March 2021

Rachel’s Vineyard Twin Cities:
Offering a chance to heal from the despair of abortion
By: Debbie Musser

Maggie Larson of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Isanti has found healing from abortion through a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat. The retreats are supported by funding from the Catholic Services Appeal.

DAVE HRBACEK | THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT

Maggie Larson was not a young teen when she found herself in an unwanted pregnancy in 1988.

“I was 27 years old and working as a psychotherapist,” Larson said. “I had been in a relationship for about two years and was taking the birth control pill; yet, I became pregnant.”

When she revealed this to her boyfriend, he was not at all pleased. He insisted that he was not ready to be a father and that abortion was the only answer.

“I am not placing blame on him; I was so full of fear and he was terrified, too,” she said.
Larson, 59, was raised Catholic, attending Annunciation School in Minneapolis and the Academy of Holy Angels in Richfield. She said she was fortunate to have a group of close girlfriends from those Catholic school years.

“I consider them family and love them all, but I did not share (the news of) my pregnancy at the time,” Larson said. “I was ashamed . . . so ashamed. And that’s why I didn’t go to my parents.

“Looking back now, I had it all wrong,” she said. “I think my friends and family would have helped me. But at the time, I had a boyfriend who didn’t want to help, so I thought I had no road out.”

A few weeks later, Larson, convinced she could not handle raising a child on her own and wanting to please her boyfriend, found herself in a St. Louis Park women’s clinic, seeking an abortion.

“I called in sick from work, walked in and recall all these women sitting there with dead looks on their faces,” she said. “And the silence was deafening.”

Fast forward five years to 1993: Larson went on to marry. After seven years of marriage and one son, the couple divorced.

“I would say that the abortion was ultimately a major factor in the divorce; I was afraid of being honest about anything, I was angry and depressed, and I was sure I was condemned to hell for having an abortion,” Larson said.

Today, Larson, an active member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Isanti, attends a prayer group, a Bible study and weekly adoration hour. She remarried in 2008 and works with her husband in a couple of family businesses.

“I met my husband in 2005 but kept the abortion secret for a long time; I was convinced he wouldn’t want me if he knew,” Larson said. “I finally told him at the kitchen table one day in a flood of tears and sorrow, and to my astonishment, he held me and consol me.”

Larson began searching for help to heal from her abortion. She came upon an ad for a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat in February 2015 and asked her husband to accompany her. He agreed.

“I have such deep regret, sorrow and despair about my abortion; it’s so isolating,” Larson said. “Rachel’s Vineyard helped me see that Jesus never abandoned me, and that while abortion is a grave sin, it’s not an unforgivable sin.”

Rachel’s Vineyard Twin Cities offers weekend healing retreats for mothers, fathers, grandparents and anyone struggling with abortion loss. Under the guidance of trained volunteers, using Scripture, meditations, group discussion, the sacraments and a memorial service and Mass to honor the children lost, the retreats allow participants to deeply explore their trauma, guilt and grief in a safe, confidential environment.

Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries is an international organization founded in 1995. “Most of our participants are women in their 40s and 50s; about 12% are men and 84% are Catholic,” said Nancy Blom, 58, executive director of Rachel’s Vineyard Twin Cities. “It’s an average of 24 years from the time of their abortion to when they attend their retreat.”
The retreat was life-changing for Larson. “My soul experienced such a release over the course of the retreat,” she said. “God led me there; he knew what I needed to come out of the prison I had been in for years. And now I have returned to my beautiful Catholic faith, with a very supportive community who reminds me to pray, seek God and listen to him.”

**IMPORTANT HELP**

Nancy Blom, executive director of Rachel’s Vineyard Twin Cities, said half of the local organization’s budget is from the Catholic Services Appeal Foundation. The funds are used for retreats and expanding its reach.

“Another very important aspect is that the Catholic Services Appeal sends a powerful message to our wounded body of Christ that the Church cares about them,” Blom said. “With healing, many of our participants become vibrant and active members of their churches, no longer feeling separated and unworthy.”

Parishes also can benefit from the appeal, said Jennifer Beaudry, CSAF executive director.

