

VINE AND BRANCHES

December 2007

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Rachel's Vineyard is on the web at: www.rachelsvineyard.org

Our national toll-free hotline is (877) HOPE-4-ME.

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Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats for emotional and spiritual healing after abortion are held internationally. Rachel's Vineyard welcomes women, men, couples, grandparents and abortion providers. Our retreats are held in both Catholic and interdenominational settings. Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is a resource for clinical training, education and healing models.

Rachel's Vineyard is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. All contributions are tax-deductible. We work in partnership with Priests for Life and Gospel of Life Ministries.

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Help us spread the Good News! Pass along this newsletter to friends and colleagues. If you are receiving this newsletter because a friend forwarded it to you, details on subscribing (or unsubscribing) appear at the end.

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May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace,

The gladness of Christmas give you hope,

The warmth of Christmas grant you love.

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A Christmas Message from Kevin & Theresa Burke

“My power is made perfect in weakness”

(2 Cor. 12:9)

The King of the Universe enters this world as a helpless infant.

This reality plunges us deep into the abyss of a mystery whose depths we can plumb for all eternity.

But in a special way the mystery of the Humility of Christ is very near and dear to the mission of Rachel's Vineyard, and to all who struggle to heal from the type of complicated grief and anguish that abortion and other abuse can unleash on the human heart.

Entering the door to healing often feels like crossing an abyss of great fear...fear of judgment, fear of being torn apart by pain, self hatred or rage toward those who abandoned you, fear or anger toward those who manipulated you during a time of temptation. For men in particular, entering the unknown waters of emotional vulnerability, so necessary to healing, calls for a different kind of courage -- one that initially feels like weakness.

For all of us, the door to any healing is humility. Sometimes this humility comes a long time after the loss. It is born from the inability to contain the pain any longer, from weariness of living with the consequences of not healing.

The greatest gift we can give to God, especially those of us entrusted with leadership in ministry, is a humble heart. A humble heart allows us to be honest with our weakness, trusting in God's power and providence, his charity and graciousness toward our success and failures. The greater our ability to go through the continual process of pruning the vineyards of our heart and soul, the greater God's power will be manifest in our lives.

Each level of pruning the vine requires a deeper level of humility so that we can abandon ourselves to God's will. This is not a lofty theological concept as much as it is an earthy experience of pulling weeds, tilling rocky soil, and lifting up and healing the vines.

If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and begin to follow in my footsteps. (Mat 16:24)

The journey to that blessed cross begins in Bethlehem.

May the light of humility manifested by our awesome and mysterious God, shine upon us like the great star that guided the Magi and lead us to the humble birthplace of our Savior where we will find in that helpless infant Jesus the power that will forgive our most shameful sins, and heal our deepest wounds.

Now that's something to celebrate!!!

A blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones!

In the love of Christ,
Kevin & Theresa Burke

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*Truly He taught us
To love one another
His law is love and
His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break
For the slave is our brother
And in His name
All oppression shall cease.*

from O Holy Night (Verse 3)

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A Note from the Pastoral Director

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas!

“God and sinners reconciled.” There’s the message and gift of this holy season, and there’s the heart of the ministry of Rachel’s Vineyard.

In fact, the verse of Jeremiah from which Rachel’s Vineyard takes its name (Jer. 31:15) is part of a prophecy that Christmas fulfills. It speaks of the restoration of God’s people - a restoration accomplished in its fullness by the coming of Christ.

“Peace on earth,” the promised fruit of his coming, does not primarily mean the end of wars - it means the peace within the heart of one who is reconciled with God. Peace in the heart then becomes the antidote to war. We are involved in the work of giving that peace through Rachel’s Vineyard.

In fact, if nations want to know how to secure peace in the world, they would be well to promote post-abortion healing. One of the ways the human family distracts itself from the pain of destroying its children is precisely to divert its attention and energies to conflicts at every level of society.

