“I will bless the works of those hands and whatsoever you lay your hand upon will prosper.”

We are excited to share all of the great things that happened in 2014. Rachel’s Vineyard continues to grow exponentially. Since the first retreat was held in 1995, Rachel’s Vineyard has grown from one single retreat to over 375 sites in 49 states and over 70 countries with the help of about 150,000 compassionate and gentle volunteers dedicated to healing the pain of abortion. This profound growth is evidence that God has a deep longing to heal His people.

As we share this Year End Review it provides an opportunity to offer a special thanks to Fr. Frank Pavone, the Pastoral Director of Rachel’s Vineyard, and the entire staff at Priests for Life / Gospel of Life. Rachel’s Vineyard is blessed to be one of the family of ministries at Priests for Life working together to build a Culture of Life.

Rachel’s Vineyard offers men and women a safe place to renew, rebuild, and redeem hearts broken by the aftermath of abortion. Our weekend retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where those affected by abortion can express, release, and reconcile painful post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal, and healing.

If you or someone you love is hurting after abortion visit www.rachelsvineyard.org or call toll-free 1-877-HOPE-4-ME for more information.
Rachel’s Vineyard Sites Approved in 2014

NEW INTERNATIONAL SITES

Tucuman, Argentina
Site Leader: Lala Rey Mendez

New Edmunton, AB, Canada
Site Leader: Lorie Sprokkreeff

Newfoundland, Canada
Site Leaders: Martha Shuping

San Salvador, El Salvador
Site Leader: Lorena Bolanos de Abrego

Glasgow, England
Site Leader: Sr. Andrea

Liverpool, United Kingdom
Site Leader: Paula Gunn

Maidstone, Kent, England
Site Leader: Pam Nelson

Tiszaalpar, Hungary
Site Leader: Valeria Zsiga

NEW INTERNATIONAL SITES

Asuncion, Paraguay
Site Leader: Cinthya de Rojas

Warsaw, Poland
Site Leader: Hanna Pottrapeluk

Tobego and Trinidad
Site Leader: Patricia Bevan

NEW NATIONAL SITES

Harvard, IL
Site Leader: Christie Larson

Petosky, Michigan
Site Leader: Jane O’Brien

Farmington, NM
Site Leader: Ann Campbell

Charleston, SC
Site Leader: Lynn Smith
Rachel’s Vineyard Sites in Development

Austria – Interdenominational –  
Site Leader: Tara Stockton

Saltpond, Ghana, Africa  
Site Leader: Fr. Anthony Afful-Broni, Ph.D.

Penang, Malaysia  
Site Leader: Fr. Edmund Woon

Nicaragua  
Site Leader: Fr. Augustine Conner

Southern Poland  
Site Leader: Justyna Redczuk

South Africa  
Site Leader: Moira Gillmore

South Korea  
Site Leaders: Kent and Linda Dickerson

Slovenia  
Site Leaders: Fr. Tomaž Mikuš & Valentina Pikelj

Chicago, IL – Polish Speaking Site –  
Site Leader: Sr. Maksymiliana Kamińska

Chicago, IL  
Site Leader: Rev. William Lego

Orlando, FL  
Site Leadera: Michele Gill & Jessie Cuadros

Douglas, GA  
Site Leader: Barbara Chapple

Louisville, KY  
Site Leader: Heather DeCamillis

Baton Rouge, LA  
Site Leader: Shannon Baldridge

Lansing, MI  
Site Leader: Vince Gale

Manchester, NH  
Site Leader: Susan Clifton

Reno, NV  
Site Leader: Laura Brown

Nashville, TN  
Site Leader: David Suchanick

Boerne, TX  
Site Leader: Linda Tamez
# List of National Rachel’s Vineyard Sites

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International Rachel’s Vineyard Sites

Bahia Blanca, Argentina
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Tucumán, Argentina
Brisbane, QLD Australia
Canberra, NSW Australia
Hobart, TAS Australia
Melbourne (Interdenom), VIC Australia
Perth, WAA Australia
Sydney, NSW Australia
Vienna, Austria
Tiko, Cameroon Africa
Cache Creek, BC Canada
Calgary, AB Canada
Edmonton Rural Area, AB Canada
Kelowna, BC Canada
N.Battleford, SK Canada
Newfoundland, Canada
Northwest Territories, Canada
Ottawa, ON Canada
Vancouver, BC Canada
Winnipeg, MB Canada
China
Bogota, Columbia
Cali, Colombia
Pereira, Colombia
Santiago, Dominican Republic
Quito, Ecuador
San Salvador , El Salvador
East Midland, England
Leeds, England
Maidstone, Kent, England
Tórshavn, Faroe Islands
Compiegne, France
Fontainebleau, France
Nantes, France

Paris, France
St. Etienne, France
Hildesheim, Germany
Wiesbaden, Germany
Tiszaalpár, Hungary
Cork City, Ireland
Bologna, Italy
Kingston, Jamaica
Beirut, Lebanon
Mellieha, Malta
Culiacán, Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico
Nogales, Mexico
New Zealand, New Zealand
Belfast, N. Ireland
Provincia Colon, Panama
Asunción, Paraguay
Mirafl ores, Peru
Warsaw, Poland
Lisbon, Portugal
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Magadan, KM Russia
Vladivostok, Russia
Singapore
Banska Bystrica, Slovakia
Barcelona, Spain
Madrid, CM Spain
North-East Scotland (Interdenom)
Incheon City, South Korea
Taipei, TC Taiwan
Caroni, Trinidad
Montevideo, Uruguay
Vietnam
Rachel’s Vineyard Leadership Conference in Germany, a great success!
By: Anne Arthur