“When parishes go above their goal or even give more than last year, they receive parish sharing dollars to use wherever they need it most,” Beaudry said. “We were grateful to be able to share approximately 11%, or $1,100,000, with parishes in 2020.”

She said donors can give online, at their parish or by mail.

“We’re using a variety of tools,” Beaudry said, “so that parishes will have the flexibility to reach their parishioners however works best, and additionally this year, parishes will find an extensive tool kit on our website to help spread the word through digital and social channels.”

To learn more about the CSAF and to donate, visit csafspm.org.

**Article originally posted by The Catholic Spirit, and can be found here.**

"Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies."
~ St. Teresa of Calcutta

**Virtual Training Event**

Join Dr. Theresa Burke, a pioneer and expert in the Post Abortion Counseling movement for a dynamic and life-changing series of training that will build and strengthen a solid foundation for Healing After Abortion.

The Rachels’ Vineyard Professional Training Series will provide unique, practical, and
dynamic workshops to equip you for post abortion counseling.

This unique training will be held in 6 sessions over the course of 2 years.

**Session Dates:**
- February 22, 2021
- June 14, 2021
- October 18, 2021
- February 28, 2022
- June 13, 2022
- October 17, 2022

**Costs:**
- $15 per class
- $20 additional per class for CEU’s (pending)
- Multiple sessions discount
- Pay over time

**Audience:**
- **Clinicians**—morning classes are geared to clinicians, but open to all.
- **Clergy**—are welcome to attend all classes, with one class addressing your special role.
- **Rachel’s Vineyard Team**—are welcome to attend all classes.
- **Anyone**—and everyone is welcome. Even if you aren’t currently involved in this ministry, understanding the trauma that can stem from abortion can help you help so many!

*To learn more about this training, [click here.](#)*
*To visit the Facebook Event page, [click here.](#)*
*To Register directly, [click here.](#)*

"I hope you live a life you're proud of, and if you find you're not, I hope you have the strength to start over again."
~ F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Hidden Abortion Pain of Grandparents:
A Journey from the Calvary of Traumatic Loss to the Miracle of Resurrection
By: Kevin Burke, LSW

At age 19 Leann's daughter Lisa faced an unplanned pregnancy. The father of the child and his parents pressured Lisa to have an abortion. She scheduled the procedure at a nearby hospital.

Leann shares:
"I contacted our parish priest, Fr. Dominic, on the day of my daughter's procedure. I explained the situation and Fr. Dominick immediately rushed to the hospital to try and persuade Lisa to change her mind."
Fr. Dominick gave Lisa a rosary blessed by Saint Pope John Paul. He spoke of what a gift this baby is to the family, and how loved this child and grandchild would be.

Lisa walked away from the priest in tears and went into the procedure room to allow the doctors and nurses to assist in the destruction of her unborn baby.

Leann shares her emotional devastation:
"I cannot explain the level of grief and anger that flooded my heart and soul. I was filled with rage at the hospital and all involved with the procedure. But I was especially so deeply hurt and angry at my daughter for participating in the death of her child -- of my precious grandchild."

**Reaching Out from the Pain**

Shortly after the abortion Leann met with Fr. Dominick. He suggested she consider a Rachel's Vineyard Weekend healing program to grieve and heal of her loss as a grandparent.

Leann agreed and reports of her experience:
"The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat was a powerful weekend of healing for me and really went to the heart of my emotional trauma and grief, and helped me to find peace and closure. I formed a number of close friendships from that experience and we remained in touch at support group meetings and social events, loving and supporting, and praying for one another."

**A Miracle Unfolds**

During this time Leann would pray in Eucharistic Adoration and beg Jesus to call Lisa to healing. She could see how her daughter was suffering in the aftermath of the abortion.

Six months after the abortion, Lisa's brother asked if she would be the godmother of his baby boy. This event triggered a release of her pent-up abortion pain and Lisa suffered a nervous breakdown requiring hospitalization. She recovered from the breakdown, but remained deeply wounded. Two years after the abortion she met a man with an abortion in his history. He encouraged her to consider the Rachel's Vineyard weekend, and she agreed to attend.

