



Fall 2015

Dear Friends,

There are moments that are pivotal, defining points in our lives. Those are most often the difficult moments. And yet we still choose to defend and support whatever is easy despite the fact that the more difficult path is the one that brings more good into our lives.

When I went to college, it was always, "I'm against abortion, but what about...?" There would be a list of hard situations that seemed to justify legalized abortion. Our sense of compassion has toppled our belief that true love conquers all. True love defends us against the disappointments of despair.

Life stories remind us that abstract "problems" involve real people. In this newsletter I want to share the story of Jana, a young lady who had only come back to her Catholic faith six months before attending her first Ignite Your Torch Youth Conference.

We all suffer the loss of the unborn who are aborted, but Jana felt it in a particularly personal way due to her own brush with death.

"I was excited about my faith already, but Ignite helped take my excitement and love for my faith to a whole new level... The great thing about it is that it prepares you for dealing with the real world, with ways to explain and defend your faith to others who don't agree with Church teaching or simply don't understand it."

She found a deeper joy in her newfound faith and in the richness that the Church has to offer.

"I had never witnessed such beauty until I saw the sisters in their habits. They were so peaceful to be

around, and you could tell they were so in love with Jesus. Seeing them made me want to fall more in love with Jesus."

For Jana, it turned out to be a journey that had come full circle for her as she stood in front of the abortion center and prayed with the Ignite youth. We all suffer the loss of the unborn who are aborted, but Jana felt it in a particularly personal way due to her own brush with death (see her story below).

At Ignite Your Torch, we bring people together to let God work His miracles in their lives. Sisters, brothers and priests are able to show young people "faith at a whole new level," as Jana said. Many things came into Jana's life to bring her to the fullness of faith, including a faithful man to be her husband. I am so glad that Ignite was one of those elements. I have greatly enjoyed seeing the growth and energy of their family's model of simple faith. These are the modern miracles that give us hope.

Please help us continue our work with prayers and financial support.

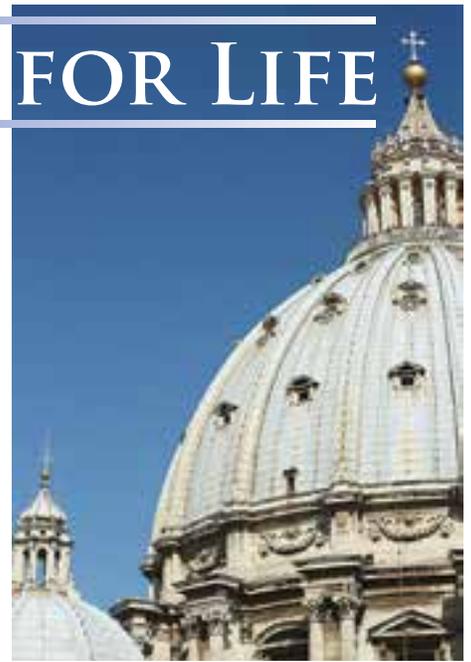
Tamara Cesare

I WAS SAVED FROM ABORTION

Jana Taylor

Some of my earliest memories are of my grandmother, whom I call Mom, telling me about my being such a special little girl. She would always tell me, "You were adopted, which means that I chose to bring you home from the hospital even when I didn't have to." It wasn't until I was in middle school or early high school that my grandmother shared the whole story with me. My grandparents had joined the Catholic Church just before they were faced with a difficult situation, and the Church had been there to guide them. My grandmother told me that I was saved from being aborted. God's providence is amazing, and I see each day how He is working in my life.

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MOTHERS ARE PRESSURED

My birth mother was being medicated for mental illness at Middle Tennessee Health Institute in 1988. She began to experience stomach cramps and was sent to the hospital, where they discovered that she was expecting. The doctors called my grandmother to let her know that the medications her daughter was on could cause serious issues, and they recommended an abortion. They insisted that the child would be born with possible mental and physical defects, and/or die shortly after birth.

She chose to sacrifice her life for mine in a world where most people would not have done this.

My grandmother relied on prayer and trusted God. She hoped for a healthy baby to be born into this world and, despite the obvious crosses ahead, refused to sign the abortion paperwork. Family members and friends advised against taking me in. My grandmother was at the age where all of her children were older and out of the house. She could finally have time for herself to grow her business, travel with my grandfather, and much more. She chose to sacrifice her life for mine in a world where most people would not have done this.