As many of you may know, Rachel’s Vineyard has been well established in Hildesheim, Germany since 2010. Our vision for Germany was to plant new Rachel’s Vineyard sites in many cities so that we can offer easier access to post-abortion healing for our prospective participants. This would also facilitate an efficient aftercare with higher attendance numbers. We are very pleased to see our ministry steadily growing as we are grooming new team members. For 2015, we already fixed the dates for two retreat weekends at a new Rachel’s Vineyard site in southern Germany.

Back in 2013, we began to discuss the need to have a leadership conference in Germany, and we finally made it happen!

As always, when great things lay ahead, opposition proves to be fierce and shocking. Right after Dr. Theresa Burke’s arrival in Germany, Christiane Wiedebusch, one of our Co-leaders, fell seriously ill and fainted at the dinner table. We had to call for an ambulance and she was hospitalized for an entire week. No conference for her! Christiane Kurpik, the German leader from Hildesheim and I suddenly had to manage on our own.

We had to facilitate travel for teams from Germany, Austria, and Poland; and we were pleased to be able to hold this international conference on the weekend of October 3rd to 5th 2014 in Dietershausen, a small town in the middle of Germany and located close to highways and train stations. With forty-three participants, the retreat house was fully booked.

We invited individuals and pro-life organizations to the sessions on Saturday, October 4th and were pleased to see that 14 persons travelled from cities very far away to participate. Some of them had to drive 5 hours one way to attend! Of course, Dr. Theresa Burke was the drawing card, as she led the conference and training sessions. Among other themes, she presented her classes Crash Course in Trauma, The Aftermath of Medical Abortions, Brain Functions in Relation to Trauma, and the Rachel’s Vineyard Method of Healing to an open-minded public.

We were greatly surprised with who showed up this weekend! It was very obvious that the Lord had his hand in the planning and was clearly leading these participants. We did the advertising for the conference but the Lord did the rest, leading these interested people to us who clearly had a desire to “be part of Rachel’s Vineyard”. The variety and quality of participants was amazing: from all walks of life, gifted with a multitude of charisms, and from different organizations and cities.

Positive results did not take long to manifest. Only two weeks after the conference a new site team has been formed in the city of Fulda. This group told us: “We have been observing your work in Germany for a good while, and we want to be part of it.” We met with them, visited their organization (called “Vater-Haus” = Father’s House) and it was concluded that they were a wonderful addition to Rachel’s Vineyard in Germany. We promptly gave them our approval to start a new Rachel’s Vineyard site. We will mentor them through the process and they will have their first retreat in February 2015, which will be in addition to all other retreats planned for that year. We are overjoyed about this development.
Rachel’s Vineyard Leadership Conference in Germany, a great success!
By: Anne Arthur (Cont’d)

The Berlin Group:
We had been praying from our early days to be given the opportunity to get into contact with Evangelicals in order to spread Rachel’s Vineyard to these communities. Our prayers were surprisingly answered and a pastor from Berlin, Germany’s capital attended the entire weekend with three women of his congregation. Friendships were forged, and we are planning to visit Berlin in the very near future to discuss how to implant Rachel’s Vineyard in this city where healing is greatly needed. The Lord ensued that we take His call seriously. Only one day after the conference, and out-of-the-blue, we received phone calls from post-abortive women residing in Berlin who had seen our website “by coincidence” and decided to ask for help. We will soon train an interdenominational team in Berlin. Praise God!

Switzerland: Dr. Josef Lingenhölle, a gynecologist from Switzerland was another surprise participant. Apart from being a most wonderful human being, he impressed us all by presenting himself to any new acquaintance by saying that he is a Catholic ob-gyn. His personal journey as a doctor sticking firm to Catholic teaching is amazing. He is very active in Switzerland’s pro-life movement and desires to work with Rachel’s Vineyard. He invited the German team to organize a similar conference and training weekend with Dr. Theresa in Switzerland in 2015. He already has a host of persons at hand who are very interested to offer healing for post-abortive women. Dr. Lingenhölle will attend training weekends in Germany with a colleague prior to starting his own site in Switzerland.

Our international conference was a God-given, Spirit-filled amazing teaching event. We are grateful to Theresa for making the journey. I was happy to be working again in Germany and seeing the fantastic Austrian and Polish teams in person, which I usually mentor via email and phone. Glory to God for what he is doing in Europe!

A little side note: the Slovakian team held a retreat during that same weekend in Slovakia, and reported great wonders. God is good, and we give him praise for letting us grow in Europe in a truly miraculous way.
WINNICA RACHELI – How Poland Has Made a Difference in the Lives of Those Suffering After Abortion

By Hanna Potrapeluk

Rachel’s Vineyard’s Polish Branch ‘WINNICA RACHELI’ has been working very hard over the last year to bring healing to those suffering after abortion to Poland.

