No matter what side of the abortion issue you are on — pro-life or pro-choice — one thing is certain. The life of a child is lost every single time. Whether the abortion took place last week, last year or even 30 years ago, Marjorie Long wants people to know something else that is certain: forgiveness and healing through a Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat.

“Healing is out there. It is available,” said Long, the licensed site leader for Rachel’s Vineyard in the Diocese of Lake Charles. “We are going to take them (retreatants), love them, welcome them, and serve them the best way we know how.”

A worldwide ministry for Priests for Life and sponsored locally by the Diocese, the weekend scripture-based retreat is for anyone struggling with guilt, depression, regret or other difficult emotions brought about from an abortion. The step-by-step process provides “therapy for the soul” in a safe, strictly confidential, non-judgmental environment.

A monstrance designed especially for Rachel’s Vineyard retreats is hand carved in the form of the Blessed Virgin Mary, cradling the Eucharist. Adorers are invited to pray for the retreatants.
between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. on Saturday of the retreat.

“The salvation of souls is what I am after in these retreats,” said Long with determination in her voice. “If their soul is truly healed and they feel forgiveness from God’s mercy and love, they will have the power to work through all the pain,” she said. “It’s still going to be a journey for them. It’s not going to happen with just one weekend, but they will have what it takes to continue on their journey of healing.”

This summer marks 10 years for Rachel’s Vineyard in the Diocese of Lake Charles with Long having completed 18 months of training and preparation before that first retreat in July 2010. There were nine retreatants with 25 babies memorialized. The following year, Long began scheduling two retreats per year and has done so ever since with Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff as the setting for sensory-based therapy which integrates emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Founded in 1995 by psychologist Dr. Theresa Burke, Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries has grown to more than 1,000 retreats annually, at 375 sites, held in 49 states and 70 countries, with many new sites in development. The retreats are currently offered in 27 languages in both Catholic and interdenominational settings.

The weekend offers an opportunity to examine the abortion experience and identify ways that the loss has impacted the persons involved. The retreat helps to acknowledge any unresolved feelings that many individuals struggle with after abortion. These buried feelings can surface many years after the fact and can lead to symptoms of post-abortion trauma and self-destruction taking on many forms.

Having worked in a pregnancy crisis center for 10 years, Long had seen firsthand the impact abortions can have on the mothers of unborn children. It is all too common for them to experience feelings of emptiness, low self-esteem, self-hatred, depression and low self-worth, she said.

Acknowledging that what she witnesses weighs heavily on her heart, Long said she knows without a doubt that God wanted this ministry in the Diocese; he just needed a servant. Still, she is careful to strengthen herself spiritually in order to fulfill her role.

“I know that God has called me, and he has given me the graces and gifts,” said Long. “I armor myself with daily Mass, frequent confession, and receive the Eucharist as often as possible.”

When Long hears people say that abortion is not really their concern, her response is: “It’s all of our concern. It affects everyone because that is a life not here that God intended to be born. One abortion has such a rippling effect on so many people.”

Long emphasizes that Rachel’s Vineyard is for anyone who has been affected by an abortion or anyone who played a part in the abortion decision. She said for every abortion, multiple lives are affected — including mothers, fathers and family members of aborted children, as well as those who have been involved in the abortion industry — and it doesn’t matter how long ago the abortion took place.

“Grief hits different people at different times. Certain things trigger their lives,” she said. “They are not just dealing with the loss of the baby. Some people will also have triggers from the physical part of the abortion,” Long continued. “It might be a smell, something that connects to the trauma that took place at the abortion clinic.”

While we are all called to forgive one another, sometimes the hardest thing to do is to
forgive ourselves for our own sins. Rachel’s Vineyard wants to help the retreatants uncover what led them on their journey to making the decision to abort their baby, and then help them forgive themselves.

In one of the series of scriptural exercises, the retreatants reflect on the story of the Woman at the Well. (John 4: 4-30). It is during this part of the retreat where they are learning to let go of their shame.

“It’s hard for them to let go of the guilt,” Long said, “because the guilt is all they have left of the child they don’t have anymore. Most of them have gone to confession over and over even before coming to the retreat,” she continued, “but they are still trying to live with their decision. You cannot get through it until you go through it. They can go through it at Rachel’s Vineyard.”