Leann was blessed to be able to attend the memorial service on Sunday of her daughter's retreat, when participants honor the child with a special memorial service and Mass, and entrust the children to the Lord.

When Leann opened the memorial service program and looked over the list of names of the babies being entrusted to the Lord, she knew right away the name Lisa had given her child - Dominick Leonard.

Lisa named her baby after the priest, Fr. Dominick, who reached out to her in the hospital, and after the abortion continued to reflect the love and mercy of Christ to the family.

Leann reflecting on the retreat experience:
"We know now that Dominic is alive with the Lord. We grieved and honored the child together as mother and daughter -- as mother and grandmother. This was a time of grace and healing in our relationship which had been so deeply damaged by abortion."
Validating a Hidden Grief

Catholic therapist Donna Gardner has extensive experience as a counselor and Rachel's Vineyard facilitator in the Palm Beach area of Florida. She was invited by a parish pastor to share a message of abortion healing at all the Masses offered that weekend. This particular parish has a large population of retired women and men. Donna decided to focus on a population that is often overlooked when considering the aftermath of an abortion - grandparents.

As Donna began to share her message with the parishioners, she became aware that many in the congregation deeply moved by the acknowledgement of their grief as grandparents; she could see their eyes filling with tears and hear some openly express their pain.

I asked Donna if she was surprised that the parishioners felt comfortable publicly sharing their grief. Donna responded:

"The pastor here has worked very hard for years to establish an engaging and positive pro-life culture in his parish that includes the healing message of the Church for those wounded by abortion. This is a safe place for the parishioners to acknowledge this loss openly."

Donna went on to offer a program for abortion loss for grandparents in that parish and later was invited to share a healing message at five other parishes in the area.

You can learn more about Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats at www.RachelsVineyard.org and grandparents and abortion loss at Silent No More Awareness

[Therapist Donna Gardner and her husband Eric are the founders of Magdalene's Joy, a non-profit Christian organization dedicated to the support, healing and restoration of men and women impacted by the harmful effects of abortion, abuses, or other hurtful life choices.]

"Courage is grace under pressure."
~ Ernest Hemingway

A Message from the Pastoral Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you know, the abortion wounds from which people seek healing on Rachel's Vineyard Retreats do not only result from the inherent destructiveness of the procedure. They also come from the uncaring, unscrupulous ways in which the abortion clinics are run and the abortionists treat the mothers who come to them.

The more we understand about the environment of abortion clinics in America today, the better we understand the suffering of those to whom we minister.

For decades I have been involved in a number of projects to uncover the horror of how these clinics function. Now, a new 50-state report has been issued about these clinics,
documenting more than 2400 health and safety violations reported just since 2008. In the Americans United for Life publication “Unsafe,” you can read about the common scenarios of untrained staff, expired medications, poorly maintained equipment, faulty buildings, neglect of patients, and disrespect for patient privacy.

The full document is on the Priests for Life website here.

So many come to us for healing after they have been traumatized. May we accompany them courageously in facing the powerful mercy and healing of Christ.

Sincerely,

Fr. Frank Pavone
Pastoral Director, Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries
National Director, Priests for Life

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows; it empties today of its strength."
~ Corrie Ten Boom

Connect with us!!
Rachel's Vineyard Social Media

Facebook Fan Page: facebook.com/rachelsvineyard
YouTube: youtube.com/user/rachelsvineyard
Twitter: twitter.com/RVHealing
Pinterest: pinterest.com/rachelsvineyard
Instagram: www.instagram.com/rvhealing
"Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful. And believe that anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you."
~ Misty Copeland

**United in Prayer**

Please keep **Jeannie Craig**, longtime supporter of Rachel’s Vineyard, in your prayers as she mourns the loss of her husband, Dan Ring. Please pray for repose of Dan’s soul.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Karol Meynard**, Rachel’s Vineyard Leader in Lafayette, LA. Please keep her family and friends in your prayers as they try to find peace in the loss.