My real journey with Rachel’s Vineyard started in 2009 when I attended a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat in Colorado I truly didn’t expect to find any healing because I didn’t feel like I deserved to, but by the end of the weekend I found the same peace everyone else received and I saw it must have been from God. The retreat changed my life.

I waited a few years before reached out to Rachel’s Vineyard again. When I did I sent an email to the Rachel’s Vineyard National Office. After the first few emails it became clear that there was a great need to translate the Rachel’s Vineyard Manual into the Polish language. So that is where my team and I began. It has been a long journey since that first correspondence and now we are beginning to see our labor come to fruition.

We recently took part in a Symposium on Forgiveness in Warsaw, Poland it was held on March 29\textsuperscript{th}–30\textsuperscript{th}. The Warsaw Catholic University - Uniwersytet Kardynala Stefana Wyszyńskiego – invited Rachel’s Vineyard to lead a debate on “How to help to forgive after an abortion”. Rachel’s Vineyard [RV] was not well known in Poland prior to this debate, but thanks to UKSW we are changing that.

The Symposium was organized by a well known psychology professor Maria Rys. The event turned out to be the perfect place to introduce RV to clergy and professionals. Having a bit of experience in catering I offered to sponsor one of the coffee breaks on the first day of the conference, according to the Polish proverb “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach”. I started the preparations by painting fruit boxes the colors of grapes and spraying the RV logo in gold. I topped each box with a piece of glass to get a presentable surface for the 200 carrot cake muffins I would make.

The number of people registering for the conference grew rapidly the day before, so I called in a favor from a student friend of mine. She later told me that she asked her 2 roommates for help with the cakes, they were happy to help saying that, “for the first time in our lives we got the satisfaction of helping a non-profit activity.”

This was only the beginning of what would become a miraculous weekend.

Thanks to the generous sweet display we were all able to look beyond our differing political views. We had people coming up to us all day with a few even asking us for our recipes! Through this weekend it felt like we were invigorating the scattered and separate Polish Pro-Life scene into one body of people who are working to save lives.
We prepared carefully for the debate on ‘forgiveness after an abortion’ thanks to the material we received from Laien from the national RV office and the counsel of our mentor Edie Gutierrez of RV Colorado.

Each of us had 2 questions up our sleeves and a short presentation of how the problem is approached and dealt with on the retreat.

Ania, one of our team members, who was raised by the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, surprised a psychologist in the auditorium by presenting how the RV process is compatible with ‘Jesus speaks with the soul in despair’ in St. Faustina’s Diary.

Gosia, a psychiatric nurse on our team, explained how the stone is helping the retreatants face their inability to forgive.

I asked what would they most like to know about RV and a man asked whether we offer healing for men. Luckily the day before I read the testimony from Kevin Burke about the male retreatant in a Florida prison and I shared what I could remember. After the debate the man came up to us to register for our April retreat!

Another extraordinary moment was that a journalist from ‘Gosc Niedzielny’, the #1 catholic magazine in Poland, came up to us and told us she had planned to attend another more popular debate at the same time, but changed her mind at the last minute and attended our debate. The result of her unexplainable change of plans was a photo session with us holding the RV flag. She also invited me to do an interview. I accepted and was interviewed by a journalist for her program ‘Spirituality and Psychology’ to present how RV can bring those suffering healing after abortion.
WINNICA RACHELI – How Poland Has Made a Difference in the Lives of Those Suffering After Abortion
By Hanna Potrapeluk

During the show I had the chance to talk about the history of RV and how long we have been in Poland.

She asked what kind of healing we're offering and I said we base what we do on faith that Jesus Christ has conquered death otherwise healing would not be possible; then I said RV is the fruit of a branch of psychology that combines faith and psychology and is widely accepted in the US. I added that the process leads through grief to truth, to reconciliation, peace and ends with joy and happiness.

They asked me to describe the life of a woman with a post-abortion syndrome, so I mentioned some of the symptoms women struggle with such as, depression, insomnia, substance abuse…etc… I added that everyone has a different sensitivity but to the men and women who have had an abortion even a bug which drowned in a sink or killing a fly can remind them of the abortion. Sometimes a newborn in the family or an adopted baby is a reminder to somebody who has been trying hard to forget the decision they made to have an abortion. The radio show aired just before our first retreat at the end of April.

The symposium was a part of the Week for Life here in Warsaw culminating on the 9th Annual March for Life. We couldn’t miss this opportunity to attend the march!

Fr.Dominik Koperski, from the Warsaw Curia, who has been designated by Cardinal Nycz to care for the RV retreat yelled “join us!” when he saw us walking with the flag and distributing flyers and we gladly did.

Our initial unease of being in the spotlight melted away quickly and having a sense of God’s hand over us in every detail strengthened our belief that RV is truly His work.

Thank you for supporting us as we embark on our journey through the Vineyard.
Sincerely,
Winnica Racheli - Poland
International Happenings

Rachel’s Vineyard in Italy

The Rachel’s Vineyard retreat site in Bologna, Italy has been very busy this past year. Most recently they participated in Italy’s 4th annual March for Life on the May 4, 2014. Though abortion has been legal in Italy for over 35 years, the country is just now starting to realize its harmful effects on men and women. To see pictures from the March please Click Here (http://www.vignadirachele.org/news/Marcia%20per%20la%20vita%20Rome%202014%20FOTOGALLERY.pdf).