Long said the retreat gives them permission to own their actions, to let it go, to give it to God, and to allow themselves to accept forgiveness.

During another scriptural exercise, retreatants reflect on the story of the Blind Man. (Mark 10:46-52)

“In this exercise, we want them to understand, you are not a bad person. People can get caught in the devil’s trap,” said Long. “They begin to see where they were blinded. What was going on in their life that led them to the decision of abortion?”

A lot of Catholics let their choice to have one or more abortions keep them away from the sacraments. “When they have been living with this kind of sin, they are usually staying away from the very things that can help heal them,” said Long. “They lose sight of their faith.”

There is an opportunity during the retreat for the mothers to reconnect with their babies on a spiritual level. This is a chance to give the unborn children honor and dignity through a memorial service on the final day of the retreat. Because of the nature of the pregnancy loss, the baby was never held or properly buried, Long explained.

After sharing in the “Cup of Grace” segment, participants move directly into the memorial service — a time for mothers and fathers to place a bereavement doll in a “Moses” basket. Long said by doing so, this is another way to release the pain and heartache and place their baby in the arms of the Creator. It brings comfort, allowing to let go. Also during the service, a chance to reconnect with the unborn children is offered through poems, written letters and songs.

In addition to discussions and spiritual exercises, the weekend includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a Mass of Entrustment, and Exposition of the Holy Eucharist. A monstrance designed especially for Rachel’s Vineyard retreats is hand carved in the form of the Blessed Virgin Mary, cradling the Eucharist.

Retreatants are invited to kneel at the altar with the Blessed Sacrament and express out loud to Jesus what they are feeling as they gaze their eyes upon Christ.

“At the end of the road, when this part of their life is healed, the retreatants will have what it takes to live life,” said Long. “Yes, they own the consequences of their actions, but they can accept the healing. They are putting their relationship back together with God. He never left.”

The retreat format used in the Diocese of Lake Charles is Catholic-based, but any denomination is welcome to attend. Team members consist of a licensed counselor,
women and men who have experienced abortion, compassionate volunteers and a priest. Retreat sizes are small, usually 8-10, so participants can receive individual care as needed. Nothing is forced on anyone during any time of the retreat.

The next Rachel's Vineyard Retreat is scheduled for Feb. 12-14 and Oct. 22-24 in 2021. Long encourages anyone to make the call, come with an open heart. “You are worthy of it,” she said.

For more information on Rachel’s Vineyard or to register for an upcoming retreat, contact: Marjorie Long, site director in the Diocese of Lake Charles, at 337-489-2473, or email rachels.vineyard@lcdiocese.org For a national listing of retreat dates and locations as well as testimonials, visit www.rachelsvineyard.org

"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."
~ Helen Keller

Beautiful Catholic Ministry for Families
Hurting After the Loss of a Child from Pregnancy Through Adulthood

From Red Bird Ministries:

“Ryan and Kelly Breaux gave birth to a set of twins in 2005, a son Talon and a daughter Emma Grace. Talon died after 15 days with Emma Grace joining her brother in Heaven three years later.

Their lives were propelled onto a personal journey of both discovery and recovery after battling a decade of darkness in their marriage.

By the grace of God, their marriage was saved. Through the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, the Breaux’s found healing and restoration. Ryan and Kelly felt called to help others navigate the pain and unexpected challenges that come from the loss of a child, and through their first divine vocation of parenthood, Red Bird Ministries was born.”

Here’s a great interview with Kelly followed by a brief video to introduce you to the couple’s story and their ministry.

**Orginally shared on Kevin Burke's blog, which can be found here.

"Sushine comes to all who feel rain."
~R.M. Drake
RV Recommends:
Homily on Rachel's Vineyard by Bishop Kelly in Dallas, TX

In the following video clip, Bishop Kelly describes his experience serving on the Rachel's Vineyard retreat weekend. To watch the video, click here (start at 33:45).

