Every year, we take time to reflect on the past year and recommit to our vision and mission. We exist to bring the Kingdom of God into the lives of those who have suffered the loss of a child by abortion. We do this by loving God and one another in Relationship to Christ and bringing others into relationship and service with Him. In other words, we do not exist for ourselves, but we exist because of Jesus, so that the world would know and experience Jesus in their lives. This is what you are doing by helping our ministry through your treasure, your time and your talents. You are the reason we have been able to accomplish so much!

Together, we honor our accomplishments and all that we have achieved, while at the same time, we pause to consider what remains to be done to achieve our vision of healing other tragedies and traumatic wounds. We hope to remove the obstacles which cause alienation from God in order to discover the source of hope, truth, joy and redemption.

What began as small husband and wife effort to help those who had suffered the loss of a child from abortion to heal in body, mind and spirit has evolved into an international apostolate that is now paving the way for new psychological and spiritually integrated approaches for treating other forms of traumatic experience. The Grief to Grace Retreats for Healing Abuse are now being run by many Rachel’s Vineyard Leaders throughout the world in Canada, USA, Latin America, The Caribbean, England, France, Austria and Australia.

Our goal is to continue igniting shifts in the way the public views and responds to traumatic violence and the impact it has on men, women and families and the church; creating group retreat environments that reflect the compassionate ministry of Jesus as we continue to develop leadership teams to facilitate our models of healing.

People can suffer for many years and not even realize they are in need of healing until they become physically or emotionally ill. It’s then that we might look to God and pray for interior freedom, realizing where trauma has hurt us; or that our ways of seeing are not complete, and that we need help. In this stance of powerlessness we find our radical dependence on God. We beg God, and at some point we surrender to God, not always realizing that in surrender we are letting go with a leap of faith and desperation into the very heart of God. We surrender to love. We surrender to Mystery. And as we surrender our control and our sin, we open ourselves further to encounter, not only with God but with one another as we share God’s love and healing power for the wounds of the world, filling the despair with the power of his presence.

And so we believe it is a joy to look back at this past year and reflect on how God has worked throughout the world in our ministry and how He continues to use all of us to impart His healing touch and grace. It is also an exciting time to feel awe and gratitude for all the plans that God has so faithfully accomplished in the past year.

Financially, we look toward the coming year and move ahead with faith — faith that God will provide, faith that our retreat sites will grow and prosper and faith that God will continue to use us to cultivate His kingdom here on earth.
As we share our end of year report, it’s with a thankful heart that we recognize Jesus Christ as the healer who we trust for strength. We are grateful for the privilege of spreading His message of forgiveness, faith, love and hope in a spirit of gentleness and respect. We are grateful for the support of Priests for Life, the many diocesan and interfaith church based ministries, the crisis pregnancy centers which offer our retreats and the many other nonprofit organizations that partner with us to spread the healing work of Rachel’s Vineyard retreats and support groups.

We want to thank you for being a part of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries! May the peace and mercy of Christ always be evident among us.

Blessings and Peace,
Theresa Burke, Ph.D
Founder, Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Photo credit Maggie Pierson Carlson
Malvern Retreat Center
The International Leadership Conference took place at the Malvern Retreat House in Pennsylvania. Over 200 participants attended with several dozen clergy, deacons, and pastors. Over 50 presentations were offered with 5 tracks plus Interdenominational Services, Holy Hour and Reconciliation Opportunities, and Daily Masses.

The Conference Theme was “Touched by Mercy, Moved By Love.” The joy and smiles of our leaders were a true testimony to the invigoration and excitement everyone had for being together, learning new information and facilitation techniques!

We can all share in the excitement about where we are headed in the future. We will continue to bring inspired people together in leadership and training forums like this, to ensure our ministries can collaborate to achieve maximum fruitfulness.

“Keep up the excellent work of healing and wholeness! My most sincere thanks for the practical hope to receive and pass on.”

“Awesome opportunity—So thankful for the quality of all presenters. Very valuable information and connections!”

“This conference was well planned and met my hopes for good contact with leaders, good workshops and genuinely a great time!”

“Tons of great information, with lots of time to share with our team and other teams. All of the presenters were totally accessible. Tons of work was done and it was a great experience—my first RV conference!!”

“Theresa’s presentations were engaging, fluid, relevant and useful.”
2018 International Leadership Conference

The following classes were offered at this years conference:

