Post-Abortion Healing:
Who We Are is How We Heal
by Msgr. Mike Mannion

[Note: Msgr. Mike Mannion, a priest of the Diocese of Camden, NJ, is a pioneer in the field of healing after abortion. He authored some of the first books on this topic and helped develop the Church's understanding of the wounds abortion brings and of the path to healing. In the following article, Fr. Mike brings to our attention a new line of thought he is developing that links the path of healing with the traditional schools of spirituality in the Church. We at Priests for Life are happy to have Msgr. Mannion more closely connected to our work.]

If St. Thomas Aquinas was correct when he stated: “Grace builds on nature,” then we can learn much about the journey of healing for those suffering from the aftermath of abortion.

When personality types are matched with Christian schools and traditions of spirituality, a “healing guide” can be developed as a significant resource in walking with one who is broken in the journey toward wholeness.

Recognizing that our goal is psycho-spiritual, we seek not just to help the post-abortive individual return to pre-abortive attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and commitments, for they might have actually predisposed and facilitated the abortion decision. Instead, we seek to help the individual integrate the wound of abortion into his or her life in a true Paschal Mystery sense, identifying with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Christ has died. My baby has died.
Christ is risen. My baby will rise.
Christ will come again. And when he does, He will carry my baby in His arms and hand him/her to me.

The healing process is not just one of reconciliation, but reunion and healing as well.

Perhaps the post-abortive woman or man is one who especially values tradition and is inclined to “connect the dots” between past, present and future. This is a person who would seek to commemorate events in the life of Jesus and also to entrust her/his child to the Child Jesus, the Healer Jesus, the Merciful Jesus, the Consoling and Compassionate Jesus. This is one whose healing process or journey, in a sense, parallels an Ignatian spirituality, in the spirit of St. Ignatius Loyola. The seeker of healing would do well to learn more about the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, for it would complement her/his journey to Jesus and His loving embrace.

(Continued on reverse)
Perhaps the post-abortive woman or man is drawn to action and opportunity – a life centered in actively seeking to do God's will. Spontaneous prayer, informal prayer, and a special openness to the Holy Spirit, as well as acts of loving service, are all parts of this person's “spiritual profile” and inclinations. All these characteristics are common to a Franciscan spirituality. Compassion for the “lepers” of our day and a deep appreciation for the beauty, gift and goodness of God’s creation, may lead a mournful mother or father to plant a flower or a tree in memory of their aborted child. This is a gesture, when combined with a sacramental and prayerful experience, that may contribute significantly to healing.

Many schools or traditions of spirituality have emerged in the 2000 year tradition of the Catholic Church. In studying them, one can easily see a beautiful “tapestry of life and faith,” where many colors and threads intermingle with each other. The soul who hungers for healing may, in the last analysis, draw eclectically from aspects of many spiritual traditions. We have look, briefly, at only a few in the preceding paragraphs. Though we are all certainly made in God’s image and likeness, there is a uniqueness and individuality to each of us that can help heal all of us, especially those who carry the wounds of abortion in the memories of their lives. At the center, there is always a loving Jesus, ever seeking to lead us to the Father, through the gentle power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Summer Novenas

This summer, we invite you to participate in and promote two special novenas. The details, and the prayers for each, in English and Spanish, can be found at www.PrayerCampaign.org. Please mention these in your emails, on your websites, and in newsletters and parish bulletins.

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Novena to Blessed Mother Teresa: August 28-September 5

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Prayer Intentions

You are encouraged to remember the following intentions as you pray the Liturgy of the Hours:

**JULY INTENTION:**
That men may grow in the authentic spirit of fatherly responsibility.

**AUGUST INTENTION:**
That preachers in all denominations may courageously preach about abortion and euthanasia.

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