"Maybe you've been assigned this mountain to show others it can be moved."
~ Unknown

A Message from the Pastoral Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Rachel’s Vineyard heals the multi-faceted wounds of abortion. The very existence of this ministry, not to mention its continued strength, growth, and abundant fruits, contradicts those who say abortion is a benefit, even a blessing.

Those voices, in these next two months, will be heard in various electoral campaigns. They will be loud, clear – and unpersuasive.

If a nation is going to remove protection from the unborn by its laws and court decisions, then the same people who write, sign, and judge those laws need to know about the devastating effects of those laws and decisions.

So many of our fellow citizens have become aware of Rachel’s Vineyard and have heard the testimonies of those who have participated in this process. This strengthens their resolve to do all they can in the upcoming election to choose leaders who will protect as many people as possible from the destructive force of abortion.

May we play our full role in building the Culture of Life in this election season!

Sincerely,

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

"He loves you today, with a full understanding of your struggles."
~ Dieter F. Uchtdorf
United in Prayer

Please keep the Rachel's Vineyard retreat teams and retreat participants in your prayers. Many of our teams are beginning to hold retreats again this fall. We pray for the health and safety of our teams as they navigate holding retreats during the pandemic, and pray that those who have been waiting for healing find hope, support, and peace.

"I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice?"
~ C.S. Lewis

Connect with us!!
Rachel’s Vineyard in 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

"Courage is grace under pressure."
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

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

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

Lake Charles, LA
Email: grieftograceLouisiana@lcdioce.se.org
Call: Marjorie Long – 337-489-2473
June 30-July 3, 2021

Newark, NJ
Email: info@grieftograce.org
Call: 610-203-2002

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

Aston, PA
Email: info@grieftograce.org Call: 610-203-2002

International:

Perth, Australia
Website: https://rachelsvineyardministriesperth.wordpress.com/grief-to-grace
Email: perth@grieftograce.org
Call: +61-0-413-593-059
October 20-25, 2020

Cote D’Azur, France
Email: g2g.lsi.france@gmail.com
Call: +33 6 09 39 79 27

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
November 11-15, 2020

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

**Slovenia**
Email: tomaz.mikus@gmail.com

"The pain that you've been feeling cannot compare to the joy that's coming."
~ Romans 8:18

**Upcoming Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats**
(Retreat dates subject to change due to Covid-19)

**Agnes/Fort Worth/Glen Rose, TX**
Website Address: www.racheltx.org
Contact: Betsy Kopor
817-923-4757
forgiven@racheltx.org
Friday, September 11, 2020
Sunday, September 13, 2020

**Dallas, TX**
Website Address: www.racheldallas.org
Contact: Regina Rivas
214 544 2273
healing@racheldallas.org
Friday, September 11, 2020
Sunday, September 13, 2020

**Janesville (Interdenominational), WI**
Website Address: www.pregnancy-helpline.net
Contact: Pregnancy Helpline
608-755-9739
cheryl@pregnancy-helpline.net
Contact: Donna Lessner
608-931-1065
dnaponwywi@aol.com
Friday, September 11, 2020
Sunday, September 13, 2020

**Newark, NJ**
Contact: Cheryl Riley
973-497-4350
rileyche@rcan.org
Contact: Spanish Contact
elvinedoderaquelinfo@rcan.org
Language: English
Friday, September 11, 2020
Sunday, September 13, 2020

Lancaster, KY
Website Address: https://www.cdlex.org/rachels-vineyard-2
Contact: Peggy Sheiko
859-310-3970
hope@cdlex.org
Friday, September 18, 2020
Sunday, September 20, 2020

Lubbock, TX
Contact: Mindy Yarbrough
806-702-2284
rios2000us@yahoo.com
Friday, September 18, 2020
Sunday, September 20, 2020

Prescott Valley, AZ
Contact: Diane Duncan
928-308-6859
rvrpvaz@gmail.com
Contact: Jeanne
928-910-5253
rvrpvaz@gmail.com
Friday, September 18, 2020
Sunday, September 20, 2020

Tampa, FL
Contact: Carmen Claypoole - Spanish & English
813-924-4173
projectrachel@ccdosp.org
Language: Spanish
Friday, September 18, 2020
Sunday, September 20, 2020