The Rachel’s Vineyard Italy Mission has also just released their Spring Update. In it they tell or share the stories of how the Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat has touched and transformed the lives of the men and women who have gone through their many retreats. To get an idea of how Rachel’s Vineyard has helped their retreat participants please read the following testimonies.

A cohabitating couple in their mid 30’s with a 2 year-old daughter had aborted their second child just months before finding us. Their entire family project was crumbling. Even knowing they would not share quarters during the weekend as they do at home, the couple travelled over 2 hours to Bologna and courageously participated in the 3-day retreat. They have stayed in close contact with us and their fellow participants in the months following. Six months after the retreat they baptized their living daughter and are now discerning Christian marriage as a next step in building their life together. They now have friends with whom they share their budding faith.

They pray daily and have come to recognize what they often call their “blindness” in having lived many years thinking they had no need for God’s presence in their daily lives. Their journey continues, especially in healing family of origin relationships that strongly contributed to the abortion decision.

Another retreat participant reflected on her participation in Rachel’s Vineyard:
“This was a unique and profound experience. The Church doesn’t turn its back on you. I’d always considered the Church a bit bigoted but I was wrong. There’s a great sense of sharing and solidarity among the retreat participants and team. ... I was able to see the fragility and vulnerability of my partner and all of his pain. He asked my forgiveness. I can’t condemn him anymore.”

A husband from Northern Italy, who participated with his wife, said:
“This is a healing process that proceeds step by step and is well prepared and well organized. ... The sharing of stories in the small group, including our family of origin and the traumatic events of our life was a big help.... it wasn’t easy for me to speak about certain experiences but here I never felt uneasy, and hearing other stories was positive. This retreat will help me a lot in my faith journey. Thank you for your presence and for the great affection you showed us.”

A husband & wife from Rome grieved the abortion they’d experienced 25 years earlier, before marrying, said:
“Having participated with my husband was undoubtedly a work of God, Who inspired and led us to attend together. Joining in this experience helped us to “not harden our hearts” and to talk openly about our poverties. We were able to let go of our hiding and our false sense of pride, to allow the truths of our experience to come to light and to let mercy enter our relationship.”
While the team in Italy makes a great effort to prepare participants for the intensity of the process into which they invite them, the spiritual intensity of the retreat often surprises the retreat participants.

In the words of one participant:
“The retreat allowed me a most precious encounter with Jesus. It was conducted on a deep level and was marked by a high degree of professionalism and knowledge of the Word of God... words alone can’t express the importance of this experience for me. Honestly, I wasn’t prepared for such a deep encounter, even if in the pre-retreat period I appreciated and benefited from the availability of the team and the various members with whom I shared my experience and the motivations behind my choice to take part…”

Another participant particularly appreciated the team members who themselves had been through abortion and now offered their companionship and testimony to others:
“I experience a deep connection with one of the team members who’d been through the same experience and her presence was particularly precious because she knew how to support me throughout the three days of the retreat, particularly at a moment in which I felt bewildered and unsure. For that reason I would say the support of the entire team is a key element of this process…”

The team in Italy is doing great things, to read their full spring report CLICK HERE! (http://www.vignadirachele.org/news/Italy%20Mission%20Spring2014%20update%20Rachel%27s%20Vineyard%202014-14.pdf)

**For more information on the retreat site in Italy please contact Monika at info.vignadirachele@yahoo.it
Deacon Don Battiston remembers the day well. It was a Tuesday, and he was on one of his regular visits to prisoners at Okeechobee Correctional Institution, a maximum-security prison located in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Fla. Five days earlier he had attended a conference for prison ministers within the diocese led by Donna Gardner from the diocese’s Respect Life Office and coordinator of Rachel’s Vineyard post-abortive healing ministry.

In her presentation, Gardner brought up a strong correlation between abortion and a life of crime among men.

Deacon Battiston wasn’t buying it, though, and he set out to prove Gardner’s theory wrong on his next visit to Okeechobee.

“Before we began our Communion service, I passed out a sheet of paper to each of the men,” he said. “On one side it said ‘yes’ and on the other it said ‘no.’ Then I said to them, ‘Have you ever been negatively affected by abortion? That means your wife or your girlfriend or whomever had an abortion, and you paid for it, forced her to do it or helped her to get it.’”

What happened next shocked him.

“Of the 75 or 80 men there, more than half had said ‘yes,’” Deacon Battiston said. “I went to Donna and told her we have to get something going on this.”

Idea becomes reality

Thomas Lawlor, Catholic Charities director of Catholic Charities Prison Ministries for the Diocese of Palm Beach, agreed.

“When Deacon [Battison] came to us with these numbers, we were stunned and knew that we had to do something,” he said.

Lawlor approached the Florida Department of Corrections, and they allowed Gardner to put together a pilot program of a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat for the prison.

Rachel’s Vineyard, which was founded by Theresa and Kevin Burke, began in 1986 as a support group for post-abortive women. It offered a model for counselors to use in working with women who were grieving the loss of their aborted children.

Rachel’s Vineyard evolved into a transforming weekend retreat that is offered in 48 states and 57 countries, according to its website. In 2003, the program became a ministry of Priests for Life.

