

Mercy Story Seven – July

They had a good marriage – three children - 10, 12 and 14, a nice house and yard in a quiet suburb, good neighbours, a friendly parish, and a good family income. They'd been through a lot together, the two of them, ever since they fell in love during their last year in high school. Their wedding had followed a year later, and the children came at two year intervals after that. They knew it was wrong, but they decided that it was in the family's best interest to limit themselves to three children. So she went on the pill. That's when their ardor started tapering off.

His office in the city was in a gallery overlooking a bevy of secretaries. Though he didn't admit it to himself, there was something about that young one in the far corner that kept drawing his attention. One evening he had to stay after hours to complete a report for the boss, due the next day. He requested her to stay and help him type it up. She was the logical choice. She typed faster and better than the others. She agreed. When the job was done, they sat on his office sofa and treated themselves to a drink. And that's when things took a very wrong turn....

This went on for some time until his wife found incriminating evidence in his own handwriting in the pocket of his shirt. She was devastated. She had suspected something. You can tell when things aren't really right. But she didn't immediately confront him with it. She had her reasons....

It had been going on for about two years now, ever since the delivery man came to her door and offered to carry a heavy box into the house for her. It should never have happened even once, but after that fateful day it kept right on happening, at least twice a week. He was young, virile, of another race, and very complimentary to her about her irresistible good looks. She'd answer the door only if she knew for sure the kids were in school and her husband was at work. And then for several minutes, passion reigned supreme. Afterwards, remorse ate away at her, but only until it was time for his next "call". She was ashamed of herself, but why did she care so much that he find her irresistible? Why had she become so preoccupied with dieting and staying in shape?

Finding the evidence of her husband's infidelity, and discovering how deeply it affected her, shocked her into reality. She picked up the phone and called their priest. She made an appointment for both of them. And there, in their presence, she spilled out her own confession and produced the evidence of her husband's infidelity. She declared her commitment to him, to their children, and to their marriage. She did not want to see it destroyed! He broke down and wept. With their priest's help they decided what to do. They bought a small business in the suburbs not far from their home where they could work side by side. She went off the pill and onto Natural Family Planning. And they returned to regular Confession after years of being away from it. Their kids were delighted with the change and enjoyed helping out in the business.

After their appointment, Father heard their confessions right then and there. For their penance he asked them to read together Psalm 51 daily, the outpouring of David's heart when he was caught in their situation: **"Have Mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant Mercy blot out my transgressions!.... Create in me a clean heart, O God!..."**