



Testimony given by Pina from Rome

May 10, 2015 March for Life

I was a 29 year-old woman raised with Christian values, but as they say, “not practicing”.

I'd just left a marriage I considered boring and I had a child who was my joy. I was recently “orphaned” through the death of my father who'd been my whole life. I was a career woman who excelled at work, always elegant, fascinating to the outside world, wealthy, from a good family. I lived in a small city, and was used to people paying attention to me... but I lived without Jesus.

I got involved with an older man, a plastic surgeon who fed my vanity. I would do totally crazy things just to see him and be with him. I lived on a pendulum, swinging between extremes, doing all kinds of things in hiding. I'd begun a dangerous game that ended up producing a pregnancy. I panicked as I sensed this little fruit growing within me, conceived in a love that was false. I spoke with the man. First he didn't believe me, then he did and he brought me to some religious folks to decide for me. They said they were willing to take my baby.

“No,” I thought. “I'll have it, it'll be a little brother to my child and it'll grow up with him....”

The problem was my friends.

A female friend starts to feed all my doubts:

“What are you going to do? How will you be able to raise a kid with no father?”

How do you expect to keep things a secret? What are people going to think?

What about your work? Your life is over if you do this. How will you be able to explain all this to a kid?"

She continues: "Catholics say it's a life from conception, but it's not, it's just a formless mass in the first trimester. If you want I'll help you out, I'll make you an appointment and you don't have to worry about the money, it won't cost you anything."

My head is spinning.

Like a robot I go and do it, putting myself on autopilot to get through it all.

I find myself in a room with other women. I feel stupid and ashamed and I just want it to end soon.

They put me to sleep. The doctor's name is Nicola, just like my living son. When I wake up I'm treated sweetly by my friend and by the father of the child I've just sent away.

Without realizing it, my life turns into an avalanche of pain manifesting in divisions and disasters: divorce, loneliness, debts, a move to another city, and yet more loneliness.... so much loneliness. I throw myself into an unbridled search for love in all the wrong places. I take my beloved living child with me. He's my only companion in this loneliness and I live for him.

God is merciful to me.

He grabs me and offers me a new way of life: a husband, the annulment of my first marriage, another son and an adopted daughter. My life fills up with love, but a sense of emptiness still accompanies me.... Low self-esteem makes me accept all kinds of compromises just to feel loved.

I don't ever think of what I did. It's tucked under the rug, there's nothing I can do about the past and anyways, it doesn't impact my new life.

As the years pass every one of my 5 siblings confesses to me that they've had an abortion.

I don't have the courage to say, "Me too." But God is ever more merciful to me. He takes me by the hand and leads me on a path to get to know Him ever more deeply. My faith deepens thanks also to His Mother Mary and to other people who talk to me about Him.

A priest in the parish next to my house puts up a flyer for a "Rachel's Vineyard retreat" and I stop and read it.

I'm embarrassed to talk with him directly so I call the phone number. I never could have imagined what happened next: All the pain I'd stuffed inside for 23 years came flooding out... the part of me that died in the abortion... my wounded and aborted motherhood.

I take part in the retreat.

I finally ask forgiveness. At last I can envision my aborted child. His name is Michael. Now I can love him and ask him to forgive me. I also get the chance during the retreat to recognize and honor my 5 aborted nieces and nephews along with Michael. It's really hard to do, because I see all their aborted potential as human beings. I see how Love's plan was destroyed in my family by distorted values and cold financial calculations. My heart in shreds can finally express its grief outloud. I can finally admit that I hadn't been able to defend life, to defend my child, my unborn nieces and nephews. I finally understand just how much my choice had in fact determined so many other choices I'd made after, choices that had made me cold and cynical over the years.

But with Jesus and the process I went through in *Rachel's Vineyard* hope is reborn.

I finally feel worthy to know and receive the love of Jesus. I can finally tend to the wounds I'd carried inside, and see them heal. I can love my living children without feelings of guilt. I can love my little Michael knowing that he's there with Jesus and is praying for me and walking with me. One day I'll be able to embrace him in the light of the Lord.

I want to tell everyone: Don't do it! Ask for help, look for help. Don't follow Satan's temptings, because along with these innocents, their moms die inside as well. And there's nothing worse than dying inside while staying alive, having given yourself over to the enemy of life.