- Bringing Rachel’s Vineyard to Prison
- Sleep Deprivation’s Impact on Mental Health
- Finding Redemption for Post-Abortive Fathers
- Prepared to Give an Answer
- Women with Secrets
- What is Ritual Abuse? Why do we need to know about it?
- Growing on the Vine: Aftercare
- Spiritual Direction and Trauma Healing
- PTSD Associated with Reproductive Trauma
- Ritual Abuse and how it was integrated into the church
- Am I ready to lead? Mentoring
- Validation Facilitation
- The Adverse Childhood Experiences: ACE Study
- Grieving the Babies you tried to Save
- Facilitation Skills I & II
- Growing Your Non-Profit: Fundraising
- Shockwaves of Abortion I & II
- Healing Touches to Sooth Trauma & Pelvic Pain
- Who We Are is How We Heal: Integrating Theological Approaches
- Facilitation Practicum
- Tears of a Fisherman: Understanding Men & Abortion Loss
- Self-Care for Retreat Facilitators
- What Works in Abortion Recovery: Research Evidence of Benefits of Faith Based Programs
- Accompanying the Clergy
- Overview of Grief to Grace
- EU Data Protection (GDPR) and it’s Influence on Record Keeping
- A Call to Greater Love: The Family Martin
- Adverse Drug Reactions and Trauma Treatments that Work
- Addictions: Confronting a Problem
- Memorializing the Unborn
- Sharing your Personal Story
- Panic Attacks and Limbic System Therapy
- He has Rescued Us from the Dominion of Darkness…
- Public Persona and Media
- Supervision Panel over your Toughest Retreat Cases
- Intake Protocols
- Stranger Things, Stephen King, and Abortion Trauma
- Expanding your Silent No More Ministry

With Keynotes from:
Fr Dominic Allain - Christ: Divine Physician, Wounded Healer
Georganne Ford - Build Team Cohesion with Emotional Intelligence
Fr Frank Pavone - The Biblical Meaning of Rachel’s Vineyard
Dr. Theresa Burke - The Scandal of Service
A Quick History

Since our inception, our healing retreats have:

Served over 320,000 individuals, couples and Families;

Trained more than 155,500 healing professionals;

Educated more than 11,000 clergy;

Organized more than 535 educational seminars for mental health professionals;

Offered more than 13,000 retreats;

Offered more than 3,000 support group models;

Connected millions of visitors to our help resources;

Disseminated 500,900 books and videos;

Empowered 500,600 volunteers who volunteer with our ministries;

Welcomed millions of visitors to our websites and social media presence;

Garnered thousands of print, radio and media titles regarding our work

Published 8 books (listed at the end of this report);

Published 51,000 Retreat manuals.
375+ Retreat Sites

225+ offer Catholic Retreats  75+ offer Interdenominational Retreats  75+ offer Spanish Retreats

NOTE: some retreat sites offer multiple retreat types

NOTE: Due to the abortion laws in various countries we are not able to list all retreat sites.

We also have unlisted retreat sites that are hosted by prisons.

Rachel’s Vineyard Sites Approved in 2018

NEW INTERNATIONAL SITES

Roxburghshire, England
Lake Atitlan/San Juan, Guatemala
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Bogota minuto de Dios, Mexico
Lurin, Peru

NEW NATIONAL SITES

Cottonwood, AZ (Interdenom)
Sacramento, CA (Interdenom)
Tallahassee, FL
Louisville, KY (Interdenom)
Shreveport, LA

Dr Theresa Burke with the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat team from Lake Geneva, WI
375+ Retreat Sites
225+ offer Catholic Retreats  75+ offer Interdenominational Retreats  75+ offer Spanish Retreats
NOTE: some retreat sites offer multiple retreat types
NOTE: Due to the abortion laws in various countries we are not able to list all retreat sites.
We also have unlisted retreat sites that are hosted by prisons.

Rachel’s Vineyard Sites in Development

INTERNATIONAL SITES
Czech Republic
Ontario, Canada
Vancouver Island, Canada
Hong Kong
Korea
Johannesburg, South Africa
Quebec, Canada (French Speaking)

NATIONAL SITES
Los Banos, CA  (Español)
Central Coast, CA
Orange County, CA
Manhattan Beach, CA
Pensecola/Tallahassee, FL
Harvard, IL
Saginaw, MI
Nashville, TN
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<td>Wheeling, WV</td>
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<td>*Holds English &amp; Spanish Retreats</td>
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International Rachel’s Vineyard Sites

By Continent

Africa:
- Tiko, Cameroon
- Cape Town, South Africa

Asia:
- China
- Hong Kong
- Beirut, Lebanon
- Penang, Malaysia
- Magadan, Russia
- Vladivostok, Russia
- Singapore
  - Incheon City, South Korea
  - Ba-Li, New Tapai City, Taiwan
  - Tai-Shan, New Taipei City, Taiwan
  - Taipei, Taiwan
  - Vietnam

Australia:
- Brisbane, QLD Australia
- Canberra, NSW Australia
- Hobart, TAS Australia
- Melbourne, VIC Australia (Interdenom)
- Perth, Australia
- Sydney, NSW Australia
- New Zealand

Central America:
- Santiago, Dominican Republic
- San Salvador, El Salvador
- Lake Atitlan Region/San Juan, Guatemala
- Catedral, Juticalpa, Olancho, Honduras
- Kingston, Jamaica

Managua, Nicaragua
Matagalpa, Nicaragua

Europe:
- Vienna, Austria
- Vienna, Austria (Interdenom)
- Essex, England
- Kent, England
- Leeds, England
- Stroud, Gloucestershire, England
- Tórshavn, Faroe Islands
- Mere de Misericorde, IDF, France
- Oise, OIS, France
- Hildesheim, Germany
- Tiszaalpár, Hungary
- Cork, Ireland
- Bologna, Italy
- Vilnius, Lithuania
- Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Poznan, Poland
- Piwnicza Zdroj, MP, Poland
- Warsaw, Poland
- Lisbon, Portugal
- Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- Glasgow, Scotland
- North-East Scotland (Interdenom)
- Bansk Bystrica, Slovakia
- Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Barcelona, Spain