"Faith does not eliminate questions, but faith knows where to take them."
~ Elisabeth Elliot

**Upcoming Grief to Grace Retreats**
www.GrieftoGrace.org
(Retreat dates subject to change due to Covid-19)

**Phoenix, AZ**
Email: Phoenix@grieftograce.org
Call: 480-215-6762

**July 11-16, 2021**
**August 11-15, 2021** **Retreat Held in Spanish**
**October 10-15, 2021**

**Houston, TX**
Email: G2GTexas@GrieftoGrace.org
Call: 866-763-6557

**May 29-June 2, 2021**
**August 28-September 1, 2021**

**Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN**
Email: Diane@grieftograce.org
Call: 612-440-7247

**June 6-11, 2021**

**Lake Charles, LA**
Email: griefogracelouisiana@lcdiocese.org
Call: Marjorie Long – 337-489-2473

**June 29-July 2, 2021**
Newark, NJ
Email: info@grieftograce.org
Call: 610-203-2002

Beaverton, OR
Email: GrieftoGraceOregon@gmail.com
Call: 541-357-7501

Philadelphia, PA
Email: Philadelphia@Grieftograce.Org
Call: 610-427-1187
Call: 610-203-2002
March 21-26, 2021

International:

Perth, Australia
Website: https://rachelsvineyardministriesperth.wordpress.com/grief-to-grace
Email: perth@grieftograce.org
Call: +61-0-413-593-059

Cote D’Azur, France
Website: www.duchagrinalagrace.com
Email: g2g.lsi.france@gmail.com
Call: +33 6 09 39 79 27
July 5-11, 2021
**Retreat held in Abbayes Notre Dame de Jouarre

El Salvador
Email: Anajhill@hotmail.com
Call: Ana Julia Hill – 503-772-97-721
Call: Nueva Alianza – 503-229-87-000

Kelowna, Canada
Email: G2GKelowna@gmail.com
Call: 250-878-7603

London, UK
Email: info@grieftograceuk.org
Call: +44-207-937-4297
Call: +44-07484-248-799

Slovenia
Email: tomaz.mikus@gmail.com

"My God turns my darkness into light."
~ Psalm 18:28
**Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Weekends**  
**March & April**

**Columbus, OH**  
Website Address: www.OurChoiceOurVoice.org  
Contact: Carolyn Klair  614-721-2100  CarolynK@pdhc.org  
Denomination: Interdenominational  
Friday, March 5, 2021  
Sunday, March 7, 2021

**Lubbock, TX**  
Contact: Mindy Yarbrough  806-702-2284  rios2000us@yahoo.com  
Friday, March 5, 2021  
Sunday, March 7, 2021

**Northwest Indiana, IN**  
Contact: Rosanne Kouris  219-552-2944  nwinrv@outlook.com  
Friday, March 5, 2021  
Sunday, March 7, 2021

**Philadelphia Area, PA**  
Contact: Georgeann McGarry  484-955-4278  geemcgarry@gmail.com  
Contact: Susan  610-716-4795  
Friday, March 5, 2021  
Sunday, March 7, 2021

**Asheville, NC**  
Contact: Jackie Childers  980 241-0251  jackie.childers1@gmail.com  
Contact: Spanish - Karina Hernandez  336-267-1937  
Contact: Spanish - Lorena Haynes  828-585-0483  
Language: Spanish  
Friday, March 12, 2021  
Sunday, March 14, 2021

**Chicago (Polish), IL**  
Website Address: http://www.aborcjabolterapia.com/  
Contact: In Polish - Sr. Maksymiliana Kaminska  773 656 7703  rekolekcjechicago@gmail.com  
Contact: In English - Magda Zagrodek  773 946 2697  rekolekcjechicago@gmail.com  
Language: Polish  
Friday, March 12, 2021  
Sunday, March 14, 2021

**Grand Rapids, MI**  
Contact: Maggie Walsh  616-340-1824  mwalsh@ccwestmi.org  
Contact: Toll-free (MI only)  800-800-8284  
Friday, March 12, 2021  
Sunday, March 14, 2021  
*Note: Virtual retreat with the option of lodging at the Franciscan Center if unable to participate virtually from home.*
Maison de la Trinité, ACR, France
Contact: Joel Rosenfeld 06-08-42-43-81 lavignederacheloise@gmail.com
Language: French
Friday, March 12, 2021
Sunday, March 14, 2021