Gardner, who has facilitated Rachel’s Vineyard retreats for more than 20 years, had to modify the weekend retreat into a two-hour program, spread out over a 10-week period. Equally challenging was that this would be the first time a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat would be given to an all-male audience.

“I came to realize that one of the keys here in working with these men would be the power of the word (of God),” Gardner told Our Sunday Visitor.

She was familiar with a Bible study that used the word of God extensively, called “Healing the Father’s Heart” (Baker, $12.99), which became the name of the retreat.
Getting started
The first retreat led by Gardner and Lawlor was in May 2011.

“I can remember it was an eye-opening experience just to get into the chapel,” Gardner said. “We went through check point after check point.”

In the program’s first few weeks, Gardner works with the men — of all faith backgrounds — to help them understand God.

“It is important for the men to realize that abortion is a soul wound and that only God can heal that,” she explained. “Once we have understood who God is for each of those in attendance, then we work on understanding his forgiveness. It is only then that we invite the men to accept his forgiveness and accept that their child is in heaven.”

Lawlor shared that it is hard for the men to understand and accept the fact that God is going to forgive them after killing their babies.

“It shocked me,” Gardner said, “that these men make themselves so vulnerable. I am in there with murderer. They are so eager to share their experiences. God works on their hearts. There has been a real brotherhood growing beyond the walls because of their deceased children.”

Cause and effect
Kevin Burke, Rachel’s Vineyard cofounder and a licensed social worker and pastoral associate of Priests for Life, has for many years helped men who have been hurt by abortion.

In January, Burke attended one of the Healing the Father’s Heart retreats at Martin Correctional Institution in Indiantown, Fla. At that time, he was able to sit down with four alumni of the program and hear their stories.

He discovered that as boys these men were, in various ways, estranged from their fathers. They were beaten, sexually abused or ignored by their dads. In their teenage years through young adulthood, the men participated in at least one abortion decision.

While they might not have understood it at the time, the abortion decision affected them deeply on a personal level.

“Because boys have such a strong need for affirmation, emotional connection and guidance from their fathers, it wounds them when this is not present or the connection is one of violence and abuse,” Burke told OSV. “This is especially damaging to all boys, but in particular to a more sensitive young man who desperately needs and hungers for the acceptance, love and guidance of their father. In rejection of those vulnerable, painful feelings and the rage of that rejection, young men can embrace a false sense of male identity and power rooted in selfishness, exploitation and a kind of reckless, hyper masculinity that can escalate to violence.”

Burke added that in the formation of male identity, risk taking, aggression and adventure can be part of a healthy male personality if channeled in positive ways such as sports, hunting or outdoor adventure.
Prison Ministry Happenings

Healing Happening in Florida Men’s Prison! (Cont’d)
By: Eddie O’Neill

In listening to these men, Burke discovered all of them would join the military in hopes of rebuilding their fractured manhood and to give them a new start.

“Instead, the military proved to be a toxic decision for these men,” Burke explained. “It provided an outlet for their growing rage, pain and unresolved grief. They hungered for opportunities to express this rage in the socially sanctioned context of war (Vietnam, Middle East) and criminal activity. Thus, this corrupted wounded manhood nurtured a complete lack of respect for life and an equally callous disregard for their personal safety and futures.”

Which, in some cases, led to murder, he added.

Success

“Absolutely,” Deacon Battiston said when asked if the program is working. “This is a fantastic program. Anytime we can get these men out of themselves and to be able to share, it is a great thing. It breaks down the barriers of mistrust.”

Burke says Healing the Father’s Heart has been effective.

“You can see the transformation that takes place in these men’s lives revealing that the spiritual and emotional benefits of the weekend program are also found in this version of Rachel’s Vineyard for prison ministry,” he said.

Lawlor estimates that since that first retreat three years ago, approximately 70 men have gone through the program. This year, Gardner and Lawlor will be offering their 13th prison retreat.

Gardner now has four men who have been through the program and serve as facilitators of the weekly programs.

“These guys are the ones who now put these retreats together,” she said.

As for the road ahead, Gardner and Lawlor hope to reach out to other prisons in other states, and they have already been contacted by a Rachel’s Vineyard effort in Ireland that wants to adopt the program.

“This is the first of its kind in terms of ministering to men in prison,” Gardner said. “Nobody else is doing it. We hope that this can serve as a model for this ministry to expand.”
National Happenings

Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat Offers Healing for Women after Abortions

By Joseph Ryan

“Thus says the Lord: In Ramah is heard the sound of sobbing, bitter weeping! Rachel mourns for her children, she refuses to be consoled for her children – they are no more! Thus says the Lord: Cease your cries of weeping, hold back you tears! There is compensation for your labor...they shall return from the enemy’s land. There is hope for your future...your children shall return to their own territory.”

-Jeremiah: 31:15-17

Rachel’s Vineyard is a weekend retreat program designed to help women come to terms with an abortion in their past.

The confidential retreats help in healing the emotional and spiritual wounds of women and men who have had or were involved in past abortions.

Nan Freeman, a parishioner at St. Ann’s in Wilmington, DE, who leads a retreat team in the diocese, said recently that it is often decades later that post-abortive women begin to seek healing for their loss.