North America:
- US Sites on Previous Page
  - Cache Creek, BC Canada
  - Kelowna, BC Canada

N.Battleford, SK Canada
Newfoundland, Canada
Ottawa, ON Canada (Interdenom)
Thunder Bay, ON Canada
Vancouver, BC Canada
Winnipeg MB, Canada (Interdenom)
Yellowknife, NT Canada
Culiacán, Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico
Nogales, Mexico
Tijuana, Mexico
Zapopan Jalisco (Cercade Guadalajara), Mexico
Provincia Colon, Panama
San Juan, Puerto Rico

South America:
- Bahía Blanca, Argentina
- Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Tucumán, Argentina
- Iquique, Chili
- Bogota, Colombia
- Bogota Minuto de Dios, Colombia
- Cali, Colombia
- Cartagena, Colombia
- Medellin, Colombia
- Pereira, Colombia
- Quito, Pichincha, Ecuador
- Asunción, Paraguay
- Lurin, Peru
- Miraflores, Peru
- Caroni, Trinidad
- Montevideo, Uruguay
On August 21, 2018,
Dr. Theresa Burke, received this message from Pope Francis:

Dra. Theresa Burke,

Muchas gracias por su carta en la que me expone su trabajo en "Vinedo de Raquel" y "Del dolor a la gracia". Me consoló leer lo que me dice. Estas son obras fecundas, que sanan, que derraman misericordia. Gracias por lo que Usted hace.

Si puede enviarme más material se agradeceré mucho. Por favor, no deje de rezar por mí.

Que Jesús la bendiga y la Virgen Santa la cuide.

Cordialmente.
Francisco

Translation:

Dr. Theresa Burke,

Thank you very much for your letter in which you have described to me your work in "Vinedo de Raquel" (Rachel's Vineyard) and "Del dolor a la Gracia". (Grief to Grace)

It brings much comfort to me to read what you told me.

These are fruitful works, that heal, that pour out mercy.

Thanks for what you do.

If you can send me more materials, I will be very grateful.

Please, do not stop praying for me.

May Jesus bless you and the Holy Virgin take care of you.

Cordially.
Francisco
INDIANTOWN | Dressed in laundry-worn prison blues, Earl J. Hinson doesn’t stand out among fellow prisoners of Martin Correctional Institution. Thin and unassuming, his prison-issued light jacket looks a tad big on his 5-foot-7-inch frame.

Yet, as he sat down at a conference table of an interview room at the prison, located off the beaten path in Indiantown, two things immediately stand out — Hinson’s wide, genuine smile and the “Magnificat” book he carries with him always. He speaks about his relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit freely and with open frankness.

Hinson is a “lifer,” sent to prison 16 ago years for horrendous crimes. In his time behind bars, this 37-year-old experienced a spiritual awakening that has led to receiving spiritual counseling, training in different ministry services and being present for counseling his fellow inmates. In November, the Diocese of Palm Beach named him Respect Life Person of the Year for his work in completing certification as a Rachel’s Vineyard facilitator, and helping facilitate more than a dozen retreats for inmates suffering from a post-abortion experience.

“Working in the midst of great darkness, our recipient has been a beacon of hope and a light of Christ,” said Don Kazimir, director of respect life for Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Palm Beach. “He has truly been a missionary to the many lost souls in the prison. He is known as the ‘go-to guy’ if you want to learn about God.”

Hinson is a changed man from the 22-year-old sentenced to life in prison for first-degree murder, attempted murder and armed robbery. But he cannot completely separate himself from the man who committed those crimes that left one man dead of a single gunshot wound to the back of the head, and another man critically wounded with 11 gunshot wounds. Another victim, a 16-year-old girl, escaped death because the gun put to the back of her head did not fire when the trigger was pulled.

“At my sentencing hearing, the mother of one of my victims … made the comment that I was a monster and looking at the facts of the case I can’t disagree with that,” Hinson recalled. “I really owe it to my victims and not just the ones of my crimes, but also my family and their families and friends and loved ones to kill that monster. … Society would want people like me locked up for the rest of my life because there is a genuine fear that I could go do something like that again. I have to make that an impossibility.”

Despite being the man who committed those crimes in 2000, Hinson has tried to live a life of conversion, and that path lies in a calling he believed he always had but never pursued or acknowledged — a calling to be a priest. While he is not eligible for the priesthood because he is a felon, Hinson said he could still live a life dictated by the tenets of vocation.

“What I try to do is live out my baptism as priest and prophet. I am offering my life as a sacrifice,” said the graduate of Tampa Catholic High School. “By living a priestly vocation as a sacrifice — to just say, ‘Lord I offer myself to you; use me up’ — is about the only option I have that can slay the monster who brought me to prison.”
HOW DID HE GET HERE?