Peoria, IL
Website Address: www.cdop.org/rachels-vineyard
Contact: Colleen Harmon 309-264-1489 rvrpeoria@gmail.com
Contact: Cathy Trowbridge 309-264-1489 rvrpeoria@gmail.com
Friday, March 12, 2021
Sunday, March 14, 2021

Albuquerque/Santa Fe, NM
Contact: Sophie Serna 505-386-7922 Smserna1@gmail.com
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021

Central Indiana, IN
Contact: Jennie Hack 765-404-9583 jenniehack@gmail.com
Contact: David Bangs 765-860-6006 dlbangs1@gmail.com
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021

Houston, TX
Website Address: https://www.archgh.org/projectrachel
Contact: Cindy 713-825-0649 cindy@rvhouston.org
Contact: Julie Fritsch 713-741-8728 jkfritsch@archgh.org
Contact: Zulema (Spanish Contact) 713-440-3443 zgonzalez@archgh.org
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021

Lake Geneva (Interdenominational), WI
Website Address: www.twentythree61.com
Contact: Women contact Amber Culverhouse 262-325-1970 littlesue123@yahoo.com
Contact: Men contact Alex Chobanian 262-989-6553 alexchobanian@gmail.com
Contact: Donna Brendel 262-620-3608 donnajane2361@gmail.com
Contact: Para Español llamada Laura Brown 414-975-2270 lsbs2p@gmail.com
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021

Lancaster County, PA
Contact: Becky Biter – English 717-788-4959 undefeatedcourage@gmail.com
Contact: Indhira Garcia – Spanish 717-788-4959 vdryorkpa@gmail.com
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021

Madison, WI
Website Address: www.madisondiocese.org/rachel
Contact: Mary Mead 608-221-9593 meadmt@sbcglobal.net
Contact: Mary Mead 608-821-3177 rachel@straphael.org
Friday, March 19, 2021
Sunday, March 21, 2021
Atlanta (For Military & Veterans), GA
Contact: Jody Duffy, RN  404-247-9046 militaryandveterans@supportafterabortion.com
Denomination: Interdenominational
Friday, March 26, 2021
Sunday, March 28, 2021

Cork, ICK, Ireland
Website Address: www.rachelsvineyard.ie
Contact: Bernadette Goulding  087 859 2877 noramalone15@yahoo.com
Friday, March 26, 2021
Sunday, March 28, 2021

Shreveport, LA
Contact: Rosalba Quiroz – Spanish 318-588-1064 rquiroz@dioshpt.org
Language: Spanish
Friday, March 26, 2021
Sunday, March 28, 2021

Cedar Rapids, IA
Website Address: bridgehavencr.org/abortion-recovery-support/take-courage/
Contact: Haley Brimmer 319-364-8967 haley@bridgehavencr.org
Denomination: Interdenominational
Friday, April 9, 2021
Sunday, April 11, 2021

Lafayette, LA
Website Address: https://www.diolaf.org/pro-life
Contact: Trista M. Littell 337-261-5598 tlittell@diolaf.org
Friday, April 9, 2021
Sunday, April 11, 2021

Sherbrooke, QC, Canada
Contact: Mélanie Poisson 819-570-6333 mielanie@videotron.ca
Language: French
Friday, April 9, 2021
Sunday, April 11, 2021

Austin, TX
Contact: Sheryle Knorre 512-876-8049 sheryle@celebration.church
Friday, April 16, 2021
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Cypress/Katy (Interdenom), TX
Website Address: www.newheartoftexas.org
Contact: Mary Lee Mason 866-763-6557 rvinfo@newheartoftexas.org
Friday, April 16, 2021
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Honolulu, HI
Contact: Lisa Shorba 808-349-5071 RVinHawaii@gmail.com
Friday, April 16, 2021
Sunday, April 18, 2021
Louisville (Interdenominational), KY  
Contact: Linda Johnson 502-235-3191  lindajohnson@TWC.com  
Friday, April 16, 2021  
Sunday, April 18, 2021  
*Note: Retreat will be held virtually.*

