



# FROM ASHES

by JUDY SCHLUETER



In our home hangs a small sign that reads: “God will heal your broken heart if you will give him all the pieces.” The story behind this gift lives on in my heart. It was 15 years ago late one night when

our phone rang. That wasn’t unusual. As an RN and Catholic counselor I had served women in crisis pregnancy as well as through the painful aftermath of abortion. Many had access to our home phone number.

This call was different.

**A faithful Catholic pediatrician was on the other line**, accompanied by the parish priest. In the background I could hear a woman screaming, “I hate this monster! I hate priests! I hate the Church! I don’t want this ‘thing’! Leave me alone! I hate all of you!”

“Linda” was greatly struggling with knowledge that the life growing within her was extremely deformed due to a genetic birth defect. Her husband “Mike” had been going from parish to parish knocking on doors, desperately seeking a priest who might encourage Linda to cancel a 2nd trimester abortion. All other doors closed, at this parish God intervened. The M.D. asked if I would see Linda in my office the next morning, if she would agree.

**The following morning a distraught, young woman** with a small boy in tow arrived in my office. Arms crossed, she was filled with determination and rage. As we entered my office I glanced at the crucifix over the door and knew this session was beyond my competence. I placed her in the Heart of Jesus.

Linda’s rage spoke, but so did her tears. She shouted how she would not bring a “monster” into the world. In that moment I was moved to direct her attention to her young boy, “Sam,” who was ever so slightly dismantling my office. I asked if he were diagnosed with a terminal illness, would she love him in his moments of pain and discomfort, his deteriorating condition, his need for her. Linda became quiet and looked at Sam with tenderness: “Of course, I would love him with all my heart and be there for his every need.” She became quiet.

**I sensed the graces of the Holy Spirit** moving us into a blessed space. We were able to gently share the story of another young pregnant mother who was alone, possibly frightened and uncertain of what the future would bring. And how that young pregnant

woman traveled to visit an older woman sort of like us this morning. And when they went to present their infant for blessing they were told that this journey would entail great sorrow.

At that moment Linda said, "I know about that woman... wasn't her name 'Mary'?" She was able to enter into my recounting the experience of Mary holding the bruised and broken body of her Son when he was removed from the Cross, to ponder what that must have been like.

**Aware that her heart was softened, I was moved to pronounce:** "He freely did this for you, Linda. His Mother deeply understands your pain, grief and disappointment. In fact this very moment of love and care for you are from Him. You are part of this story."

Now there were different tears in her eyes. A new relationship was born. Linda allowed me to give her a rosary and a small booklet. She agreed to come for another session before her scheduled appointment to abort her baby.

**When she returned the following week**, she allowed me to pray with her at the start of our session. I led her through an experience of gifting her unborn son with prayers, letters, and expressions of love. Linda truly did begin to fall in love with her baby. She named him "Phoenix" because it meant "out of the ashes."

**She canceled the appointment to abort their child.**

Prior to the baby's birth, Linda invited the doctor, the priest and me into the post delivery room. These were the same men she had vented rage and anger only a month earlier. The night of his birth, we were all there. And he was baptized.

**With the remaining hours of this tiny person's life**, Linda kissed and held him so tenderly, as though "wrapped in swaddling clothes." She had concern for his every need and was assured he was in no pain. When she invited me to hold him, I was deeply moved by the beauty of her sharing and trust. This tiny boy evidenced multiple external birth defects. But this mother seemed not to notice. As she looked at her baby she breathed the words of her heart and changed spirit as she whispered,

**"Isn't he beautiful!"**

Sometime later, as Linda and I said a farewell from our sessions, she handed me the sign that is a constant reminder and joy of the power of the love of the Father that lives on in the heart of Linda:

**"God will heal your broken heart  
if you will give him all the pieces."**



**BERNIE & JUDY SCHLUETER** have been married 57 years. They live in Dublin, Ohio and are parishioners of St. Patrick Church in Columbus. Bernie is a retired health care executive. Judy is foundress of a Catholic post-abortion healing ministry. Both remain fully engaged in Catholic mission throughout the region and to their 65 children and grandchildren.

**Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,**

**Our world is pining for good news. God's supply is *you*.** Your short, moving story of "God with us" will make a big difference in someone's life.