Hinson lays the blame at his own feet when it comes to his crimes. Yet, he does speak about his downward spiral that lead to the events of May 12-13, 2000. From all accounts, he had a bright future. In a 2001 article by the St. Petersburg Times, his cross-country coach from Tampa Catholic recalled how surprised he was that Hinson was involved in a violent crime. When he heard about the events, he thought Hinson was the victim not the perpetrator.

But Hinson said his inability to deal with situations happening in his life, especially his relationship with his father and his parents’ divorce, led him to make one bad decision after another. He had no foundation of faith or a relationship with God to “fall back on,” and instead relied on bad decisions coupled with destructive behavior and violence.

“There was a series of lies I was telling myself, of who I was. What I needed to be or how I should I act. And I chose all the wrong influences during that timeframe to be my foundation and support those lies,” he said, admitting that the crimes were a “test run.”

“The one I really wanted to kill was my father. I just didn’t know if it was possible. If I could do it.”

He was arrested a day after the crimes — Mother’s Day. He was at his mother’s house spending an evening with her and his grandmother. Then the SWAT team showed up.

“As they arrested me, they were holding my mother at gunpoint. And it was very real to me how innocent people were being hurt by the choices I was making,” Hinson said, meaning not only the three victims of his crimes and their families, but people he would have classified as unrelated to the event because they weren’t there. “It really hit home when I saw my mother held at gunpoint. I am not an island. My decisions hurt innocent people.”

Locked up in county jail, Hinson had the first of many soul-searching experiences, asking the question, “How did I get here?” He was lying on the floor of the crowded jail cell and thought “physically and morally speaking it couldn’t get very worse.” But then he envisioned an abyss, and realized he could sink even lower by continuing on the same path, becoming an even more violent criminal in prison and causing more suffering.

But that wasn’t what Hinson wanted.

He did repent at that moment — sorry for his actions and the hurt they caused. He knew God could do better with his life than Hinson had done with his life for those first 22 years.

“To this day there’s been a great awareness for the loss I have caused, for the pain I have caused. Each day there is a greater contrition, a growing contrition,” he said, adding he won’t allow himself to forget about his victims. “I can’t pick up that eraser and say, ‘I wish it didn’t happen.’ I hurt them.

They’re always going to remember. How dare I forget if they aren’t going to. How dare I forget them when they have the curse of remembering me at my worst.”

TRANSFORMING MOMENTS

Hinson said he has changed but will not release himself from the debt he owes his victims. In many ways, it is that spiritual debt that guided his conversion and leads him to serve others in prison.

He started studying his faith, Scripture, the works of the doctors of the Church and the saints, and it led him to transformation. The saints became a family to him, whose counsel he relied on.

He recalled a transforming moment when he was in the Hillsborough County Jail awaiting sentencing. He was reading the Gospels and he prayed to God about how does living the Gospel look in the 21st century.

“I asked, ‘Lord, send me somebody that I could emulate behind these walls, that I could see how this looks,’” Hinson said. “And I had this sense from the Holy Spirit of, ‘Be the example.’ And I would think, well, yes, that’s what I’m looking for, an example. But the Holy Spirit was consistent: ‘Be the example.’

“That’s been a push to me when I feel burnout or frustration or lazy, I have to be an example here,” Hinson continued. “I can’t ask people to be Christian and not be an example of a Christian myself.”

As Hinson speaks about being an example to others, he mentions prison ministers he has met who inspire him. He said
his mother is also a great example of the faith. Although she suffered pain and sorrow for her son’s sins, she has not abandoned him and continues to travel an almost three-hour trip to visit him in prison every weekend, when possible.

One of the greatest examples of faith that Hinson ever witnessed came from a member of his victim’s family — the grandmother of Eduardo Natal, who Hinson killed. During the trial, prosecutors approached Natal’s family to tell them they wished to seek the death penalty in Hinson’s case. But Natal’s grandmother, the family matriarch, said the family was Catholic and didn’t believe in capital punishment. As a result, Hinson received life in prison without parole instead of death.

“It was a very tangible expression of faith on her part and it really rocked my world,” Hinson said. “In a sense of desperation, I was getting back into my faith and then she does that, and all the sudden all that matters is living my life like that.”

**PRISON MINISTRY**

To broaden his faith life, Hinson has sought services offered through Catholic prison ministry. Martin Correctional, where Hinson has been for nine years, is located within the Diocese of Palm Beach, where Deacon Don Battiston serves as a Catholic chaplain.

Some eight years ago, Tom Lawlor, the now retired diocesan director of prison ministry, approached a volunteer, Donna Gardner, about bringing Rachel’s Vineyard, a post-abortion healing ministry, within the prison. Gardner, who now works in private practice but until September 2016 worked as diocesan director of Rachel’s Vineyard for 16 years, said the experiment to bring the ministry behind bars proved to be fruitful, as many prisoners had experiences with abortion and sought healing.

One of those men was Hinson. When he was 18, and just out of high school, he got a call from a girl he had dated. She was pregnant and she was going to get an abortion. At the time, Hinson breathed a sigh of relief, did nothing to stop it and hung up the phone.