As we hear again the Christmas gospel that a Savior has been born for us, may our commitment to bringing people to that Savior increase!

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

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*We make a living by what we get, but we make a **life** by what we give.*
Winston Churchill
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Christmas Appeal

Donations enable us to educate and equip others to engage in the work and blessing of this beautiful ministry. Tax-deductible donations can be made by calling us at 610-354-0555 or donating online at <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/support/support.htm>.

You can also mail your donation to:
Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries
808 N. Henderson Road Suite 210
King of Prussia, PA. 19406

Your time, talents and gifts have helped make Rachel’s Vineyard the largest post-abortion healing program in the world. By giving financially, you become partners in the restoration of lives through the fruitfulness of healing. Being able to grow our organization through your generosity enables us to meet the increasing demands and growth of Rachel’s Vineyard.

Please consider a gift to Rachel's Vineyard given in the spirit of Christmas. You will experience the joy of making it possible to help others realize the comfort of peace that our Savior wants for us all.

Through 2007 only, taxpayers age 70 ½ and older can contribute up to \$100,000 directly from their IRA to a charity tax-free. Consult Publication 590 from the IRS for details.

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What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.

Agnes M. Pharo

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Grief to Grace - Retreat for Healing Abuse

The next Grief to Grace – Reclaiming the Gift of Sexual Dignity Retreat will be held February 4-7, 2008. This is the new retreat for those who have suffered abuse. The retreat will be led by Dr. Theresa Burke at the St. Francis Spirituality Center in Aston, Pa. For an application contact: info@griegtograce.org Space is limited.

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New Web Features at Rachels Vineyard!

We are excited to finally announce our long awaited and recently completed new website! After many months of planning and development we welcome you to visit our site with a new look and new features to serve the needs of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries and those seeking healing. Come visit www.rachelsvineyard.org and explore all that we have to offer. Special thanks go out to our dedicated web designer, Sam Ranelli.

New online communities can be accessed from the home page, including [The Rachel's Vineyard Leadership Group](#). In the [Ask an Expert](#) forums, the public can anonymously ask questions of experts on a variety of topics including emotional, spiritual, medical, legal and psychological issues. [Companions on the Journey](#) is an aftercare group for those who have had abortions and have completed a Rachel's Vineyard retreat. There is also an [Open Forum](#) for public discussion on any subject related to post-abortion stress, trauma and healing.

We especially want to draw your attention to the stories of those who have been through the Rachel's Vineyard experience. We also invite you to [Tell Your Story](#) so that others might see the benefits of attending a retreat.

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One Healed Heart at a Time

By Susan Gliko

With the Incarnation, the Son of God assumed human nature and became a man in order to accomplish our salvation in that same human nature. Every moment of Christ's existence on earth teaches us the meaning, value and dignity of life. The Joyful Mysteries are the perfect meditations to pray and reflect on, especially the Annunciation together with the Visitation. Contemplating Christ's conception and first moments of his life ultimately leads us to respect life.

At the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel appears to Mary greeting her, "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee." He tells her she is favored with God and will conceive in her womb the Son of God, Jesus. Mary says yes, "Let it be done to me according to thy word." Immediately the Holy Spirit overshadows her and she conceives Christ.

Mary then takes a hasty trip into the hill country to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is in her sixth month with John the Baptist. When Elizabeth hears Mary's greeting, the infant John leaps in her womb and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cries out in a loud voice and says, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy."

Let us unpack what these two meditations reveal to us about life at its earliest moments.

A just-fertilized ovum is called a **zygote**. It will divide and re-divide repeatedly and develop into a solid, shapeless mass of cells called a **morula**. Later it becomes a **blastocyst**. Twelve days after conception, it will implant into the wall of the womb, and is then an **embryo**.

Mary's hasty trip may have taken no more than six days. Christ is a blastocyst moving toward implantation in the womb. He is not yet considered an embryo, yet He sanctifies John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth and at the same time, He sanctifies each moment of life, from conception to natural death.