Right now you can think of at least one moving moment in



your life. An example of "God with us." Please take a moment now to simply email me the possible subject of your story. If you're motivated, sure, write it out (no more than 500 words). We'll help you land it. Many will be blessed. We want to feature a new story every week.

Thank you in advance!

So blessed to be united in building the Kingdom,



**Greg and Stephanie Schlueter**  
Image Trinity | Mass Impact

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Call: (814) 449-8808  
WEB: [ILoveMyFamily.us](http://ILoveMyFamily.us)

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**The great calamity of this day** dates back to the beginning of time, and punctuates our one, underlying, unifying, eternity-defining mission:

**"The future of humanity passes by way of the family."**  
~ Pope St. John Paul II

Marriage and family have always been Satan's most fierce point of attack. Why? Because man and woman image God and exist to make Him, who is love, known. (Gen. 1:27)

It's no longer subtle. Things hidden in darkness are coming to light. (Mark 4:22) It's not just playing out among those who've been deceived into rejecting their Maker, but also under the roofs of many who profess Him. Now more than ever good Catholic families are looking for a solid anchor. Lived encounter. Community enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Remnant.

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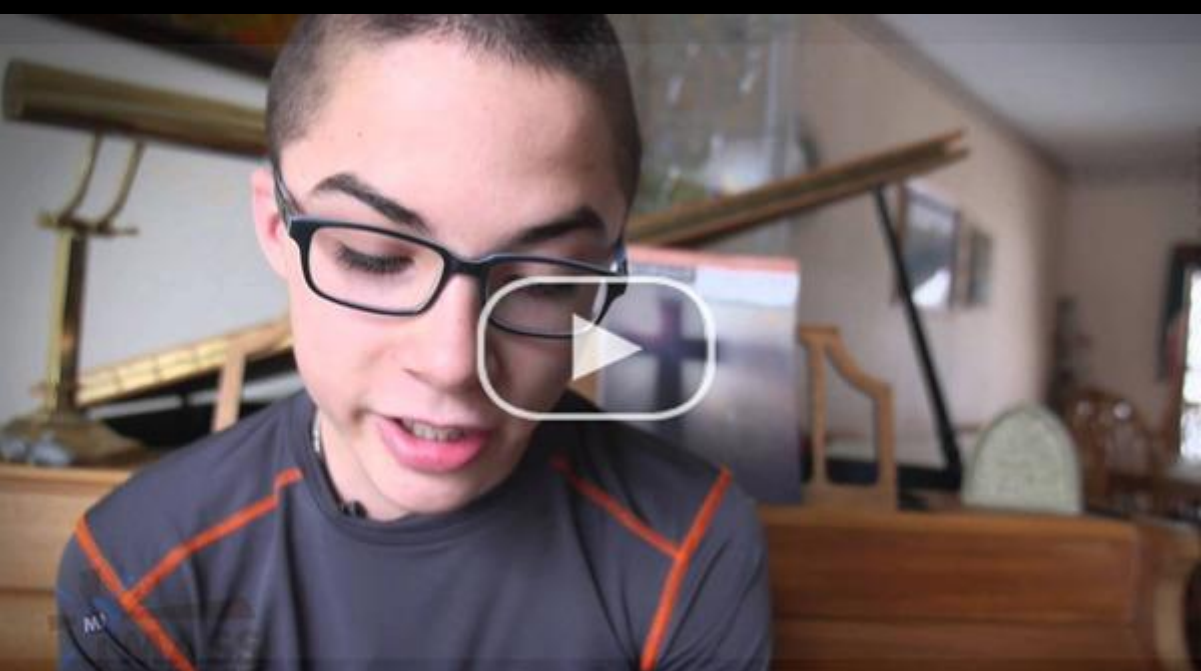
**DREW BLAZSIK**

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WHERE WE'RE GOING.**



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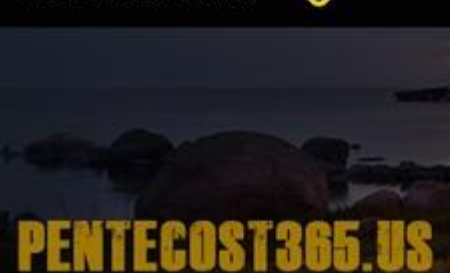


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"The future of humanity passes by way of the family."  
~ Pope St. John Paul II

**We are families seeking to make our homes places of  
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