



Summer 2010

PATHway

Post Abortion Treatment and Healing

Nun Excommunicated For Abortion Decision To Save Mother's Life

"If Life is sacred, isn't the mother's life sacred too?"

by Vallory Welday

WHAT?! That is an eye-popping, show-stopping headline. I used to avert my gaze, my curiosity, my awareness from words like *abortion*. Since I've been to a Rachel's Vineyard retreat sponsored by PATH and become involved with the group as a volunteer facilitator, I can now face the truth about abortion. It is NEVER the answer to ANY problem facing ANYONE.

But upon reading the article (for full article see URL at end of this commentary), I found myself sympathizing with Sr. Margaret, an administrator at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix who authorized an 11-week abortion for a pregnant woman threatened by pulmonary hypertension. Why?

I had learned the truly hard way how abortion can be presented as an answer, THE answer, and discovered the aftermath of believing that it is true to be devastating. After my retreat, I S-L-O-W-L-Y found the Church's pro-life stance to be the only logical, safe, pro-woman stance. And yet I found my old, radical, feminist, angry self wondering about this Sister of Mercy, this family, this mother, this baby.

I knew the only thing to do was share my ambivalence with my PATH friends. I always feel totally honest, totally myself, with this group of friends formed over the years during and after my retreat. These are the people who know the real me. The woman who hid in shame behind a wall of anger and hardness for 20+ years thinking that to become the next Gloria Steinem must be my purpose in life. Never mind what God had in mind for me. I didn't even think about God. I couldn't. I figured He was done with me after what I had done. It was all about me, a me I hid behind the trauma of 3 abortions...

And so I sent out a cry for help via e-mail: "I find this story disturbing. I find myself agreeing w/Sr. Margaret. Have I learned nothing from my experience? If Life is sacred, isn't the mother's life sacred too? Is it really better to lose both than to save one and lose one? I really don't know." And my PATH friends jumped eagerly into the discussion and lovingly shared their thoughts about the situation and my ambivalence.

My friend Jessica wrote with understanding and references from the Catechism: A bad effect may be the consequence of a morally good act, or it may occur simultaneously along with it, but the anticipated good must never be a result of evil actions. Such acts are never morally licit (CCC 1756) and Circumstances of themselves cannot change the moral quality of acts themselves; they can make neither good nor right an action that is in itself evil (CCC 1754). She continued, "My personal thought is that we, as adults, are called to act in a humble manner....to sacrifice for others (as

mothers, we are to sacrifice ourselves for our children; just as our husbands are to sacrifice themselves for us; just as Jesus sacrificed himself for all of us....) this is the essence of love."

My friend Mary Ann remembered "grilling my mom over this question because an old movie came on where the mother would die if she continued her pregnancy, and her husband was heartbroken, and of course there was a pious priest telling them what to do. I remember being infuriated by it, and asking my mom if that was accurate...was that what the church taught, and her telling me yes, the church did teach that an abortion was never ok, even if to save the life of the mother. In the movie, an old black and white 40's film, the mother did die and it was pretty awful. I remember crying and being really ticked off...thinking this is just not right. I do remember really struggling with that teaching, but honestly I've never known a real life case where a mother did die."

continued on page 3

INSIDE



Speaking Engagements Spring Retreat
Post-Abortion Network



From Our Director

Mary Ann McNeil



Board Members

Mary Ann McNeil
president

Richard Farnsworth, Esq
secretary

Stephanie Tramonte
treasurer

Ann LaBar, PA-C
Dottie O'Connor
Martha Shuping, MD
Jessica Slovensky LPC,
NCACII
Mike Slovensky, CPA
June Webb, RN

Emeritus Board

Debra Ayers
Kelly Cortez RN, LPC, EdS
Candee Elrod
Tarne Eyl
Tony Eyl
Msgr. Richard Lopez
Sheila Mallon
Kathleen Raviele, MD
Peggy Sinanian
Sr. Pat Thompson, RSM

PATHway

is published
for supporters of
PATH, Inc.