However awesome it is to contemplate Christ before he was an embryo already accomplishing God's plan for our salvation, this reality is heartbreaking for the post-abortive person, especially when the walls of denial start to crumble, with realization that the dehumanizing terms to describe the unborn, such as blob of tissue, blood clots and the "it's not a baby yet", do not change the fact that what is aborted is a human made in the image and likeness of God, a child.

The post-abortive person comes to a depth of the reality of the loss of their child to abortion that many cannot comprehend. The abortion wound is intimate, personal and deep. It is only in turning to Christ and His salvation, mercy and forgiveness that the post-abortive person can come to reconciliation with God, their child, themselves and the others involved in the abortion.

The individuals finding healing from the wound of abortion then become signposts to others who are seeking healing. They point the way to hope, they point the way to Christ. They also become signposts to those contemplating abortion, urging them to choose life. After healing, the post-abortive person truly does become "among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life."

Respect for Life is becoming a reality one healed heart at a time.

Susan Gliko runs Rachel's Vineyard Retreats in Helena, Montana. You can reach her at SusanMTRV@msn.com.

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The Justice Foundation Invites More Testimonies on Abortion

Justice Kennedy quoted from the brief submitted by The Justice Foundation in the recent Supreme Court decision to uphold the ban on partial birth abortion. The Court heard testimony from women of Operation Outcry, The Justice Foundation's project to end legalized abortion by

exposing the truth that abortion hurts women, men, families and the culture. Although the Court said that abortion causes severe depression in some women, it also said that it does not have reliable data on the scope of the problem. In response, The Justice Foundation is aiming to collect 1,000,000 testimonies to use as legally admissible evidence from people who have had abortions.

If you'd like to submit your story contact: Tracy Reynolds, Media Liaison, The Justice Foundation. 210-614-7157, 650-400-0436 (cell), info@txjf.org
www.thejusticefoundation.org www.operationoutcry.org

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Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas.
Dale Evans
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Please join us in prayer:

Please join us in prayer for **Fr. Anthony Gramlich**, MIC who sustained some crushing injuries when he fell from a tree during a hunting trip. He is recovering from some bruised and broken bones – I guess it's safe to say that the deer got away! Father Anthony coordinates the Rachel's Vineyard retreats at the National Center for Divine Mercy in Massachusetts. We pray for his recovery from reconstructive wrist surgery on his right hand. He shares: "I am grateful to still be alive after such a fall. The fall could have been much worse. I could be paralyzed or even dead right now. I am grateful to God for sparing my life and taking me on this road of suffering." Father Anthony's goal is to be well enough to celebrate the Christmas Midnight Mass at the National Shrine of the Divine Mercy. He says: "It will be extra special this year to carry the little infant Jesus in the Church, even if I can only do it with one hand!"

Please pray for **Michelle Heath** who coordinates Rachel's Vineyard in Elkton, Maryland, as she recovers from a painful spinal injury.

Remember **Mary Lee Ingram**, who will be undergoing knee replacement surgery over Christmas. Mary Lee coordinates Rachel's Vineyard for the Diocese of Tulsa, Oklahoma. We pray for her speedy recovery and rehabilitation.

Join us in prayer for the family and friends of **Peter Rudegair** who died tragically in a car accident last week. He was a prominent Catholic psychologist from Pennsylvania who will be missed by many.

Please pray for all those who give of themselves so selflessly in the ministry of Rachel's Vineyard. May the hope and love of the Christ Child enkindle their spirits with renewed joy and bountiful blessings this Christmas.

We pray in thanksgiving for the financial support provided to our ministry from **Priests for Life**. With hearts of gratitude and thanksgiving, we pray blessings upon this wonderful organization which has done so much to help us meet the many demands in this ever-growing ministry.

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The joy of brightening other's lives, bearing each other's burdens, easing other's loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of Christmas.
W. C. Jones
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Become an Editor - Wikipedia needs help!

