

angered me that she could be “over it” with such little pain. I hurt! She should hurt, too!

Meds and massive amounts of therapy helped. But not completely. Something was still missing.

In 2005, through an amazing twist of fate, we were put in a position where we had to deal with the abortion.

It’s taken three years, but we’re on our way.

Fast-Forward: We can actually talk about it, now. It still isn’t easy, but it is possible.

In the spring of 2007, I became aware of a new healing ministry called Sons of Adam.* I waded in. I wanted to help other men heal. But before “helping,” I had to “be helped.”

One of the most important things that I realized during the process was that while I could forgive her for the abortion, forgiving myself was another matter, entirely. THAT took some serious work.

The key issue, for me, was understanding why, if she knew how much I loved her and wanted to spend the rest of my life with her, did she want to abort our baby.

She said she couldn’t be sure I wouldn’t leave her. That hurt more than anything. Our lives were bound together, and she didn’t trust me. I admit it: that still hurts.

But, for the first time in memory, I felt healing taking place. I forgave myself, and we asked our baby to forgive us. Somehow, we knew it was a boy, and we named him Jason.

After finishing the program, the priest who was guiding my recovery, asked if we would like him to offer a Mass for our

baby...a Memorial Mass. An opportunity for us to finally lay him to rest. Without any hesitation, but with no small amount of trepidation, we accepted the offer.

On Saturday, June 23, 2007, we were finally able to lay Jason to rest.

For the first time – since the spring of 1978 – we both felt “free.” “Light.” “Healed.” For the first time in our post-abortion couplehood, we were no longer bound – chained – by the abortion. Rather, we were bound by our vows, with no chains attached. The way it was supposed to be. The way we promised on our wedding day. Thank God from whom all blessings flow.

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Abortion Monologue

December 10, 1977.

We had our first date. Christmas party. Exams were over. Tomorrow: home for the holidays, awaiting grades. First date jitters. I’d never wanted a date so badly, before.

She was a sophomore; I, a freshman. Getting used to college was both easier – and harder – than I’d expected. Classes, parties, and the fraternity scene were hard to balance. Meanwhile, she was confused and alone. She’d had a boyfriend her freshman year. They came back to school after a summer apart, and he more-or-less dumped her. Jerk. I never properly thanked him for that.

I first saw her, about a week into school. I was a very drunk (fraternity) rushee. She was a cute girl playing pool. I liked the look of things.

We go to know each other, and quickly became friends. Then close friends. Then very close friends and confidants. She had another boyfriend, at least nominally. I wasn’t dating anyone. I would listen to everything she had to say about the other guy...all the while wondering why she didn’t notice me. Close friends. Holding hands, but not so much as a first kiss.

Then, she agreed to go to the Christmas party with me. Things were looking up.

The morning after our first date, we went our separate ways for Christmas break. When I got home, I told my best friend I was going to marry her. What he said was unprintable...but understandable.

After Christmas break, we picked up our friendship where we had left it. One date, and friends. We spent much of our free time together, and quickly became much more than friends.

Shortly after Valentine's day we became sexually active. Or rather, fully sexually active. It was the '70's. We had a "near miss," and learned nothing from it.

At the end of the semester, we spent the night together (nothing unusual, it was the '70's), and went home for the summer. She came back to summer school. I was thrilled to see her (it was only a couple of hours from my house to school). She came down to my house for the weekend, and we went out for the evening.

She told me she was pregnant. Actually, she started to tell me...I knew the rest of the story without her saying a word. I asked her what she was going to do, and she told me she was going to have an abortion. I knew that was her right. And I hid behind it.

On June 23, 1978 (not that I remember) we went to the abortion clinic. I was scared, but tried to be "strong." What a perfectly stupid thing to do. It was done, and we went back to my parents' house, pretending nothing had happened. Later, we went to our favorite restaurant for one of the worst dinners of our lives.

The abortion changed our relationship. I still loved her, and felt bound to her. I wanted to be with her, and she with me. Our love for each other was intact, but we were no longer young and in love. We were still in love, but no longer young. We aged. A lot. We were "old" for our ages. I was 18; she was 19.

Seven years later, my Mom would die...on June 23rd. Not that I remember.

We saw each other for brief periods during the summer; she was only a couple of hours away, and could come to town fairly easily. One Friday night, I just fell apart. I told her I had to go see a priest. She went with me, but as a born-and-raised-protestant, didn't have a clue why it was so important to me. We went to see the priest who had been the associate pastor in the parish in which I grew up. He was the same priest who had nurtured my vocation to the priesthood. I can only imagine what he thought.

Father gave me absolution, and we left. I felt so much better. And worse. We didn't really talk about the abortion after that.

The following summer, we got married. I guess I was right after all.

And we never really talked about the abortion.

Years went by, and there were two topics of conversation that were strictly verboten: religion and the abortion. They became twin elephants hiding behind the piano. We knew they were hiding in plain sight, but couldn't bring ourselves to address either. Yet we knew they were intimately entwined.

A few years later, we had a miscarriage. You don't suppose the abortion "did something," do you? We wondered. Years later, we named him Gregory.

But she became pregnant, immediately, and we were on our way. Three daughters later, our family was complete. Three daughters. God is merciful, but just.

We were as close as ever. Things were fine. We could talk about anything. Except for "me," faith, and the abortion.

I understand the notion that "once a Catholic, always a Catholic." She couldn't.

But two kids into our marriage – with no active practice of any faith in sight – she declared that we were going to go to the Catholic Church. We had to go as a family, and since I was too stubborn to sensibly compromise, "Catholic," it was.

One down. Two to go.

Some years before, I had virtually fallen apart. Memories of sexual abuse came flooding back, and I fell into the third depression I could identify. Much to my surprise, she didn't divorce me when I told her about it. More depression when my Mom died. And the "big one," when my Dad died. I've never really been the same since the "big one." And I thank God for that!

Sidebar: Not until November, 2007, did I ever begin to understand the full impact that my sexual abuse had on my life and life choices (including my sexual life and the abortion. Without the sexual abuse, I wonder, would the abortion have ever occurred?)

Meanwhile, I could not make her understand how painful the sexual abuse had been. Or how hard it was to talk about. And I couldn't even mention the abortion.

No discussion, no help. No help, no healing.

She said she didn't need to talk about it. She was over it. Why, she wondered, did I have to live in the past all the time? And it