He didn’t think about it again until he was in prayer and incarcerated. The experience was not as cut and dried as he thought. Hinson felt a sense of powerlessness and believed his inability to care about the girlfriend, his unborn child and the act of abortion became part of the central lie that caused him to lash out and become violent.

When the opportunity to participate in Rachel’s Vineyard surfaced, Hinson was eager to participate in the retreat experience tailored for the prison setting into 10-week sessions. But so were other inmates. Hinson would have to wait until the third round of classes to participate.

“It was more than I could have expected. Through the program I was able to have an encounter with my daughter and who she is. It floored me,” he said.

Gardner described Hinson as a “super personable” guy who truly had a relationship with the Lord and the Blessed Mother. She also recognized his strong leadership skills, and it sparked her to ask Lawlor about the possibility of developing a Rachel’s Vineyard leadership “inside team” — retreat leaders who are prisoners themselves.

“The thought was the inmates could continue to minister to their brothers as they go through Rachel’s Vineyard,” Gardner said. “(Hinson) went through the same rigorous training that all go through on the outside. … It is a year-long process and he did great. He has been an incredible minister in the prison and is helping build a beautiful culture of life behind the walls.”

Lawlor agreed Hinson is an asset to Rachel’s Vineyard and to many prison ministry programs because he lives an “absolutely legitimate” faith life. “He truly brings the light of Christ into a dark environment,” Lawlor said, adding Hinson is a perfect example of why the death penalty is not necessary and should not be used. “It is during his incarceration that he brought his life back to Christ. The way he is living his life, he is a living example of the faith 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in a place no one else can reach. That wouldn’t be possible if he was given the death penalty.”

Hinson described his experience with Rachel’s Vineyard as a “vocation inside a vocation.” It is not the only ministry he has served. Just before participating in Rachel’s Vineyard, he was teaching a creative writing class to inmates to help give voice to their thoughts and possibly have a project to work on when they leave prison. He has served as an orderly
National Happenings

For the prison chaplain, in which he assists with day-to-day activities. He previously facilitated the prison’s DIRECT program — which stands for Direct Involvement Reduces the Effects of Criminal Thinking — a behavior modification program that analyzes the motivations for thinking patterns based on the 40 years of study of criminals performed by psychologists Stanley Samenow and Samuel Yochelson.

And when the Welcome Home Initiative for prisoners who are also veterans exhibiting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was established in the prison, Hinson was asked to help facilitate and live in an dorm setting with veterans in the program. As such, he is able to be available for counseling 24/7.

INTRINSIC VALUE
According to the Florida Department of Corrections, Hinson is one of 1,339 inmates living at Martin Correctional Institution. Of that population, Hinson is part of the roughly 27 percent who are lifers.

Ministry to the incarcerated is not an easy calling and it can have a negative connotation. It means ministering to criminals, some of whom are serving their second or third term, some of whom will not see outside the walls for decades and some, like Hinson, who will never again see the outside of prison walls. Labels such as lost souls and limited futures might pigeonhole the ministry and those served.

That might be another reason why Hinson’s calling is even more satisfying and crucial. He said it is easy to relate to the prisoners because they are him.

“I know I am a living, breathing human being and I know I have an intrinsic value, because that is what I feel in myself. Since I know that truth, the first thing I try to do is to treat them by telling them that truth — that they are somebody worth knowing, that they are a living, breathing human beings,” Hinson said. “The most critical thing to help them grow in this environment where they have the chance to heal themselves and maybe come to contrition for their crimes and sins is that Jesus is a living, breathing person … reaching out for us, to have a personal relationship with us.”

Hinson references St. Thomas Aquinas as he describes a philosophy of prayer in which he said it is possible that his life and the lives of his fellow lifers could be compared to that of cloistered monks.

“Like monks who have cloistered themselves, we have the opportunity to lift the world up in prayer. We have the opportunity to lift our victims, our families, our pains, justices and injustices,” he said. “Some men are spiritually inclined and take to that rather quickly. Other men, it takes time to develop. The good news is that they are a captive audience. You really cling to Jesus or you cling to the dark, depression of this environment.”

Praying for his victims is a critical part of Hinson’s life because the way the incarceration system operates, he is not able to contact them, even if it is in an act of contrition. He would welcome them contacting him, even if it would be to lash out at him because that might help them heal.

But he knows their healing is out of his hands. He is “betting the whole house” on the “miraculous reality that Jesus heals,” even if his victims never forgive him.

“I think about that night and morning regularly, and I make it part of my prayer life. I walk through those memories with Jesus, and I ask Jesus to touch them with healing, to help them,” he said. “I can still choose to grow closer to Jesus so that his grace can take care of them. As long as I continue to convert to the Lord and offer them up in prayer, nothing is impossible with him.”
Rachel’s Vineyard hopes CSAF will increase retreat’s reach

By Matthew Davis

Rachel’s Vineyard Executive Director in the Twin Cities area, Nancy Blom has seen abortion impact the lives of mothers, fathers, grandparents and young people in her work.

Blom, who had been involved in pro-life work as a young adult, felt a calling to help people looking for post-abortion healing after a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She likened the work of Rachel’s Vineyard to the story of the men lowering a sick man through the roof of a house to Jesus for healing.

