and the one person I never really felt called to speak to was Joe, the father of my aborted son, Joshua. I am not sure why. Maybe because he was out of the picture by the time I had the abortion, or because it had been so many years. I had no idea where he was, and it was just never something that came up for me, so it came as a surprise when on a recent day one of my sisters asked me if I had ever told him what had happened. I replied that I thought he knew I had had an abortion, but we had never spoken. Then, she asked "Well, don't you think he has a right to know what happened?" A part of me realized she was right, and I told her I would pray about it and ask God for direction.

Well, this time He answered within a week! I received a notice for my high school reunion and guess whose contact information was on the site! There was no denying that this was an answer to my prayer for direction. For over thirty years we had had no contact and then all of a sudden there he was!



I prayed for a few more days, and then sent him an email telling him what had happened. I also shared how even this horrific sin God had brought good out of. I shared how our unborn son had touched thousand and thousands of lives through Lumina and Entering Canaan. I also sent him the web sites for post abortive fathers not knowing what his experience had been or if he had ever addressed it. Lastly, I told him he did not have to respond, it was okay, I just knew I was called to contact him and that I was sorry I had given in to the pressure to abort our son.

It was not long before I received a response. He apologized for what I had gone through and asked if he could make it up to me in any way. At no time during my pregnancy did this boy (at the time we were teenagers) ask me to abort our baby, and I came to learn how my dad had approached him and threatened him, telling him to stay away from me.

I would be lying if I did not admit it opened more issues with my dad, but as with many times in the past, I have made the choice to forgive him and I continue to pray for him.

Perhaps the greatest grace from all of this was that I knew in my heart I needed nothing from Joe. I was at peace and he did not have to "make up" for anything. Not that he could. I already knew that the only person capable of that was Jesus Christ, and He already had.

T Bonopartis

UPCOMING POST ABORTION RETREATS

ENTERING CANAAN MINISTRY

Sisters of Life or Theresa Bonopartis of Lumina
Contact: 866-575-0075 or 877-586-4621
Days of Prayer & Healing
Sept. 12, 2009 - Oct. 3, 2009 - Nov. 14, 2009

Men's "Day of Prayer & Healing"

Franciscan Friars of the Renewal & Rev George Stewart
October 17, 2009
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Day of Prayer & Healing for Siblings

March 6, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Poor Pre Natal Day

For couples suffering because of an abortion due to a poor prenatal diagnosis
April 10, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

RACHEL'S VINEYARD <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>

NEW JERSEY

Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)

9/18/2009 - 9/20/2009
11/20/2009 - 11/22/2009
Contact: Michelle Krystofik 732 388 8211

Metuchen

Spanish
10/02/2009 - 10/04/2009
Contact: Carmen Diaz 908-722-1881

Cherry Hill

10/23/2009 - 10/25/2009
12/11/2009 - 12/13/2009
Contact: Stephanie Claudy 866-4-RACHEL sclaudy@camdendiocese.org

NEW YORK

Long Island/Uniondale

Contact: Frank Gariboldi 516-523-0586
Call for dates

Ogdensburg, NY

0/9/2009 - 10/11/2009
Contact: Colleen Miner 518-891-2309 cbm510@roadrunner.com

CONNECTICUT

Fairfield County

Local host: Diocese of Bridgeport
Contact: Clarissa Cincotta 203 218 0291
Website: www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com
9/18/2009 - 9/20/2009

Spanish retreat

Contact: Cristina Martinez 203-394-3898
caminodeluz1@sbcglobal.net
10/23/2009 - 10/25/2009

Farmington

Contact: Mary Hayden 203-882-1326
10/23/2009 - 10/25/2009

YEAR OF THE PRIESTS

On June 19, 2009 Pope Benedict opened the "Year of the Priest", the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the day for the sanctification of priests. He will close the celebrations during a World Meeting of Priests in St. Peter's Square June 19, 2010. As part of the significance of this year I will be including in each newsletter, some words from the women and men we have served.

"There have been several priests who have helped me tremendously. I don't recall all of their names. The one that stands out, though, is Rev. Stewart. He has been instrumental in my healing process. I often think back to his words and sentiments. In particular, during confession he really helped me see things clearly. I realize that such moments are the work of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit can only work through faithful and dedicated priests such as Rev. Stewart.

Fr. Stewart is a holy priest. I can remember watching him during the consecration and feeling so blessed to be at Mass celebrated by him- I don't know exactly how to describe it, but I really felt Jesus' presence because of him". DS



"During my one day retreat, Rev. Glenn, CFR, said something that has been important for me: he said, "God speaks in stereo." As someone who can be stubborn, I now pay closer attention when at least one person kindly gives me the same advice or suggestion". AB



"I will always remember what Father Thomas told me "you have to forgive yourself also". This was a little bit confusing on my part as I didn't know that I should forgive myself also. Up to now I am keeping Father Thomas's advice. It has helped me in my post abortion healing as I learned to forgive myself and let go of the worries and the sadness I carry wherever I go. I will always cherish the memory of my aborted child, she became my eye opener and the incident made me a stronger person and moved me closer to my Creator." JDL



"When I came to Lumina I was in despair, so lost, but the worst feeling tormenting and afflicting me day and night was the feeling of being unforgivable.