Maison Saint Joseph, ACR, France  
Website Address: www.lavignederachel.net  
Contact: Joel Rosenfeld  06-08-42-43-81  lavignederacheloise@gmail.com  
Language: French  
Friday, April 16, 2021  
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN  
Website Address: www.rvineyardmn.org  
Contact: Nancy Blom  763-250-9313  rachels@rvineyardmn.org  
Friday, April 16, 2021  
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Portland, OR  
Contact: Lori Eckstine  541-942-2861  ProjectAurora@aol.com  
Friday, April 16, 2021  
Sunday, April 18, 2021

Bismarck, SD  
Website Address: www.rapidcitydiocese.org  
Contact: Carol Kling  605-374-5639  ckling@sdplains.com  
Friday, April 23, 2021  
Sunday, April 25, 2021  
*Note: **VIRTUAL RETREAT***

Dallas, TX  
Website Address: www.racheldallas.org  
Contact: Debbie Kaluza  214 544 2273  healing@racheldallas.org  
Friday, April 23, 2021  
Sunday, April 25, 2021

Doylestown, PA  
Contact: Evelyn  215-317-5752  evelynwalsh59@gmail.com  
Contact: Daria Zarczynska-Polish  201-754-8201  kontakt@winnicaracheli.org  
Friday, April 23, 2021  
Sunday, April 25, 2021

Encino (Interdenominational), CA  
Contact: Tegra Little  833-652-6863  info@nolongerboundministry.org  
Friday, April 23, 2021  
Sunday, April 25, 2021

Kansas City, MO  
Contact: Teresa O'Donnell  1-816-679-4973  rvkcmo@gmail.com  
Friday, April 23, 2021  
Sunday, April 25, 2021
Newark, NJ
Contact: Cheryl Riley  973-497-4350  Cheryl.riley@rcan.org
Contact: Spanish Contact  elvinedoderaquelinfo@rcan.org
Language: Spanish
Friday, April 23, 2021
Sunday, April 25, 2021

Rapid City, SD
Website Address: www.rapidcitydiocese.org
Contact: Carol Kling  605-374-5639  ckling@sdplains.com
Friday, April 23, 2021
Sunday, April 25, 2021
Note: **VIRTUAL RETREAT**

Richardton, ND
Contact: Carol Kling  605-374-5639  ckling@sdplains.com
Friday, April 23, 2021
Sunday, April 25, 2021
Note: **VIRTUAL RETREAT**

Tucson, AZ
Website Address: https://www.rachelsvineyardtucson.org
Contact: Teresa Small  520-743-6777  rachelsvineyardtucson@gmail.com
Friday, April 23, 2021
Sunday, April 25, 2021

Hildesheim, Niedersachsen, Germany
Website Address: www.rachelsweinberg.de
Contact: Anne Arthur  amecarthur@yahoo.com
Contact: Christiane Kurpik  +49-(0)5121-133761  rachelsweinberg@email.de
Language: German
Friday, April 30, 2021
Sunday, May 2, 2021
Note: Retreat held in Weinheim

Houston, TX
Website Address: https://www.archgh.org/projectrachel
Contact: Cindy  713-825-0649  cindy@rvhouston.org
Contact: Julie Fritsch  713-741-8728  jkfritsch@archgh.org
Contact: Zulema (Spanish Contact)  713-440-3443  zgonzalez@archgh.org
Language: Spanish
Friday, April 30, 2021
Sunday, May 2, 2021

Sioux Falls, SD
Contact: Margi Culhane  1-800-700-7867  mculhane@sfcatholic.org
Contact: Mary Weber  605-988-3775
Friday, April 30, 2021
Sunday, May 2, 2021

Tulsa, OK
Website Address: www.cceok.org/healing-after-abortion
Contact: Kevin  918-884-4536  counseling@cceok.org
Contact: Spanish – Clara  918-902-6687
Friday, April 30, 2021
Sunday, May 2, 2021