“They’ve never told anybody,” Freeman said. The abortion, “hasn’t been grieved. Sometimes, it’s just having the courage to tell one other person,” that can lead the woman who suffered the loss to get some help.

Freeman said that often the women who attend the retreats have already come to terms with God’s forgiveness.

“People can come to terms with God forgiving them,” Freeman said. “What’s harder to come to terms with is them forgiving themselves. They have a sense of being forgiven but they haven’t let go of the shame. The women who come on retreat carry a lot of shame about their abortion.”

The “absolutely confidential” retreats, Freeman said, provide an environment where women can look at their shame that exists, give it to God and receive his mercy. “There is a renewed connection with the woman herself, with God and with the child she lost.”

Mass, sacraments and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are offered during the Catholic retreat.

Freeman, a certified Associate Counselor of Mental Health who also counsels families at St. Paul’s Church in Wilmington, DE, said the retreat can help people who have pushed away painful emotions and face their anger and sadness, “to provide the opportunity for healing to come in.”

Men, including those who were directly involved in an abortion, those who didn’t participate and found out after the fact and those who want to know what their loved one is going through – can also participate in the Rachel’s Vineyard retreats, Freeman said.

In addition to Freeman, the retreat team in the diocese includes Jackie Wilson, a parishioner at St. Helena’s in Wilmington, DE; Sheila Dunne, from St. Patrick’s Parish; and Paula LaPente, from St. Edmond’s in Rehoboth, NJ.

The diocesan team for Rachel’s Vineyard was revived last year after weekends led by a previous team ended several years ago. Fr. Ed Fahey, a diocesan health care Chaplin, is one of the priests who has assisted at the retreat, Freeman said.
Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat Offers Healing for Women after Abortions (Cont’d)

By Joseph Ryan

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Anyone who wants to be on the team has to attend the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat first. Although not post-abortive, Freeman said, “we’ve all aborted something in our lives. I know what it’s like to abandon myself to God’s mercy.”

She also understands, as the director of Birthright of Delaware in Wilmington, an organization that offers life-affirming support for women facing crises pregnancies, the “crisis” nature of unexpected pregnancies and how a woman’s choice can be affected by pressure and desperation.

“I have a passion for bringing God’s healing to men and women who have been impacted by abortion either directly or indirectly,” Freeman said.

“I grew up in a pro-life family. My mom, especially, had a strong faith. Her testimony to pro-life was having seven kids. Pope John Paul II has been the most influential pope in the work that I do. He put such a value and dignity on each person,” she said.

“Our call is to recognize that every human life has a purpose and mission, every human life, if God wills it, has a right to exist.”

Rachel’s Vineyard retreats reflect Freeman’s passion “to evangelize right here where I am to people who are suffering from an abortion.”

She said she once heard from a retreat participant that “the darkness that has always been with her” after an abortion “went away and it has stayed away.”

** This article was originally published by The Dialog. To read more from this publication go to www.thedialog.org **

In the upcoming year there will be over to 1000 Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats offered in many different locations throughout the world. We invite you to make contact with the coordinators of a retreat location near you. You can explore the availability of retreats by date or by location by going to www.RachelsVineyard.org. Be assured that you will find a compassionate, non-judgmental and welcoming staff to assist you in your journey toward healing. The retreats have an excellent track record of providing a pathway to discover God’s help to transform your grief.]
Pro-Life Magazine’s Interview with Dr. Theresa Burke
By Brett Attebery

Dr. Theresa Burke was interviewed by Brett Attebery, founder of Pro-Life Magazine. The interview begins with an overview on how and why Dr. Burke created Rachel’s Vineyard and how the process integrates the psychological and spiritual elements of trauma through a sensory based treatment.

To Watch the interview CLICK HERE:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrWUR0sITYY&list=UU4wuvskwHCWRU0NSkomJG2w&feature=c4-

To Read the interview CLICK HERE:

December 2, 2014 Donna Gardner, coordinator for Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida was interviewed on Radio Maria for the show Gospel of Life. Donna was instrumental in starting Rachel’s Vineyard post-abortion healing programs in prisons. At the 2014 March for Life, for the first time ever, the testimony of a prison inmate who regrets his lost fatherhood was read by Kevin Burke during the Silent No More gathering.

To listen to the interview CLICK HERE:
News From Around the Vineyard

International Office
In the office located in King of Prussia, PA we have Dr. Theresa Burke, founder; Katie D’Annunzio, office manager; Lairen Vogan, administrative assistant.

Translations
We are pleased to note that our retreat manual is being translated into Slovenian by Fr. Tomaz Mikuš SJ. Rachel’s Vineyard is blessed to have around 150,000 volunteers who labor in the vineyard.

Manual Update
The translation of the Rachel’s Vineyard Manual into Spanish is complete. Please email Lairen at assistant@rachelsvineyard.org for ordering information.

