

A Mother's Remembrance

In 1982, I had an abortion. I wish I could say I was pressured into it by family or by the father. But I wasn't. My pressure was my fear and shame. For me abortion was the only option. To get through it, I clung to the belief that this was not yet a life.

I tucked away the memory for many years afterward. Eventually, I married and had two beautiful children. I savored every moment of each pregnancy. And with them I realized undeniably that life had begun the moment I conceived. Later that thought would begin to haunt me.

Every year, for Christmas and Easter, we went to church so my children could, in some small way, have God in their lives. It was all I could handle. The reality of the abortion and the separation from God I felt increasingly hurt too much. I cried at every service I attended. I tried to silence the pain for eight more years. But all I did was distance myself further from God and begin to disconnect from my children.

Driving to work one day, I heard a message of hope on the radio --healing for Catholic women who had abortions. I wanted to call but was scared. Another year went by and I heard the ad again. This time, I called immediately. The woman I spoke with compassionately referred me to a priest who would help. The last thing she said before hanging up struck a chord in my heart, "God has been calling you and thank the Lord you have heard Him."

The priest I met, has lovingly and patiently walked the long journey of healing with me. After a while, I was ready to make my first confession in decades. The words of absolution I heard as he prayed over me, were blessed words of freedom. To honor the moment, he held a Mass with just the two of us and God in a private chapel and shared the most holy of communions I have made in my life. I was reunited with God. The ride home was the most peaceful moment of silence and beauty and goodness.

Later, he told me about the Project Rachel Retreat that could help me finish my healing and reunite me with my aborted child. Led by women and priests, through scripture, and sharing, and within the safety of complete anonymity, there is a place where women can make their journey to God and to their children. There, the healing begins as we are honored as women in a context that would defy such generosity.

Since the Rachel Retreat, my heart has opened again. I love my two young children on earth in the most profound way. I can be a mother again. I have made peace with my child in heaven. And the gift that has left me forever changed, is that I will always know that I have met Jesus and spent time in the fields of heaven with Him. It took me 17 years, but I am blessed to have made the healing journey to know I am loved and forgiven by Him and by my child.

No one ever told me that the moment I terminated my pregnancy, my spirit would begin to hemorrhage. I have always believed mothers are both the guardians of the future and the roots

to the past. Abortion can shatter a woman's very core. But healing is possible through the loving touch of Jesus and the knowledge our children are safe in the arms of God. I hope you let God's call touch your heart too.