PATH, Inc. is a registered
501(c)(3) nonprofit program
which fosters a process
of compassionate healing
and restoration
for women and men
wounded by abortion.

All gifts to PATH
are tax-deductible.
For more information
please contact
our office at
404-717-5557
or visit us
on the web at

www.healingafterabortion.org

An exciting effort is underway in Atlanta to network all ministries currently offering support to individuals who may be suffering after an abortion experience. This effort is spearheaded by Nancy Sepesi Kingston, Executive Director of Atlanta Pregnancy Resource Center. Nancy's dream is to reach out and respond to anyone in the Atlanta area needing help following an abortion. Nancy formed a committee to research current programs in Atlanta, to brainstorm, and to plan. She invited me to participate.

In order to find out what was currently being offered in Atlanta, a survey was sent out to 70 pregnancy care centers. The centers were asked whether or not they offered post abortion support, and if so, how many individuals received help in 2009. Sixteen centers reported having post abortion care. All 16 centers combined provided support to 58 individuals, averaging just 3.6 people per center. (Coincidentally, PATH also offered support to 58 individuals in 2009.)

All committee members agreed that there are thousands of people who are post abortive in the Atlanta area, and current programs are reaching a small fraction of these hurting individuals. Nancy's goals are the same as those in PATH, but on a larger scale. The network would bring many different ministries together, pool resources and establish a standard of care based upon agreed policies and procedures.

There are times that PATH simply cannot serve someone due to geographic distance, and this network would allow us to serve more people. Likewise, PATH may be the answer to a care center's needs. New challenges have yet to be met regarding standards of care, training, oversight, and follow up. Similar to PATH, Nancy and the steering committee hope to establish this organization as a non-profit organization. They are currently developing a board of directors and funding resources.

As PATH's director, I welcome more "soldiers in the trenches" to bring men and women back to God through post abortion ministry. I welcome the concept of a network to coordinate our efforts so that we can help each other minister to those lost sheep, and I welcome these efforts that will ensure a standard quality of care in post-abortion care.

Sr. Pat Thompson, Beverly Osterbur, and Jessica Slovensky compile a calendar of upcoming events.



PATH SEEKS DONATIONS

The downturn in the economy has affected us all. Some of PATH's supporters have been unable to contribute as they have in the past. Can you help us to close the gap with a contribution to assist us in providing care to those seeking healing? When women heal, they extend hope and joy to their families and find the courage to return to their church. Your gift heals hearts, strengthens marriages, and brings families back to Christ.

The priest was a great comfort, delight, and peacemaker of our souls.



A statement from the movie – we are all human and humans make mistakes – reached back to the time when I had the abortion.



Many people, many prayers went into this retreat. I felt so much love and intention – like a warm, loving blanket wrapped around a chilled body.



Incredible, indescribable: the most difficult weekend of my life, confronting experiences that I had run from, hidden, and suppressed.



Spring Retreat

To the left are comments from participants in the spring retreat. Above and below are examples of floating candle arrangements from a beautiful retreat ritual.



Save the Date

Our next dinner fundraiser will be on October 28th at Christ the King.

Understanding, Compassion, Love

continued from page one

My friend Linda joined in that this was indeed a "tough, tough situation.... I would not have wanted to be Sister Margaret for anything. However, there is always the chance that the doctors may be pushing their own agendas. Doctors are human and are worried about being sued.... A legal abortion saves them a lot of headaches."

And this, to me, is the amazing thing about PATH. The fact that I can share what is going on with me over this situation honestly and receive caring, loving, non-judgmental feedback from an amazing group of supportive friends. We are after all still just fallen sinners grateful for the mercy of Jesus every day. We do and will struggle. And that's OK. As Flannery O'Connor wrote: "The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it."