“That’s what we do on the weekend retreat,” said Blom, a parishioner of St. Alphonsus in Brooklyn Center.

This year, the Catholic Services Appeal Foundation added Rachel’s Vineyard to the ministries it funds in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Blom hopes that the additional CSA funding will help expand the availability of the retreat and widen people’s awareness of it.

Rachel’s Vineyard offers retreats for “all impacted by abortion loss,” Blom said. The retreat can help both women and men, young and old, address the spiritual trauma caused by abortion.

Theresa Burke, a psychologist and founder of Rachel’s Vineyard, had researched abortion’s effects on women and men, finding that it often causes grief, shame and depression. Blom said it causes symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder and can take decades or a lifetime to heal.

The Twin Cities’ location is one of 350 Rachel’s Vineyard sites worldwide. The ministry offered its first retreat in Minnesota in 1999. Since then, more than 500 people have attended, honoring the memory of about 890 aborted babies. The retreat is offered three times per year at the Franciscan Retreats and Spirituality Center in Prior Lake.

Retreatants are invited into a healing process following the “pattern of Jesus,” as Blom described it. The retreat begins on Friday with a focus on the crucifixion. On Saturday, the focus is on Jesus in the tomb and Sunday’s focus is the resurrection. Retreatants participate in guided mediation on sacred Scripture and group discussion. Priests offer confession and celebrate Mass, but the retreat is open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Still grappling decades after participating in his then-girlfriend’s decision to abort, Bob Reynolds of Hudson, Wisconsin, went on the retreat in the early 2010s at the recommendation of a psychologist. He found that accepting God’s forgiveness and developing a spiritual bond with the baby made difference.

Reynolds, a member of Bethel Lutheran in Hudson, said he now prays nearly daily for the intercession of the baby. “We had a memorial for her. She’s a huge part of my life now,” he said.

Lisa Bursey, a board member of Rachel’s Vineyard, also experienced a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat as healing. She went in 2008 and found mercy and forgiveness in the experience.

“I went more because I was in need of going to confession, and I really hadn’t gone to confession yet with regards to the whole experience,” said Bursey, a parishioner of St. Michael in St. Michael. “I found that there was a lot more deeper, underlying issues that I didn’t even realize and [was] able to work through those. That was the biggest challenge — being able to forgive myself for choices I made.”

Bursey since has volunteered as a team member for the retreats before becoming a board member. Rachel’s Vineyard provides resources for retreatants’ ongoing healing, she said.

Blom hopes that CSAF funding will help make the retreat, which costs $350 to attend, more affordable to anyone who comes. That cost also doesn’t cover the full expense of the retreats. The ministry relies on donations, and Blom, who works multiple jobs, makes only a small salary for her work. However, “we don’t deny anyone,” Bursey said.

“Our first ever Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat in Guatemala was so incredible! Nine women attended, and 21 babies were memorialized. Abortion in Guatemala is a bit different than abortion in America, especially in the remote villages where we were hosted by Impacto Ministry.

The word for miscarriage and abortion in Spanish is the same, aborto. But then there are clarifying words to attach to this one word that distinguish whether you’re describing a miscarriage or an abortion, such as accidental, criminal, elective, forced, induced, natural, or spontaneous. Although there is probably a percentage of abortions in Guatemala that are elective, of the women who attended our retreat, none of them were of this category. Many were accidental and some were forced and very much against the will of the mothers.

Is it important to note that 64% of abortions in America are forced or coerced as well*. This is a little-known statistic, and it is important to note because when abortion is forced or coerced, the trauma can be greater to the women. Although, when a woman chooses abortion for herself, the guilt and remorse can be great as well. So, in either instance, healing is incredibly important, even years and decades later.

Women who have miscarriages, whether in Guatemala or America, carry a lot of guilt feeling that they did something that caused them to lose their babies. Some women are also forced or guilted into continuing to work in order to provide for their families because of poverty and/or sometimes out of embarrassment of their own accord or put on them by family members. When bed rest is required for a pregnancy to sustain itself, especially in Guatemala, sometimes the women, and sometimes family members feel they are just being lazy, not understanding or accepting the medical necessity for rest.

Here is what our ladies in Guatemala had to say about their healing experience:

“I feel happy and joyful, the retreat has been a great blessing.”

“I feel very good, like a weight has been lifted from inside me that I’ve been carrying for a long time. I feel lighter and a great peace. If [the person who caused this] was still alive, I’d be able to talk to her about it now.”

“My case happened twenty years ago, and you form a shell around you and say it’s over and you move on. This weekend I’ve been able to see it wasn’t gone, it was still inside me and still hurtful. I feel blessed and thankful to you all and the ability to be able to forgive others and myself. I know my son is ok and is in a much better place, and that’s brought me a lot of peace.”

“I feel very good. I’ve never been in a meeting like this, and I’m thankful to you all. I will pray God continues to give you wisdom so we can help many other women. I would also forgive [the person who caused this] if she was still alive. I talked to my husband last night and forgave him and explained how it has affected me. I’m thankful for all the local women here for sharing and the laughter and doing this together.”