If you would enjoy correcting errors on Wikipedia and are interested in preventing distortions of information on the mental health effects of abortion, please check out the Wikipedia article on "post-abortion syndrome" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-abortion_syndrome.

The slant, distortions, and omissions are obvious. To observe an even more incredible "spin," read the discussion page and how many of the editors are seeking to purge information that supports the view that abortion can be traumatic.

Wikipedia is a very popular and important "user generated" online encyclopedia. While it takes persistence, anyone can edit Wikipedia pages. Se we would like to encourage people who truly know about post-abortion issues, often from first hand experience, to keep a close watch on this page to add (or replace) material. When you register to be an editor, you will be directed to information on how to edit and the policies that should govern editing...which you will need to reference when explaining to others why you are correcting their misinformation.

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Whatever else be lost among the years, Let us keep Christmas still a shining thing: Whatever doubts assail us, or what fears, Let us hold close one day, remembering its poignant meaning for the hearts of men. Let us get back our childlike faith again.
Grace Noll Crowell

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Good Tunes

Marjie Higgins wrote lyrics to a song in 1973 following the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. She remembered that she had written it last February during a homily at her parish. Within six months the lyrics were set to music and a band was put together to perform the song, called "Please Don't Say No." Marjie hopes that the lyrics of the song help, in part, to heal broken hearts. For a copy of the CD, call Marjie at (801) 737-1373.

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Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful.
Norman Vincent Peale

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Upcoming Clinical Trainings and Speaking Engagements

January 13, 2008 Bechtelsville, PA
Theresa Burke will speak on Post-Abortion Trauma & Healing
Shepherd of the Hills Church 527 Hoffmansville Rd 8am and 10:15am
Contact: Rev John Brown sothjbrown1@aol.com 610-754-6446

January 22, 2008 Washington DC
March for Life
Interviews with EWTN

February 2-7, 2008 Aston, PA

Grief to Grace – Reclaiming the Gift of Sexual Dignity Retreat

For those who have suffered abuse. The retreat will be led by Dr. Theresa Burke at the St. Francis Spirituality Center.

For an application contact: info@griefftoGrace.org

February 29, 2008 Savannah, Georgia

Clinical Training sponsored by the Savannah Diocesan Office of Family Life
Marsh Auditorium at Candler Hospital 8am-5pm

Contact: Stephanie May scmay@diosav.org 912-201-4059

Continuing Education Credits Available

April 1, 2008 Yakima, Washington

Clinical Training sponsored by the Diocese of Yakima

Contact: Sheryl Scott sherylmarie25@msn.com 509-469-9433

April 2 - 4, 2008 Portland, Oregon

Conference sponsored by Catholic Charities

Contact: Lori Eckstine e2lori@aol.com 541-521-5186

April 5, 2008 Eugene, Oregon

Oregon Right to Life Conference

Contact: Gayle Atteberry gayleatt@ortl.org 503-463-8563

April 23, 2008 Duluth, Georgia

Post-Abortion Talk for Men

Kevin Burke will present at the Church of St Monica, 1700 Buford Hwy 7-9pm

Contact: Kathleen McCusker triplejmk@bellsouth.net

July 22- 26, 2008 Saskatchewan, Canada

Rachel's Vineyard Canadian Leadership Conference

Contact: Janet Kormish jkormish@telus.net for more information

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Silent No More Events

The 35th Annual March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C. on January 22nd, 2008. The theme is "Build Unity on the Life Principals Throughout America. *No Exception! No Compromise!*" To join the march with Silent No More click on the following link and add, "Want to attend Washington gathering" in the comment section:

<http://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/join/>

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Other Conferences of Interest:

UNBOUND Freedom in Christ Conferences with Neal Lozano

February 1-2 Word of God Community. Ann Arbor, MI For more information contact:
Phil Tiews by email: phil@thewordofgodcommunity.org or 734-994-3243

February 22-23 St. Mary's Parish. Vancouver, B.C. Canada. For more information email Carolina at: carolturkia@yahoo.com

February 28-Mar. 1 Saint Equippers. Leavenworth, WA. For registration form go to www.saintequippers.com or email: info@saintequippers.com

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Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world - stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death - and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can keep Christmas.