I remember going on an Entering Canaan retreat with such depression and anxiety, but everyone was so welcoming, so warm, compassionate and merciful. I sensed peace all around me. I am so blessed Father John McCartney was there that day with the perfect words that would change my ideas and beliefs for the rest of my life. There were other women and we gathered at a living room and watched a documentary. We discussed how we felt and I remember crying and crying and crying the whole time with such guilt, believing I was going to be severely punished by God for what I had done and it didn't matter how sorry I was, God could not forgive me. Seeing how badly broken I was Father John compassionately talked to me. I told him how afraid I was of God and that He was going to severely punish me, then Father asked me, "When you think of Jesus what do you think of?" I said, "He is all love and compassion, I can't even express with words how I feel about his love."

Father responded, "He is God, Jesus is God. That is exactly what Jesus is. He is all love and compassion. God is not a revengeful God. He is a merciful God. Our sins can never be greater than His mercy. He knows how sorry you are, and He has forgiven you."

Those words full of love and kindness were fundamental for my spiritual and physical healing. God was not revengeful or unforgiving. God was all love after that day for me. That night when I got home I was at peace and able to sleep all night. I felt so loved by God and I asked him to forgive me for not believing in his mercy. I just can't believe how I lived all those years with such fear. Definitely, Father John was directed by the Holy Spirit to tell me those blessed words that impacted my life forever. Now, I love Jesus and he loves me. Thank you Father John McCartney!" Maria

Father Benedict Groeschel Tribute

Don't miss a once in a lifetime event. Celebrating 50 years of one life lived for God extraordinarily. Good Counsel's beloved Co-Founder & Chairman, Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR. We invite you to join us in celebrating his Golden Anniversary Mass, Sunday, October 18, 2009, Holy Family Church, Nutley, New Jersey.

Please visit https://secure.qgiv.com/cps_donors/?key=goodcounsel&event=1101 to reserve your free e ticket for ushered seating. All are welcome free of charge on a first-come-first-serve basis to join us in this joyous celebration.

If you would like to include your personal greeting in a Tribute Journal being prepared for this special Mass, both your kind greetings and gift will be deeply appreciated. If you cannot attend the Mass, but would still like to send your best wishes to Father Benedict, we would be happy to send you a keepsake copy. You can access the form at Good Counsel site <http://www.goodcounselhomes.org/public/press/index.php#> to send us your intentions and donation. This form also includes reservation information for a small private reception beginning at 12 noon at the Forest Hills Field Club in Bloomfield, NJ (two miles from the church). All inquiries to Jim Schaffer, james_schaffer@goodcounselhomes.org, 203-912-2802/mobile.

Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope

A new booklet, "Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope", by Dr. Catherine Coyle has been published by the Knights of Columbus. The booklet can be obtained by calling or emailing the Knights: cis@kofc.org or 203-752-4267

Ohio Bill would Require Father's Consent Before Abortion

Bill HR 252 was introduced this month in Ohio's House and would require a pregnant women seeking an abortion to obtain written consent from the father of the baby. The bill is sponsored by Rep. John Adams and co-sponsored by four other members.

The bill does not have the support of the House Democratic majority.

North American Congress on Mercy

NACOM is an outgrowth of the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (Rome, April 2008), which was approved by Pope Benedict. The Congress offers two full days of talks from Divine Mercy leaders and witnesses, plus time for confession, the Chaplet of The Divine Mercy, and Holy Mass. The Congress aims to give its participants points not only for reflection, but for action.

Among the speakers are Scott Hahn, Theresa Bonopartis, and Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC. A series of "mini-witnesses" will be offered by Kelly Ross, Dr. John Bruchalski, Ted Hanley, and the Hawthorne Sisters.



November 14-15, 2009

Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Washington, D.C., United States

Price: \$30 General Admission (\$40 after Oct. 31)
\$20 Religious/Students (\$30 after Oct. 31).

Contact: web: <http://mercycongress.org/index.php>

Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance

Don't forget...if you are interested in hosting an "Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance" in your parish this January, a new 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

ALL AROUND THE TOWN



Sisters of Life at Camp St Joseph in Millbrook, NY where we hold our year end retreat for all who have attended "Entering Canaan" through Lumina and other resources. (Pictured: Sr's Loretta, Mary Theresa & Maria Joseph)



Regina Riley, Theresa, Brigid Feranda and Judy Anderson, at Women's Equality Day at the County Offices in White Plains, NY, where Theresa was honored for her past abortive work.