“This was a great weekend. I’m so thankful to be able to be here to heal and to learn how to forgive. I will not forget, but it will be a memory, and not a painful memory now. I’m thankful for you ladies here. I know so many others who’ve lost babies and have not been able to heal. I’m so thankful for this opportunity.”

“I will share with other hurting women now and tell them you can get over this because I’ve been there, and I’ve done it.”

“This weekend was awesome for me. In my church there are a lot of women going through this, and I hope to be able to help them with what I’ve learned here.”

“I feel I can help many women now, whether they are Christians or not Christians, and I can help them heal.”

“I learned a lot from you, how to bring out the emotions, but then direct the emotions to get rid of the pain. You shared Scripture we can use, but I feel we need to prepare ourselves more in the Word. But what makes it easier is we’ve gone through it, and we know how it feels.”

“The most important parts of the retreat for me were that I’ve been able to achieve intimacy in my heart and capture understanding of the Bible, the public testimony of my pain of my loss, and to be able to have peace in my heart, to heal my wounds and to know that it’s a process that we have to continue to work through.”

“This retreat encouraged me a lot, and I want to hear more. It’s the first time I’ve been like this. The most important part was that everything in my heart, the hate, the sadness, is leaving little by little, and I move forward in these things with God.”
“I found courage because I had a lot of time this weekend, and I liked very much how you prepared the subject. The best part of the weekend was to sit and to listen to the other women that this happened to with them, because I thought that I was the only one that this happened to.”

“The retreat was super! A great opportunity for healing. My favorite part of the retreat was the exercise with the stone, and I liked very much the ability to say goodbye to the babies and to close this chapter of our lives that happened years ago.”

“This is the first time that I’ve been in this type of group. The first day I did not understand what we were really doing with you sisters, but by the next afternoon I understood the things that the leaders spoke to us about God. I am going to share this with the pastor of my church.”

“I liked the retreat a lot. I hope that God allows you to return again. I liked everything! It was not boring, and everything had importance to work the retreat to completion.”

“I liked the memorial service, the words that you expressed and said about abortion because it’s something that no one can do anything about. The most important part of the weekend was talking about the things that have happened in the lives of women.”

I could go on and on. We were so impressed and inspired by the love and reference these women have for God and for His Word. They have entire Psalms and passages of the Bible memorized, and we were able to experience them reciting some passages in Spanish. It was a beautiful experience for us in so many ways. We went to bless the women, and of course, they were a blessing to us. We have returned to the States with so much fullness of joy and love and appreciation for the Guatemalan culture and their love of children and motherhood.

We want to thank everyone who sponsored this trip and who prayed for us, Impacto Ministry who hosted us and brought the women to our retreat, Darcy Aune who responded to God’s prompting in in heart to offer this type of ministry to her beloved country of Guatemala, and of course God who brought this trip and retreat to fruition. We could not have done this without any of you!”

*http://www.theunchoice.com/pdf/FactSheets/ForcedAbortions.pdf*
International Office
In the office located in King of Prussia, PA we have Dr. Theresa Burke, founder; Katie D'Annunzio, office manager; Lairen Vogan, executive assistant; and Kate O'Donnell, administrative assistant.

In the Media
Radio/Print:
On January 4th, Kevin Burke, LSW was interviewed on Cradle My Heart
On January 8th, Kevin Burke, LSW was interviewed on Mater Dei Radio
On March 5th, Kevin Burke, LSW was interviewed on March 4 Life NY Radio
June 6th, Theresa Burke was interviewed on In His Sign
On July 5th, Kevin Burke, LSW was interviewed on Holy Spirit Radio
On November 16th, Kevin Burke, LSW was interviewed on EWTN Morning Glory

Kevin Burke was interviewed on Radio Maria on February 27th, May 1st, & June 19th

Interviews from around the world:
IOW 03-19-18-Rachel's-Retreat

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

1/5 – The Stream
https://stream.org/stranger-things-abortion-upside-world-forbidden-grief

2/8 - Rachel’s Vineyard CSAF will increase retreat’s reach

5/8 — March for life UK draws thousands to London
https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/march-for-life-uk-draws-thousands-to-london-15256

10/26 - The Church at her very best
http://www.ncregister.com/blog/guest-blogger/the-church-at-her-very-best

11/5 – A Candidates position of abortion matter more than you think
https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/a-candidates-position-on-abortion-matters-more-than-you-think-when-you-pull?
tm_content=buffer23940&utm_medium=LSN%2Bbuffer&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=LSN

11/14 - Talk show hosts asks women is they celebrate or regret their abortions, The answers were heartbreak
https://www.lifenews.com/2018/11/14/talk-show-hosts-asks-women-if-they-celebrate-or-regret-their-abortions-the-answers-were-heartbreaking/

11/19 - Opinion: We are a voice for all
Training and Education in 2017

International Leadership Conferences

In April Dr Theresa Burke travelled to Perth, Australia:

On April 17th, Theresa presented to the Dawson Society on the sexual abuse crisis.
On April 18th, Theresa presented for priests and seminarians.
On April 21st, Theresa presented a Rachel's Vineyard/Post-Abortion training in Highgate, Australia.