Upstate / Greenville, SC
Contact: Christy
803-554-6088
grace4healing@gmail.com
Contact: Kathy
803-546-6010
kcs6010@gmail.com
Friday, September 18, 2020
Sunday, September 20, 2020

Denver, CO
Website Address: www.rvrcolorado.org
Contact: Lori Frank
303-904-7414 lorgreg@msn.com
Contact: Edith Gutierrez
303-775-4108
edieg2@aol.com
**Lancaster County, PA**
Contact: Becky Biter - English
717-788-4959
defeatedcourage@gmail.com
Contact: Indhira Garcia - Spanish
717-788-4959
dryorkpa@gmail.com
Friday, September 25, 2020
Sunday, September 27, 2020

**Maison de la Trinité, ACR, France**
Contact: Joel Rosenfeld
06-08-42-43-81
lavignederacheloise@gmail.com
Language: French
Friday, September 25, 2020
Sunday, September 27, 2020

**Springfield, MA**
Contact: To Register
413-452-0661
Contact: Yolanda Mendez
413-530-0298
yolandam3@msn.com
Contact: Joetta
516-457-2838
joettadawson@gmail.com
Language: Spanish
Friday, September 25, 2020
Sunday, September 27, 2020

**Thorn, Netherland Antilles**
Contact: Salome Irene van der Wende
info@abortioninformation.eu
Language: Dutch
Friday, September 25, 2020
Sunday, September 27, 2020

**Cluj-Napoca, CN, Romania**
Website Address: www.facebook.com/viarahelei
Contact: Fr. Mihai Groza
0040742649889
mihaidgroza@yahoo.com
Language: Romanian
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

**Dallas (Español), TX**
Website Address: www.racheldallas.org
Contact: Eileen Kuhlmann
972 900 7262
sanacion@racheldallas.org
Friday, October 2, 2020
Doylestown, PA
Contact: Evelyn
215-317-5752
evelynwalsh59@gmail.com
Contact: Daria Zarczynska-Polish
201-754-8201
kontakt@winnicaracheli.org
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

Fresno, CA
Contact: Jennifer Butcher
877-629-6626
butcher_jennifer@yahoo.com
Contact: Paula and Edward Davalos - Español
paula.d@fbcare.org
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

Lafayette, LA
Website Address: https://www.diolaf.org/pro-life
Contact: Trista M. Littell
337-261-5598
tlittell@diolaf.org
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

Richmond, VA
Contact: Marty Montgomery-Jennings
804 704 0429
rv4hope@gmail.com
Contact: Maggie Carlson
804 432 2589
rv4hope@gmail.com
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

Wichita, KS
Contact: Bonnie Toombs
316-269-3935
toombsb@CatholicDioceseOfWichita.org
Contact: Stephanie Nemechek
316-269-3900x134
nemecheks@catholicdioceseofwichita.org
Friday, October 2, 2020
Sunday, October 4, 2020

Atlanta, GA
Website Address: www.healingafterabortion.org
Contact: Christine Hodges
404.717.5557
director@pathatl.com
Friday, October 9, 2020
Sunday, October 11, 2020
**Mexico City, MX**  
Website Address: www.irma.org.mx  
Contact: Maria Esther  
52603178  
me.cardoso@irma.org.mx  
Contact: Maria Esther Cardoso  
52-60-31-78  
ayuda@irma.org.mx  
Language: Spanish  
Friday, October 9, 2020  
Sunday, October 11, 2020

**Vienna, Austria**  
Contact: Claudia Schneidenbach  
(+43) 0699-1021-4241  
info@rachelsweinberg.at  
Language: German  
Friday, October 9, 2020  
Sunday, October 11, 2020

**Bogotá, Colombia**  
Contact: Myriam Fernandez  
312-406-7127  
miryamf52@gmail.com  
Language: Spanish  
Saturday, October 10, 2020  
Monday, October 12, 2020

**Medellin, Colombia**  
Contact: Margarita Agudelo  
316-657-8585  
entretusmanos33@gmail.com  
Language: Spanish  
Saturday, October 10, 2020  
Monday, October 12, 2020

**Cypress/Katy (Interdenom), TX**  
Website Address: www.newheartoftexas.org  
Contact: Mary Lee Mason  
866-763-6557  
rinfo@newheartoftexas.org  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020

