

## Global Life Campaign

### GLC Series A: True Story #9: Amparito Espinoza (Ecuador)

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*True Stories* is a series of life giving and inspiring stories about people involved with or affected by abortion, or who were conceived in rape – like Amparito – who has suffered greatly in her life, but has a beautiful story of redemption to tell. This is her story in her own words:



My name is Amparo Espinoza. I am 49 years old, of Afro descendant, and was born in a small town called Milagros on the Ecuadorian coast. Since I was 7, we came to Quito in search of work, and at 13 years old we settled in Pisulli. Many people guided by Communists, including my family, invaded and took over the land, which is now an urban slum of northwest Quito. During the first years at Pisulli, we had no potable water, sewage, or electricity. However we all knew each other. Pisulli was growing, the first block houses and the school for the children were built, and a group of young revolutionaries were the teachers. As the cooperative grew, people from almost every province of Ecuador arrived with a great desire to be happy, but at the same time there were difficulties with alcohol, drugs and crime.

Over the years, the Lord gave me the gift of listening, and through this gift I walked with and guided my family and community. Through the work that I had the opportunity to perform in a social organization, I could realize what really answers and fulfills the desires of the heart.

**My birth.** My mother was a victim of sexual abuse at age 15 by her mother's partner. After hiding her pregnancy for almost 7 months, at age 16 she was giving birth to a premature girl. She never wanted to abort, but she also didn't feel able to raise a girl who looked defenseless and weak; because of that reason my grandmother raised me. My grandmother sure felt pain and anger against the man who abused her daughter (whom she was living with), but fear of violence, of which herself was a victim, prevented her from complaining against the abuse.

However, she decided to embrace me as her own daughter. Amazingly, I never saw in her a look of rejection, rather a love without limits as if she were my true mother, and taught me how to not stop but always go forward. Now I understand that since then Christ has preserved me. My grandmother taught me to work, not because she told me things about work, but seeing her get up every morning with great joy to go to work to bring the daily bread to her children and grandchildren. She educated me in the faith, not because she said you have to go to Mass or you have to pray, but each Sunday she asked me to go with her to Mass at the church of San Francisco, and I saw her kneeling before the image of Jesús del Gran Poder, representing Him walking with the cross to Calvary, and praying for each of us with love. My grandmother was always a firm and affectionate woman. She departed to heaven on 16 June 1998.

That pain made me feel alone because death again separated me from someone I loved. The first time was when I lost my first daughter Estefania; she died when she was a year and four months from white death or sudden death. A few months after her death, I was pregnant again. When I was almost 7 months pregnant, the father of the child abandoned me and married another person leaving me alone. I wanted to kill myself, but knowing that I had a baby inside caused me to realize that I could not take my life because I would also be taking the life of another person inside me. My baby saved my life. The Lord never abandons us, and He also made Himself present through my grandmother who always stood by my side holding me. My second daughter Amanda (who was born 4 years before my grandmother died) is now 25 years old. But it is because of these losses that the feeling of separation from a loved one marks my heart so much.

After a few years, I believed again in the words of my daughters' father and I got pregnant with my third son (child) Anthony, when Amanda was five years old. The father of my children left me again when I was eight months pregnant, and I was left alone again even without the presence of my grandmother because a week before I gave birth she left for heaven. Now I was alone with a daughter who had to enter the first year of basic education and an unborn child. Who would help me? It seemed that I was in a dead end without anything to eat.

I started looking for a school where my little girl would start her education, as every mother wants a decent education where she not only gives her a pedagogical education but a Catholic education where she is educated in the faith with bases for life, and thus I met the Sisters of the Sacred Side (where Jesus was wounded), which little by little began to be the hand that held me. When Amanda was in the third year, I started teaching dance at their school and in that way helped a little so that our African-Ecuadorian music was known.

In February 2003, my son Anthony began to have a severe pulmonary hypertension problem, and from the moment he was admitted to the hospital, the cardiologist who checked him said that my son would not live. It didn't fit in my head that the first son who I had always wanted to have would die without me being able to do anything. I could not believe that God put death in front of me again. On 10 December 2003, Anthony departed to heaven, and this caused a wound and a void in my heart that would never be filled; whoever has lost a loved one knows what I am talking about.

During Anthony's illness and after the death of my little one, it was the Sisters of the Sacred Side who held my hand, especially one of them, sister Anna, who slowly began to be and is a great friend; she was also like a mother to me. Holding on to this friendship so as not to sink into a bottomless hole, but one day I had decided to get angry at God. I cried like never before, I screamed, I didn't want to live, I was tired of losing the people I love. I didn't want to see anybody, and I told my sister to stay with my daughter Amanda that day. I wanted to be alone after so much crying; I fell asleep, and I woke up and said to God: "What do you want from me? Why did You take my son? I know that my life and that of my children belong to You; put

me where You want, do what You want to me.” In some strange way, I knew that He has had regard for my nothingness.

The next day I received a call from Sister Anna and took the call even though I didn't have the strength to get out of bed, and she told me that she had a perfect job for me with an Italian woman, and that's how I met a woman whom has such purity in her eyes that I had never seen. I began to work her in a social organization in the neighborhood of Pisulli, and little by little as I walked through the community, I started to get out of my own pain to start looking at reality and life with their sadness and joys. While I was accompanying these families, walking with and guiding them, this awakened the desire in me to resume my studies, so I finished school and learned to use the computer.

None of this would be possible if someone had not looked at me differently, taking out of me the best that I had inside. I began to be part of a reality that was generating in me a change, a look that is always in our lives. You just have to let Him in, let Him act as a potter who always has His eyes on His works, working the clay by molding and taking care of the details so that no one be lost, no matter how small their work may be. With this work with families and the fellowship of co-workers, a work that really takes care of persons, one can understand that there is always a new beginning by His infinite love.

All what I've seen happen in Pisulli in these years, to me, my family, my community is a sign of hope for all. Because of people who say yes to Jesus, this could happen.

After the visit of Pope Francis to Ecuador in 2015, in August of the same year, after 23 years without seeing my father I went to look for him. I couldn't continue to endure the pain I felt towards him. I had long felt anger over all the damage it caused to my mother, for having abused a 16-year-old girl and making her pregnant. But after hearing the Pope, something changed in me and in my heart a forgiveness was shouting to come out. I understood that I could not go without looking at my father: Who am I to judge that man? After looking for him for two days, I found him and all I wanted was to hug him and give thanks to God for the gift of life. Since then, we have a father and daughter communication.

Two years ago, I returned to the father of my children and for a year and a half we have been married in a civil marriage, and 7 months ago with the grace of God also as a sacrament in the church.

When there is someone helps you discover your own humanity, we can move forward. My grandmother, the Sisters of the Sacred Side, Stefy (from Italy), Anthony are for me the angels that He has set to heal my wounds and teach me to fly without doubts, bringing me a new word, a new hope and the opportunity to be looked at, welcomed and loved as I am; to be able to bring hope although it seems that there is no more way: there is a way and it is called Jesus. I ask to be able to serve the One who has served my life and taken my nothing to show the world that He is.

Amparito Espinosa

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Praise Jesus Christ for the many ways He has graciously and faithfully worked for good all the offenses, troubles, abandonments, and tragedies in Amparito's life, both for her and the many people whose lives she impacts with her love, kindness, and gentleness. Praise Him for how He has been with her and walked with her throughout her life, and also enabled others to see and speak to the goodness in her and value of her life. Praise God for the life of Amparito Espinoza!

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“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. . . . But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:28-30, 37-39).