And so my friend Jessica summed up exactly how I feel about PATH's mission and people: "words cannot express the gratitude I feel for you all. You are all simply amazing....gracious, loving, kind and reflective. I am thrilled that we struggle with this....it will help us all when another approaches us with similar questions. This is where we can meet pro-abortion folks....we can all understand the devastation of choice...of death...and this is where we agree.... however, then, we must pull from the wisdom of God and the stance of the Church to lead us where we are unfamiliar....or where we question our faith....and where we question God. It is beautiful to struggle, at times, it refines us....it deepens our faith....and it binds us to one another. It is ok to question God....he is the only one with all the answers, so why wouldn't we question Him...." Jess ended her e-mail to our group: "did I say 'I love you' yet? Oh...ok...well, I love you even more now!"

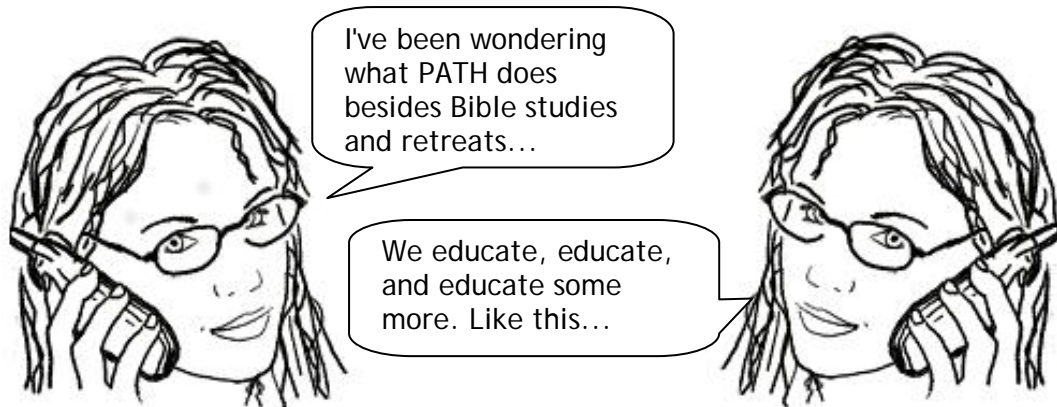
I love you too, Jess, Mary Ann, Linda, even more now. I've gone from being an angry, unloving, unwilling to consider anyone else's perspective to a person who can love again. That is the essence of PATH for me: Understanding, compassion, love.

Read the full article at www.politicsdaily.com/2010/05/21/nun-excommunicated-for-abortion-decision-to-save-mothers-life/?sms_ss=email.

Words to the Wise

Self-focused service is concerned with impressive gains. It enjoys serving when the service is titanic or growing in that direction. Christ-focused service doesn't distinguish between small and large. It indiscriminately welcomes all opportunities to serve. Furthermore self-focused service requires external reward, appreciation, and applause. Christ-focused service rests content in hiddenness. The divine nod of approval is sufficient. Also self-focused service is highly concerned about results. It becomes disillusioned when results fall below expectations. Christ-focused service is free of the need to calculate results; it delights only in service.

from *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster, as quoted on pray.nd.edu, sponsored by the Notre Dame Alumni Association.



2009

Immaculate Heart of Mary - Presentations at Masses
Pro-Life committee did a Mend a Heart Campaign fundraiser
St. Patrick - Presentations at Masses
Pro-Life committee did a Mend a Heart Campaign fundraiser
Transfiguration - Presentations at Masses
Parish did a second collection for PATH
Christ the King - Presentations to the Youth group
St. Brigid - Presentations at Masses
Presentation to Pro-Life group
St. Peter Chanel - Presentations to Respect Life Ministry
North Point Church - meeting with Councilor coordinator
Archdiocesan Seminarians - Presentation/Training
Deanery - Presentation to priests

2010

St. Benedict - Presentations to Youth group - January
St. Anthony - Presentations at Masses
Presentation to Youth group
Christ the King - Presentations at Masses
St. Lawrence - Presentations to Pro-Life group
Deacon Training
Georgia Tech - participated in Pro-Life student outreach
Pro-Life March

Coming up

Holy Cross - Presentations at Masses - August
St. Catherine of Siena - Presentations at Masses - October
Presentation to Knights of Columbus - September
Georgia Tech - Presentation to Pro-Life group - September
St. Benedict - Presentation to Youth Group - October
St. Pius - Presentations at Masses - August