

Therese Bartholomew



"It's about finding faith and humanity in dark and unexpected places and then being willing to see possibilities."

What others are saying

"Hearing Therese speak at our school and read from her memoir Coffee Shop God was simultaneously wonderful and gut-wrenching. A woman of amazing courage, she shared the agonizing story of her brother's senseless death and the compassion that arose in her for his killer. She is a powerful role model for all of us who are caught up in the societal dichotomy of 'good vs. evil.' Her profound message will change anyone who is willing to hear. Our students were deeply affected and wanted to know when she would return to speak again."

~ Lisa Kendall, Leadership Professor at Johnson & Wales University

"Therese chose to use personal adversity to affect positive change in individuals and in the larger community. Her genuineness cannot be overlooked and will serve as inspiration for those far and near."

~ John P. Comer, NAACP

"Therese's ease of relating to our clients with such plain-spun honesty, undeniable zeal for life, humor and creativity - in total - delivered such a powerful, meaningful message. Hope is such a valuable commodity, and it's clear that Therese has it in spades."

~ Rick Spreitzer, Clinical Counselor for Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center

"I'm always trying to improve 'me' and to 'grow' as a human being. Her words opened my eyes to the power of forgiveness and understanding..."

~ Caroline, Event Attendee

Prior Speaking Engagements

- New York City Bar Association: Restorative Justice and the Death Penalty Panel Discussion
- Riverside Church New York City: The Final Gift screening and discussion
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte: The Final Gift screening and discussion
- South Carolina Victims' Rights Week Conference: Meeting my Brother's Killer
- Duke University Amnesty International Annual Meeting: Restorative Justice
- Campbell University Law School: The Final Gift screening and discussion
- Johnson C. Smith University: Restorative Justice
- National Restorative Justice Conference: Meeting my Brother's Killer
- Mecklenburg Ministries: Restorative Justice in Faith-Based Communities
- Capital Restorative Justice Annual Gathering: Restorative Justice
- Chapel of Christ the King: Faith and Forgiveness
- Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation Panel: Victims' Voices on Healing and Justice
- University of the North Carolina Charlotte's Victims' Rights Week Panel: Journey to Heal
- Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center: Grief
- Johnston and Wales: Coffee Shop God in Discussion
- Myers Park Presbyterian Church: Faith and the Criminal Justice System
- Girl Scouts: Our Story, journaling our lives
- Florence Crittenton Services: Power in Voice
- Summit House: Power in Voice
- United Family Services' Survivor Fest: Victims' Stories of Survival, Sexual Assault Awareness & Education
- United Family Services' Operation Free Fall: Victims' Stories of Survival, Sexual Assault Awareness & Education
- University of North Carolina's Take Back the Night: Victims' Stories of Survival, Sexual Assault Awareness
- University of North Carolina Charlotte: Teen Pregnancy and Future Educators

Media

- The Crime Report: "Forgiving a Murderer," Graham Kates
- WBAI 99.5FM's *Wake Up Call* with Esther Armah: The Final Gift and Restorative Justice
- NPR's *The State of Things* with Frank Stasio: Restorative Justice and The Final Gift
- NPR's *Morning Edition* with Pam Bunch: The Final Gift
- *Charlotte Talks* with Mike Collins: Restorative Justice
- Charlotte Observer: "Thy Brother's Killer," Elizabeth Leland
- Raleigh Television Network's *The Artist's Craft*, Memoir Writing

About Therese Bartholomew

It was her brother's 2003 murder that drastically changed her path. A former high school dropout and teen mother, Therese is now a filmmaker, speaker, educator, and activist. She resides in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband and children. Bartholomew holds a BA in English and a MS in Criminal Justice from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She speaks on faith, forgiveness, and restorative justice.

About the memoir, *Coffee Shop God*

Released in April 2009, her memoir, *Coffee Shop God* details her struggle to adjust in the weeks and months following her brother Steve's untimely death. In this collection of essays, Bartholomew questions her spirituality in the midst of bond hearings, debilitating grief and a new marriage. As she heals, she strives to connect with the family she has left—the mother who always has a joke, the father who cannot show affection, the ex-drug-dealing brother who is now an evangelical Christian and the talking bird she inherits from her brother—while learning to forgive the young man who killed Steve. Pat MacEnulty, author of *From May to December* and *The Language of Sharks*, says, "Bartholomew's poignant memoir is sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes humorous and always brutally honest...The evocative rendering of her own grief makes for a moving and gripping read, but it is her irrepressible spirit of love, laughter and compassion that you will remember long after you've finished the book." *Coffee Shop God* is the companion piece to *The Final Gift*, documentary – "the essays are the victim voice and the film, the survivor."

About the documentary, *The Final Gift*

Completed in 2012, *The Final Gift* follows the filmmaker's pursuit to find meaning in her life after her brother's murder. Her vision for the film grew out of her desire to meet and understand the killer. In December 2010, that meeting occurred and was filmed in a South Carolina prison. The meeting was the first victim offender dialogue involving a violent crime in South Carolina's adult system. The film addresses universal ideas of forgiveness, redemption, as well as the larger societal questions – how do we live and one survivor's path to peace and healing. Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*, calls *The Final Gift* "a remarkable journey...intimate in the telling, honest and brave and true."

Booking Information

For interviews, film screenings, speaking engagements or book signings, contact Mark Zenow at Cord Management. 615-866-5003 ~ MarkZenow@ExperienceCord.com