HE MADE ME, AND I AM GOOD.

I was born on August 5th, 1989 at Davidson County General Hospital at 2:05 p.m. I weighed 6 lbs., 5 oz. and measured 19 inches long; I was a perfectly healthy baby. My grandmother was the first person to hold me, and from that moment on simply became “Mom.”

Despite the many struggles my birth mother had with a life of mental illness and insecurity, I am grateful that those burdens don't include having lost her own child to abortion.

My grandmother and grandfather did, and still do, such a great job at being Mom and Dad that I almost forget I am adopted! I am very thankful that my grandmother chose life. Because of their choice, I am able to live life and live it to the fullest. I also thank them for ensuring that I received the first sacrament of the Church. Even though they would stop practicing their faith when I was young, my grandparents had me baptized on October 1st, 1989.

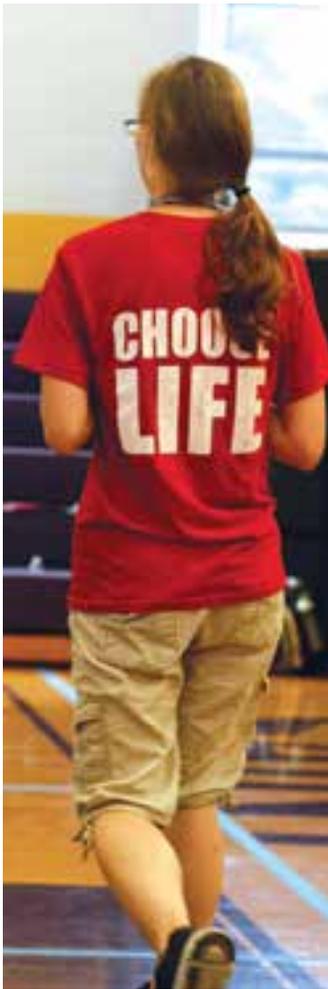


Photo: Tamara Cesare

I ALWAYS HAD A LONGING FOR GOD.

The grace I received at baptism kept me searching all my life—attending different nondenominational Christian churches. But that didn't prevent me from being at a very low place in my life and making horrible life decisions as a young woman. When I hit bottom, I moved back home. I took some time for myself and decided that I wanted a great relationship with God, but I was still so unsure how to attain it.

Shortly after making my resolution to know God to the fullest, I met my future husband. When we first met, I thought I'd have him coming to church with me in no time. I was so wrong; it turned out that he had me going to *his* church in no time. I was introduced to a priest and on many different occasions asked him questions about why Catholics do what they do. My world was completely turned upside down.

Despite my interest in the Catholic faith, I was not ready to commit to it. Then one day I heard a CD that explained the Eucharist so well that I finally realized the significance of the Mass. Once that clicked, I had to be Catholic—and *fast!* I received the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation on December 18th, 2012.

I am now 25 and have been happily married for two and a half years to Brandon Taylor. We were married on October 1st, 2013. This was the same date I was baptized, and not because we planned it that way. It was just another amazing embrace from God, reminding me that He has been caring for me all along. My husband and I have also been blessed with two little boys, Maximilian and Jude.

I do believe that God has a plan and that abortion and contraception interfere with the good things God has in mind for us. Just think what would have become of my



Photo: Tamara Cesare

husband without me if God had destined us to be together from eternity? Had I been aborted, my sons would not exist, which is hard to think about. Who knows what God has in store for them—something great and saintly, I'm sure!

I PONDER, "WHY, LORD?"

Oftentimes I ponder, "Why, Lord?" I question why He chose to save me from an abortion and give me life when so many others are lost. God had and still has a plan and purpose for my life, and through the courage of my grandparents in a very difficult situation, that plan can be fulfilled. I really believe that God wants me to change the world by cooperating with the grace He has given me.

When I say God wants me to change the world, I know I have three main missions. The first is to love God with all of my heart, mind, and soul. The second is to be the best wife I can be to my wonderful husband, Brandon Taylor. The third is to be the best mother I can be to the two boys God has blessed me with and to any future children He has planned for me.

Just as my birth mother, who had mental illness, made a poor decision to engage in premarital sex, causing her to be pregnant with me, God took that bad choice, that sin, and turned it into something beautiful. He made me, and I am good.

