

Mourning

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oneself.

"I sat there, and for the first time in a long time I felt tears," she said. "I felt terrified, but I felt somehow like coming home."

Marie went to confession and, to her surprise, the priest did not condemn her. Instead he told her, "I can't judge you — that's not for me to do. The only thing I know is that God forgives you. And we need you. Welcome home."

Despite her reconciliation with the church, Marie's problems were not over. "I was still God's biggest mistake," she said. So she went to her pastor and explained her situation. His compassion enabled her to finally cry and feel the pain that had been festering inside her for years.

Marie started therapy with a new therapist shortly after her return to the church, and began to deal with the abortion. As part of her therapy, she named the child. "I always knew she was a girl," she said. "I named her Sarah, because Sarah means 'gift of God.'"

Marie acknowledged that she still thinks about Sarah. "Today I can close my eyes and see Sarah dancing around the feet of Jesus," she said.

At about the time she started seeing her new therapist, Marie met with a friend who said she was going to have an abortion. Marie told her about her own experience, and "about how it felt to carry a dirty little

secret for so many years."

The friend decided to have the baby instead, and put it up for adoption. She has since obtained pictures of the child from its adoptive parents, and recently received a letter thanking her for the gift of the child.

"Telling her my story was so healing for me, because I was so honest," Marie said.

Keeping their secret to themselves is the biggest problem for many of the women who have had abortions, noted Marie, who once avoided healing services and bereavement Masses for fear that people would guess the truth about her.

"It's such a little secret," she said. "I'm a mother who lost a child, even if I never held that child, and I was never able to mourn that child."

Marie has finally been able to mourn her child. And her anger against God is gone.

But she has a hard time not feeling anger against both pro-choice and pro-life demonstrators because of their efforts to politicize the issue. "I feel like a bone sometimes with two dogs fighting over me, and I'm not sure which dog is going to win," she observed. "There doesn't seem to be too much middle ground."

She is now thinking about joining the Puzzle Project to counsel others about abortion. She is also involved with forming the Post Abortion Support of Today and Tomorrow group that will begin meeting at Corpus Christi Center early next year. The support group is intended to allow women who have undergone abortions to share their experiences.

In fact, the group is being created at Marie's suggestion. "I decided that what I'd really like to do is get women together and talk about it and support each other," she said. "It's not a therapy group so much as a group where we can support each other. It takes a long time to go away — if it ever does."

Marie said that since she began to tell people about her experiences, others have

urged her to speak out more widely.

"A woman said to me, 'I can't speak but you can. You've shown us that you can, and I'd like for you to speak out for us when we can't speak,'" Marie said.

"Maybe if I speak," she continued, "a woman who might have killed herself will call the Puzzle Project. Maybe a woman who feels that God is unforgiving can experience what I've experienced."

Football teams

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Kearney earned the top seed when Section 5 officials decided to average points rather than to go by total points in determining the seeding. Midlakes (7-1) had more total points because it had played more games than the Kings, but when the points were averaged and projected over an eight-game schedule, Kearney edged Midlakes 27.3 to 26.

As a result, Kearney will face fourth-seeded Hornell (4-4) Friday at 6 p.m. at Fauver Stadium.

Notre Dame 14, Dryden 6

With one game left in their nine-game season, the Crusaders clinched a spot in the Section 4 playoffs with a 14-6 win over host Dryden on Friday, Oct. 27.

The game was in doubt until the fourth quarter when Mike Bennett — who finished the game with 149 yards on 25 carries — scored on a four-yard run to break a 6-6 tie. A pass from Bryan Woodworth to

Lee Hayward on the conversion attempt made the score 14-6.

The Crusaders took the early lead on a two-yard run by Bennett in the second quarter. The kick failed, and Dryden, which managed just 148 yards in total offense, came back to tie the game 6-6 on a nine-yard pass.

Notre Dame blocked the kick. Notre Dame pounded out 375 yards in total offense, but managed only two touchdowns. Four scores were called back because of penalties.

In addition to Bennett's offensive performance, Geoff Woodworth chipped in 93 yards on 9 carries.

The Crusaders will finish their regular season at home this Friday, Nov. 3, against Waverly (4-4).

ND will then play Chenango Valley (6-2) at Chenango Valley on Nov. 11, in the Section 4 Bowl Game 2. The two teams were scheduled to play Oct. 14, but the tragic death of a CV player the day before the game forced CV officials to cancel the game and Notre Dame was awarded a forfeit.

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