**Encino (Interdenominational), CA**  
Contact: Tegra Little  
833-652-6863  
info@nolongerboundministry.org  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020

**Honolulu, HI**  
Contact: Lisa Shorba  
808-349-5071  
RVinHawaii@gmail.com  
Contact: Sr. Geralyn Spaulding, OSB  
(808) 741-3819  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**Kelowna, BC, Canada**  
Website Address: www.rachelsvineyardkelowna.com  
Contact: Vicki Deschner  
250-762-2273  
info@rachelsvineyardkelowna.com  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**Knoxville, TN**  
Contact: Sandi Davidson  
865-776-4510  
sandi@ccetn.org  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**Midland, TX**  
Contact: Priscilla Fuentez  
432-897-4788  
rachelsvineyardsanangelo@gmail.com  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**North Battleford, SK, Canada**  
Contact: Elaine Webster  
306-480-8911  
r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**Providence, RI**  
Website Address: www.dioceseofprovidence.org  
Contact: Lisa Cooley  
401-278-2518  
lcooley@dioceseofprovidence.org  
Contact: Spanish Contact: Loren  
401-742-1510  
Contact: Spanish Contact: Rosa Moreno  
401-688-4687  
Contact: Judy  
401-351-7730  
Language: Spanish  
Friday, October 16, 2020  
Sunday, October 18, 2020  

**Cache Creek, BC, Canada**  
Contact: Nancy Hadden  
250-267-5081  
rvkamloops@yahoo.ca
Bowling Green/Owensboro, KY
Website Address: www.hopeafterabortionky.com
Contact: Wendy
270-474-4707
wendyc@hopeafterabortionky.com
Friday, October 23, 2020
Sunday, October 25, 2020

Kansas City, MO
Contact: Teresa O'Donnell
1-816-679-4973
rvkcmo@gmail.com
Friday, October 23, 2020
Sunday, October 25, 2020

Lancaster County, PA
Contact: Becky Biter - English
717-788-4959
undefeatedcourage@gmail.com
Contact: Indhira Garcia - Spanish
717-788-4959
vdryorkpa@gmail.com
Friday, October 23, 2020
Sunday, October 25, 2020

Northwest Indiana, IN
Contact: Rosanne Kouris
219-552-2944
nwinrv@outlook.com
Friday, October 23, 2020
Sunday, October 25, 2020

Providence, RI
Website Address: www.dioceseofprovidence.org
Contact: Lisa Cooley
401-278-2518
lcooley@dioceseofprovidence.org
Contact: Spanish Contact: Loren
401-742-1510
Contact: Spanish Contact: Rosa Moreno
401-688-4687
Contact: Judy
401-351-7730
Friday, October 23, 2020
Sunday, October 25, 2020

Doral (Español), FL
Contact: Martha Endara
305-586-9604
vinedoraquel@guadalupedoral.org
Friday, October 30, 2020
Sunday, November 1, 2020
Greater Boston Area, NH
Contact: Susan Clifton
603-315-6971
rvofgreaterboston@gmail.com
Denomination: Interdenominational
Friday, October 30, 2020
Sunday, November 1, 2020

Greater Boston Area, MA
Contact: Susan Clifton
603-315-6971
rvofgreaterboston@gmail.com
Denomination: Interdenominational
Friday, October 30, 2020
Sunday, November 1, 2020

Newark, NJ
Contact: Cheryl Riley
973-497-4350
rileyc@rcan.org
Contact: Spanish Contact
elvinedoderaquelinfo@rcan.org
Language: Spanish
Friday, October 30, 2020
Sunday, November 1, 2020

Ottawa (Interdenominational), ON, Canada
Website Address: www.rachelsvineyardottawa.ca
Contact: Terry or Lynda Munroe
613-806-5522
rvr_ottawa@yahoo.ca
Friday, October 30, 2020
Sunday, November 1, 2020

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
Website Address: www.rvineyardmn.org
Contact: Nancy Blom
763-250-9313
rachels@rvineyardmn.org
Saturday, October 31, 2020
Monday, November 2, 2020