We can become so caught up in the materialism of this world, comfort, convenience and security. Had my grandparents held to worldly values, I would most likely have died at the hands of an abortionist. People of the world may scoff when I say God wants me to change the world by being the best wife and mother I can be, but that truly is His plan for me. The world will tell you fame and fortune are needed for success and to make an impact, but God's way is humble. By fulfilling my role as wife and mother (which I fail at miserably most days, but I continue to keep trying with the help of God's



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There are burdens that come with life, but life itself and the joy life brings are always worth the burdens. Every single time! I'm sure it was a burden for my grandmother to start all over with childrearing and give so much up for me, but she did. She tells me often that she is so glad she made the decision to choose life. I am so thankful that I have the chance to be on this earth doing God's will, and living life to the fullest through my Catholic faith.

One thing the sacrament of marriage has taught me is that I am human. God is teaching me each day that no matter how human I am and how much I may mess up, He will take what I give Him, mess ups and all, and turn them into something beautiful. Just as my birth mother, who had mental illness, made a poor decision to engage in premarital sex, causing her to be pregnant with me, God took that bad choice, that sin, and turned it into something beautiful. He made me, and I am good. Utilizing God's grace and frequenting the sacraments to receive more grace, I can help my boys, my husband, and myself become saints, which is what God has intended for all of us. I hope all of you reading this will always choose life even when choosing life means there is a possibility of hardship. ●



Photo: Tamara Cesare

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Jeremiah 29:11



We are Engaged in Angelic Warfare

In our battle for lives, we can't wait until women are at the abortion center's doors. Chastity is the only sure way to stop abortion, and the Angelic Warfare Confraternity is designed for just that purpose. The confraternity was founded due to St. Thomas Aquinas's fight for chastity in his own life and has graces and prayers specifically designed to help people guard holy purity. For more information –

Visit the Angelic Warfare page of New Hope Publications –
<http://www.newhope-ky.org/#!angelic-warfare/c1vds>
And also the Dominicans' Angelic Warfare site at –
<http://www.angelicwarfareconfraternity.org>

THE ENEMY WANTS US TO BE ALONE

Madeline Haydon

(A testimony given at Ignite Your Torch)

We've been talking a lot this week about Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and how the greatest expression of these three is our vocation. Our vocation, the will of God for us, is the key to heaven! You can imagine, then, how Satan feels about our vocation. Of course his biggest goal is to destroy Truth, Beauty and Goodness in our lives. Now every vocation, whether to consecrated, married, or single life, calls us to live in chastity, making chastity one of the greatest gifts we can use to glorify God!

But, as he usually does, Satan tries to twist these ways we can glorify God. He wants to pervert us to Lies, Ugliness, and Evil. The Angelic Warfare Confraternity seeks to preserve our vocation to chastity by equipping us with the grace to overcome temptation. Through the life of its patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, we can see a clear balance of temptation and triumph. In his story, his brothers work as a force of evil, right?—trying to dissuade him from following his vocation. It's interesting that the first thing they think to do is isolate him—lock him up in a tower. They knew that when he was alone he'd begin to feel more helpless. It reminded me of a scene from a movie that I like. The main character is trying to fight off evil alone and failing, when a friend gives him some advice. "If I were you-know-who, I'd want you to feel cut off from everyone else: because if it's just you alone, you're not as much of a threat."

This same concept holds truth in our spiritual battles. The enemy wants us to be alone, to lock us up in that tower of shame or fear. Friends, the battle for the preservation or destruction of your chastity is huge because it is a battle for your soul. And in this battle, we absolutely *cannot* go in alone. Through the Angelic Warfare

Confraternity, St. Thomas Aquinas gives us the remedy to isolation, that is, community. It gives you the opportunity to fight your struggles with chastity along with holy men and women from all vocations, not only all over the world but also in heaven! It is a powerful, powerful grace from which we can only benefit! Don't be afraid!

So I'd like to extend an invitation to every person here to join the AWC, or for current members, to recommit themselves to praying daily for chastity, so that in Truth, Beauty and Goodness, we may conquer all sin. Jesus is Lord! Amen!

(For more information on the confraternity, visit www.angelicwarfareconfraternity.org.)



Photo: Tamara Cesare

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For more information on our work, visit www.catholicsunitedforlife.org or call 1-800-764-8444.