In the Media
April 21, Dr. Burke was interviewed on the Radio Show, In Love with Christ.
May 21, Dr. Burke was interviewed for the Radio Maria show, Living Eucharist.
June 2, Kevin Burke was interviewed on the Radio Show, Catholic Connection by Teresa Tomeo.
June 3rd & 4th, Kevin Burke was interviewed by Iowa Catholic Radio.
June 10th, Kevin Burke was interviewed by Holy Spirit Radio.
June 12th, Kevin Burke was interviewed by the EWTN show, At Home with Jim and Joy Pinto.
June 15th, Kevin Burke was interviewed by Kim Ketola for her podcast, Cradle My Heart.
August 12th, Karol Meynard & Trista Littell, Layfayette, LA Rachel’s Vineyard site leaders, were interviewed on the Radio Show, Gospel of Life.
April 29th, June 3rd, September 30th & November 18th, Kevin Burke was interviewed on Radio Maria’s Gospel of Life.

Rachel’s Vineyard was featured by a number of media sources this year.

The Crescat: Upcoming Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats and Finding Forgiveness
By: Katrina Fernandez

The Spruce Grove Examiner: Find healing and spiritual cleansing at Rachel’s Vineyard retreat
By: Karen Haynes
http://www.sprucegroveexaminer.com/2014/10/31/find-healing-and-spiritual-cleansing-at-rachels-vineyard-retreat

The Pittsburgh Catholic Newspaper: Rachel’s Vineyard offers healing from abortion
By: William Cone
http://www.pittsburghcatholic.org/newsarticles_more.php?id=3817

Catholic News Agency: Finding healing after abortion: one man’s journey
By: Kevin Burke
http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/column.php?n=2825

Life Site News: Aussie celebrity admitted before committing suicide that her abortion caused ‘depression bogeyman’
By: Peter Baklinski

Live Action News: The devastating reality of Post Abortion Stress Syndrome
By: Christina Martin
Training and Education in 2014

International Leadership Conferences
In early October, Dr. Theresa Burke traveled to Hildesheim, Germany to hold various training sessions for those interested in learning more about Rachel’s Vineyard.

October 3, she held an informal sessions for Rachel’s Vineyard Team members to attend. They were able to get to know each other better as well as ask Dr. Burke any personal questions that may have had.

October 4, she held an all day clinical training that was open to the public. There were over 50 people in attendance. She was able to present Rachel’s Vineyard and post abortion syndrome to the community.

October 5, she held an all day Facilitator and Team Training for team members from, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania and more...there were over 40 team members in attendance.

October 7, she was able to meet with various clergy members in order to share Rachel’s Vineyard with them. She was able to teach on Post Abortion Syndrome to over 15 people who were in attendance.

October 8, she was able to teach on Rachel’s Vineyard and Post Abortion Syndrome to students studying at the International Theological Institute (ITI) in Vienna, Austria.

October 10-11, she held a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat in the hope that the students at the ITI will be able to offer a Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat to those hurting After Abortion.

November 1, she held an all day Facilitator and Team Training for team members from England, Poland, Northern Ireland and more...there were over 50 team members in attendance.

Clinical Training
Rachel’s Vineyard offered clinical trainings to counselors and therapists, social workers, nurses, CPC workers, clergy and laity to educate them on the affects of abortion and present an overview of Rachel’s Vineyard. Those trainings were held in: St. Augustine, FL; San Angelo, TX; Harrisburg, PA; Dallas, TX; Germany; Austria; London; Yonkers, NY; Lander, WY.

Regional Training
In addition to the clinical training, some groups opt for a day training for their Rachel’s Vineyard team and teams from the surrounding areas. A regional training offers support and guidance for the team(s) by Theresa Burke. She covers facilitation skills, runs through any exercises the teams are struggling with and answers any questions team members may have. Regional trainings were offered in: St. Augustine, FL; San Angelo, TX; Dallas, TX; Germany; Austria; London, England.
Other Speaking Events

**January 8th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Ridgewood, NJ to speak at the OLMC MOMS Ministry Chapter held at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church  
**January 18th**, Dr. Burke was the Keynote speaker in Augustine, FL for their annual March for Life Event.  
**March 8th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Carlisle, PA to speak to the congregation at St. Patrick’s Parish.  
**April 23rd**, Dr. Burke travelled to Richmond, VA to speak and meet with the local Rachel’s Vineyard Team.  
**May 7th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Enters, PA to hold a Clergy Training for the Harrisburg, PA diocese.  
**May 14th**, Dr. Burke travelled to New Brighton, MN and was the Keynote speaker for their Right to Life dinner.  
**June 29th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Dallas, TX to speak at the Dallas, TX youth rally.  
**September 6th**, Kevin Burke was the Keynote speaker for the Fundraising Event benefitting the Wilmington, DE Rachel’s Vineyard site.  
**October 8th - 12th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Vienna, Austria to meet with the students at the International Theological Institute (ITI). While there she was able to hold a Rachel’s Vineyard training Retreat, Lecture and meet with various Bishops who work with the ITI.  
**October 24th**, Dr. Burke travelled to Yonkers, NY to hold a clergy Training at St Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary.  
**December 4th**, Dr. Burke Travelled to Lander, WY where she spoke at the Wyoming Catholic Colleges Formal Lecture Series.  
**December 6th**, While in Lander, WY she was able to meet with members of the Wind River Indian Reservation.
Spanish Rachel's Vineyard Catholic Retreat Manual

Our newly revised and translated manual is available for approved Rachel’s Vineyard retreat sites. Some of the changes include a more detailed anger exercise, and more specific instructions/cues, including a list of materials needed for each exercise.

We are also able to offer the Spanish online appendix with downloadable handouts to accompany the manual.

by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.