Project Rachel of the Diocese of St Louis, MO requested Theresa to come and help them lead their first "Entering Canaan" weekend retreat. They are hoping to do a Men's Day in the future. (Pictured: Marisol Pfaff, Project Rachel, Director, Marie, Debbie, Denise, Mary, Sr. Catherine Marie & Jane)

WITNESS

"I didn't have a voice" I had to kiss my child goodbye

In October of 2006 I found out I was going to be a Father. My girlfriend of 6 months was pregnant with our child. Neither of us planned this pregnancy, or had even talked about the possibility of getting pregnant. That was about to become my biggest regret. Like I said I wasn't ready to have a child. She said she couldn't go forth in having a child and needed to abort. She went to the nursing staff at Boston College a week or two after she found out she was pregnant. The nurse at BC told her that she would be better off having an abortion, and told her where she could get one. I didn't make a big deal of it at the time because I wanted her to stay calm and positive.

I brought her to a crisis pregnancy center in Boston when she was 5 weeks pregnant, so that she could explore her options other than having an abortion. The women at the center set up a date for her to get an ultrasound so she could see her child. We went to get her first ultrasound when she was 5 weeks pregnant. We weren't able to see much at this point, but we did see the heartbeat of our child. The technologist said it was too early in the pregnancy to see our baby, and to come back in 2 1/2- 3 weeks. We came back 3 weeks later for another ultrasound, and that's when we saw our baby. Our child was at 8 weeks gestation and had fingers, toes, eyes, everything. I saw and heard my child's heart beat and I cried. It was a very overwhelming and beautiful experience for me, until she looked over at me and said: "What are you crying about? Worms have heartbeats too". Her sister had offered to pay \$500 for her to get an abortion. She insisted she was going to get the abortion, was planning to get one that weekend, and broke up with me right before.

I called the abortion clinic and asked what my rights were; they said "You don't have any". I then asked them, "What do you do with the aborted babies? I want to bury my child". They told me that it wasn't a child, it was a fetus, and to never call again or they would involve the police. My hands were tied. I, as a father had no legal right to protect my child from a death committed by a "doctor". I called everyone imaginable to see what my rights were and I got the same answer: "nothing".

The week before my child was aborted; I went to try one more time to ask the mother of my child to not do this. But she was adamant about having an abortion, and told me to leave. So I then asked her if I could do one thing before I left, she told me that was fine. I then got on my knees and kissed the stomach of the mother of my child and said "I love you, and Daddy will see you in heaven". I then took the ultrasound pictures and left.

The day my child was aborted was a very painful day for me. I was informed that my child had been aborted in the afternoon on December 2nd, 2006. It was the most painful experience I have ever been through. My relationship ended with the woman that I thought I was going to marry, and I lost my first child. I didn't want to go on; I was in too much pain. I didn't eat. I didn't sleep. I had nightmares of my child being aborted. The day after my child was aborted, I went to see my pastor and he suggested that I have a memorial for my unborn child. I took his advice, and had one the following Sunday at his church. I had my parents and a few friends come. It was a short ceremony, but very painful. I never thought that my child would meet God before I did.

After that day things were still very painful. I still couldn't sleep or eat, and thoughts of suicide filled my head every waking hour. I joined Bible studies, and post abortion Bible studies as much as possible. Those were the only people that would understand. There were times that I wouldn't even receive support at church. A man is really not allowed to grieve the loss of his unborn baby. I was told things like: "Your child wasn't even born, so get over it", "It wasn't a baby yet", or even people saying "Your child deserved to die". None of those things helped me heal and just put me in more of a state of depression.

That winter I was invited to a Right to Life march in Concord, NH. I thought it might be healing, so I went. While I was there, I met a man that ran crisis pregnancy centers in NYC. After speaking to him for awhile, he invited me down to NYC for the summer. I decided to go down and give it a shot.

On July 12th 2007, the day my child was supposed to be born, I went to NYC to serve God and help men and women in situations like I was in. While I was there, I counseled around 500 men and women, and through God, saved at least 100 lives from abortion. I continued to do this work in Manchester, NH by sidewalk counseling, counseling in centers, coordinated 40 Days for Life in New Hampshire, and started speaking to different Churches and events, sharing my testimony and how abortion affects men. I recently moved to Florida where I am doing the same work. Even though I never got to meet my child, I miss my baby every single day. I know my child is now in the arms of Jesus and I will meet him and hold him in heaven.

Theo Purington
theopurington@yahoo.com

Lumina is a separately funded program of Good Counsel Homes. Donations to support the work of Lumina are greatly appreciated. Checks should be made out to Good Counsel, Inc with "Lumina" on the note line or you can donate online www.goodcounselhomes.org. Please mark it for Lumina in the comment box.

Lumina • 1955 Needham Avenue • Bronx, NY 10466

All Donations are tax deductible.