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: Houston, TX; Tucson, AZ; Malvern, PA

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: Houston, TX; Tucson, AZ; Malvern, PA; Minneapolis, MN

Clergy Trainings:

Dr. Theresa Burke also held trainings for the clergy.
Those trainings were held in: Tucson, AZ; Malvern, PA
Other Speaking Events:

On **January 18th**, Kevin Butke LSW spoke at the 2018 Summit - Mobilizing the Church For Life hosted by Anglicans for Life in **Washington, DC**.

On **January 19th**, Kevin Burke, LSW participated in the March for Life in **Washington, DC**.

On **January 20th**, Dr Theresa Burke was the Keynote speaker for the Rose Dinner in **Lafayette, LA**.

**March 4-9, 2018** – Dr Theresa Burke facilitated a Grief to Grace retreat in **Phoenix, AZ**. While there she met with the Rachel’s Vineyard teams.

On **March 10th**, Dr Theresa Burke visited the Missionaries of Charity in **Norristown, PA**.

On **March 17-18**, Kevin Burke, LSW lectured at the Clinical/Regional training held for those in and interested in Rachel’s Vineyard. The training was held in **Tucson, AZ**.

On **March 23**, Dr Theresa Burke was the Keynote speaker at their local Pro-Life benefit dinner in **Houston, TX**.

On **April 28th**, Dr Theresa Burke was the Keynote speaker for TwentyTHREE61’s We Remember Hike & Memorial in **Lake Geneva, WI**.

On **June 20th**, Dr Theresa Burke was a presenter at the Catholic Medical Boot Camp held in **Chicago, IL**.

On **July 14th**, Dr Theresa Burke was a speaker at Night Vision in **Olathe, CO**.

On **August 24th**, Dr Theresa Burke travelled to **Newark, NJ** to meet with team leaders Cheryl Riley and Patricia Decker.

On **October 7th**, Kevin Burke, LSW was a Speaker at the DuBois Area Life Chain in **DuBois, PA**.

On **October 20th**, Kevin Burke, LSW attend a Prolife Mass for Archbishop Chaput and met with the Diocesan Rachel’s Vineyard Team in **Philadelphia, PA**.

October **21st-26th**, Dr Theresa Burke Facilitated a Grief to Grace retreat in **Minneapolis, MN**. While there she met with and trained the Rachel’s Vineyard team.

On **October 27th**, Kevin Burke, LSW spoke at the Pro-life Brunch held at Holy Name of Jesus RC Church in **Breville County, FL**.

On **November 10**, Dr Theresa Burke spoke at the Sacrament of the Human Person, hosted by Corazon Puron.
Retreat Products

*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.

_Duelo Prohibido: El Dolor No Expresada Del Aborto_ is the Spanish version of _Forbidden Grief_.

by: Dr. Theresa Burke, 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 presents abortion as a relational wound exploring the impact upon marriage and family life. It also explores the vital role post abortion counseling 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, Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries, and Fr. Frank Pavone, Pastoral Director of Rachel’s Vineyard.

This is the Russian version of _Forbidden Grief_.

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

Published in 2010.

Tears of the Fisherman, by Kevin Burke, LSW will help readers understand the wider impact of abortion on men, their relationships, families, faith and work lives. Through case studies, personal testimony, and the author’s 30 years of experience in post abortion counseling, you will encounter men devastated by unwanted abortions, the burden of shame and guilt carried by men who were passive at the time of the abortion decision or pressured their partners to abort, and the impact of abortion among the male prison population.

_Tears of the Fisherman_ is the _Russian version of Forbidden Grief_.

by: Dr. Theresa Burke, founder of Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries.
**Other Products Available**

*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.

*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.

*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.

Bookmarks and Bumper Stickers are available.
The Rachel’s Vineyard Brochure is now available in Spanish!

We are thrilled to include Rachel’s Vineyard DropCards as a new available resource!

For ordering, and for more information about our materials, please contact Kate O’Donnell at 610-354-0555.
Resources

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 & Branches
Our newsletter, Vine & 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://www.rachelsvineyard.org/resources/vine-branches.aspx

Youtube Channel
Last 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

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 8,590 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
Twitter
We are excited to have joined the Twitter community this year. Through social media sites like this, we are able to expand our reach and communicate with people in a new and exciting way. After only a few months, we’ve gained nearly 2,000 followers. We share encouraging posts, graphics, and quotes from those around the world, and share things that we hope will help and inspire our audience.
You can view our Twitter at: www.twitter.com/rvhealing

Instagram
Just a few months ago, we became a part of the Instagram community. We are up to 856 followers and counting. We share beautiful pictures along with messages of hope, love, support, and healing. Instagram is a beautiful way to share out message of healing with the world.
You can view our Instagram at: www.instagram.com/rvhealing

Pinterest
Pinterest is another form of Social Media that we utilize to spread our ministry. We post graphics that people can save and use on their own. These graphics include pictures and quotes from our Rachel’s Vineyard retreatants.
You can view our Pinterest at: www.pinterest.com/rachelsvineyard

"I finally saw that I am not bigger than God which is what I was doing by not forgiving myself and I want to learn to see myself as God sees me." - RVR Participant