Rachel's Vineyard Interdenominational Retreat Manual is for Retreat Leaders to guide them through facilitating the psychological and spiritual journey of post abortion healing.

by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.

Rachel's Vineyard Catholic Retreat Manual is for Retreat Leaders to guide them through facilitating the psychological and spiritual journey of post abortion healing. It is available in an Interdenominational edition as well as Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian.

by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.
Forbidden Grief: the Unspoken Pain of Abortion is considered a definitive work on the study of traumatic reactions following abortion.
by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.

Redeeming a Father’s Heart shares the powerful stories of 10 courageous men with the common desire to present the truth of their abortion experience.
by: Kevin Burke, co-founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.

Contraception of Grief exposes the pain that so many women endure when they realize that the contraceptives they used caused the deaths of their children. This book is for women, men, pastors, doctors, and all who minister to the family.
by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.

Sharing the Heart of Christ
The nature of abortion trauma requires a team treatment approach which includes Clergy, Counselors, and Laity working together to offer a response that encompasses the latest trauma theory integrated with the Word and Sacraments of the Church. Sharing the Heart of Christ presents abortion as a relational wound exploring the impact upon marriage and family life. It also explores the vital role post abortion healing fulfills in realizing the New Evangelization in the life of the Church. Special chapters address unique issues faced by clergy when ministering to individuals who suffer from other trauma in their histories; couples who abort due to fetal abnormalities and practical preaching tips and sample sermons on post abortion trauma and healing.
by: Kevin Burke, co-founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.
Other Products Available

**Abortion Loss and Unresolved Grief**  
**DVD series and Course Guide**

An Educational Series on the Psychological and Spiritual Impact of Abortion. The set includes a collection of professionally produced DVD’s of many of Kevin and Theresa Burke’s presentations frequently given in clinical and pastoral trainings along with a number of talks by Fr. Frank Pavone including "The Parish-Home for Healing, Healing for the Abortionist, and Facing the Need for Healing." A Course Guide has been developed to use with the DVD set that provides an outline of each talk to help facilitate discussion as well as a course syllabus and sample exams. This set was made possible by a grant from Our Sunday Visitor.

**Harvest of Hope**  
by Theresa Burke, PhD, Kevin Burke, MSS and Fr. Frank Pavone.

Harvest of Hope is a 30 minute DVD presentation intended for use on Rachel’s Vineyard retreats. It offers a brief explanation of trauma, traumatic repetition, and other post abortion themes that are helpful for retreat participants to understand as they continue on their healing journey through the weekend, a special welcome to men and couples, and a pastoral message of encouragement and hope from Fr Frank Pavone.

**Promotional Materials**

The Rachel’s Vineyard Brochure has been updated to include the image from our website. It contains information about our ministry, symptoms of post-abortion trauma, testimonies, and contact information to find a retreat in your area.

The bookmark has also been giving this new look.

Bumper stickers are now available!
Rachel’s Vineyard Facebook Fan Page

Rachel’s Vineyard joined the world of Facebook during the summer of 2009 with the creation of our Fan Page. Since then we have accumulated over 4,700 fans with new people joining everyday! It is a great way for the ministry to promote upcoming retreats, reach people with our newsletter and other resources, and promote our training events and conferences. It also gives people a chance to learn more about our ministry and meet others who are already involved or looking to get involved. We post our newsletter and list of upcoming retreats each month, report all trips followed by a post-trip overview, and share links and articles we feel support and reaffirm the mission of Rachel’s Vineyard.

You can view our fan page at: www.facebook.com/rachelsvineyard

Website

Our website offers several resources that can be very useful for women and men looking for help after an abortion. We have several ways that an individual can contact us: email, ask the experts, online forums, and phone numbers for our hotline and each of our sites. The Ask the Experts sections is a good method of communication and has been a very useful tool. Individuals can browse questions or ask their own under categories such as: relationships, legal, mental health, men, spiritual, grief and loss, abuse, the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat experience, and several others. We also have plenty of information to help people get a better understanding of post-abortion trauma and the mission of Rachel’s Vineyard.

You can view our website at: www.rachelsvineyard.org

Newsletter: Vine and Branches

Our newsletter, Vine and Branches, goes out on the 1st of each month. It highlights news from our international office or around the vineyard, honors or awards received by our volunteers, articles written about post-abortion trauma and healing or Rachel’s Vineyard, book reviews, and any other information or resources that would be useful for people involved with the post-abortion or pro-life ministry. We send it out via email and also post it to our website for anyone visiting our site to access. Also, old issues are available in an archive on our website.

You can view our newsletter archive at: http://rachelsvineyard.org/resources/vine-branches.htm

Youtube Channel

This year, we began posting weekly videos to the Rachel’s Vineyard Channel on Youtube. We are able to reach the millions of people who cruise Youtube each day with inspirational and educational messages about abortion trauma and healing. These videos are a wonderful way to equip people with a resource they can quickly share with friends and family in need of healing by emailing or posting the link. The videos feature Kevin and Theresa Burke, founders of Rachel’s Vineyard, Fr. Frank Pavone, Pastoral Director for Rachel’s Vineyard, and other supporters of our ministry.

You can view our channel at: www.youtube.com/rachelsvineyard