

Challenge to abortion is to judge less

It was a galaxy far away and a time long ago, which means that the story I'm about to tell happened somewhere else in the distant past. It's a story that did not have a happy beginning. A young woman was pregnant and decided she should have an abortion. Her mother agreed with her, and agreed to accompany her to the clinic to get the abortion.

Neither mother nor daughter was practicing their faith at the time. However, the young woman did tell a Christian friend about her intent to seek an abortion. Her friend replied simply: "I'll pray for you, and I know you'll make the right decision."

When the young woman registered at the clinic, she was told to first drink a lot of water. As she sat in the waiting room drinking the water, she made an ominous observation: "The lights were all on, but it was so dark!" Wow! What a description of an abortion clinic - the lights are on, but it's so dark.

She then recalled the words of her friend: "I'll be praying for you. I know you'll make the right decision." Then something even more amazing happened.

"As I sat there, Father Joe, I saw this big X in front of me. Then I heard a booming voice saying: 'Don't do it! Don't do it.' I looked around the room and no one else had apparently heard anything. The voice was for me. I knew then that I couldn't go through with the abortion."

The child she did not abort is today a grown woman with children of her own.

The woman who refused to get the abortion said, "I would have gone through the rest of my life beating myself up for the life I had ended, and for all the lives affected by that choice."

We sometimes forget that we're not just saving the life of a particular baby, but all the other lives to be born of that decision, and affected by that decision.

While I could say many things about that story, I'd like to reflect on just two. First, it was impressive what her Christian friend had said. She didn't attack her. She didn't berate her. She just offered prayers. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," a poet said. I'm not sure we always believe that. Yet as we pray in a special way for life during these 40 days, and as we pray all days for people to make right decisions, we need to know that our prayers make a difference. As I've said before, prayer is both mystery and energy. We all need the energy of love. We all need to trust the mystery of God.

Proponents of abortion argue that the decision is between the woman and her doctor. The truth is that the decision is between the woman and her God.

The second observation is to pray for all women who have had abortions. Pray for their healing. Abortion is its own punishment. They need no more judgment. Often they are abandoned by the man who got them pregnant, or encouraged by the man to get an abortion. And don't forget to pray for the men involved. They, too, need healing.

The challenge to abortion is to judge less and love more. Sending negative energy - blame, shame, condemnation, never helps anything. Sending love helps everyone and everything. Jesus promised that he had come that we "might have life, and life to its fullest." And let us pray for ourselves and for everyone that the light will be on in our lives, and the darkness will be banished!