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www.RachelsVineyard.org

Who is Rachel?

By: Amanda Ellerkamp

We do not have an exact number of how many millions of abortions have really occurred because statistics have never been accurately tallied. A common estimate is that since 1973, there have been more than 50 million abortions in the United States. Another statistic states that 43 percent of women in America will have at least one abortion by age 45. All of these numbers are staggering. While some women report relatively little trauma following abortion, for many, the experience is devastating, causing severe and long-lasting emotional, psychological and spiritual trauma. It is also important to remember that for every abortion, there is also a father, grandparents, and other extended family and friends who may be affected.

The readings this Lent may - awaken sorrow and pain in those who have been involved in an abortion. Project Rachel is the name of the Catholic Church's healing ministry to those who have been involved in abortion. Its name comes from the Scripture passage above. It is a network of healing that includes a variety of professionals and resources. Their primary mission is to provide a healing network to connect those in need with counseling and with the sacraments. You can find more by visiting their website at www.hopeafterabortion.org.

In our diocese, Rachel's Vineyard retreats are periodically scheduled. These weekend retreats offer a person in need of healing an opportunity to begin to deal with their grief and to experience the love and compassion of God. The next retreat in our area is in October, but it is not too early to register. There are also retreats held across the country. For more information visit www.rachelsvineyard.org or contact Carol Kling at 605-374-5639 to register.

We also have an opportunity to learn more about how to help those who may be experiencing pain from an abortion. On Friday, April 1, Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel's Vineyard will present "Abortion Loss and Unresolved Grief Training" at Ascension Church in Bismarck from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm CDT. This educational training on the psychological and spiritual impact of abortion is open to the general public. Those who deal directly with individuals in need of healing, such as priests, deacons, pastoral staff, psychologists, therapists, counselors, etc. are especially encouraged to attend. More information can be found under the calendar of events. The registration form is available at www.bismarck-diocese.com under the calendar of events.

As we prepare to celebrate the joy of Easter, let us reach out to those who may be most in need of God's Divine Mercy. Sometimes just the way we speak can impact a person's ability to find help and healing. For example, if they hear us say "I don't know how anyone could ever have an abortion," they may think we wouldn't understand or want to help them, that we are judging them. It is important that if we are truly pro-life, we want to help both the mother and the child. Even those who made the decision to abort need our support and love. Let us reach out to those among us who, like Rachel, are mourning. May they come to know God's Divine Mercy and know there is hope for their future.



Rachel's Vineyard Ministries
808 N. Henderson Rd.
King of Prussia, PA 19406
610-354-0555—1-877-HOPE-4-ME