Henry Van Dyke

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Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreats: January – February 2008

January 4 - January 6, 2008 -- Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota
Contact: Nancy Blom 952-882-2072 marypio37@usfamily.net

January 11 - January 13, 2008 -- Long Island/Uniondale (Español), New York
Contact: Donna Crean 631-258-5062 donnacrean@optonline.net
Note: Español

January 11 - January 13, 2008 -- Northwest Indiana, Indiana
Local Host: Project Rachel, Diocese of Gary
Contact: Carolyn Kenning 219-374-5193 carolyn@projectrachelnwi.org

January 18 - January 20, 2008 -- Linden, New Jersey
Local Host: Archdiocese of Newark
Contact: Michelle Krystofik 732-388-8211 arnewrespect@sjanj.net

January 18 - January 20, 2008 -- Los Angeles, California
Local Host: Rachel's Vineyard Los Angeles
Contact: Christine Lowe 866-2-RACHEL rvla.christine@gmail.com
Website: www.rachelsvineyard-la.org

January 25 - January 27, 2008 -- Baltimore, Maryland
Contact: Denise Douglas 410-354-6900 projectrachel@archbalt.org
Contact: Deacon Frank Zeiler 800-286-4224

January 25 - January 27, 2008 -- Bowling Green/Owensboro, Kentucky
Contact: Debbie Ward 270-683-6933 rv.bgky@yahoo.com
Contact: Colleen 270-776-6177 info@hopeafterabortionky.com
Website: www.hopeafterabortionky.com

January 25 - January 27, 2008 -- Fairfield County, Connecticut
Local Host: Diocese of Bridgeport
Contact: Clarissa Cincotta 203-218-0291 jeremiah31v17@aol.com
Website: www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com

January 25 - January 27, 2008 -- Santa Rosa/St. Helena, California
Contact: Valerie Johnson Fish 707-967-1101 rachelsvineyard@gmail.com

January 26 - January 28, 2008 -- Hays, Kansas

Local Host: Salina Diocese

Contact: Donetta Robben 877-447-4383 rachelsvineyard@salinadiocese.org

Website: www.salinadiocese.org

February 1 - February 3, 2008 -- Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Contact: Stephanie Claudy 866-4-RACHEL sclaudy@camdendiocese.org

February 1 - February 3, 2008 -- Denver, Colorado

Contact: Edith Gutierrez 303-410-1710 edieg2@aol.com

Contact: Lori Frank 303-904-7414 lorgreg@msn.com

February 1 - February 3, 2008 -- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Contact: Ann Depner 412-456-6955 adepne@ccpgh.org

February 8 - February 10, 2008 -- Brisbane, Queensland Australia

Contact: Lisa 0410 122 481 projectrachelqld@yahoo.com.au

February 8 - February 10, 2008 -- Wilmington, North Carolina

Local Host: H.O.P.E. Healing of Painful Emotions

Contact: Judy or Kathy 910-799-0270 jhahaj@lifelinewilmington.org

Note: Interdenominational

February 15 - February 17, 2008 -- Belfast, Northern Ireland

Contact: Marian 02890-799967 marianrvni@yahoo.co.uk

Contact: Bernadette 087-859-2877 bergoulding@eircom.net

Website: www.rachelsvineyard.ie

February 15 - February 17, 2008 -- Charlotte, North Carolina

Contact: Maggi Nadol 704-370-3229 mnadol@charlottediocese.org

Contact: Maggi Nadol 704-231-2030 (cell)

February 15 - February 17, 2008 -- Fresno, California

Contact: Jennifer Butcher 877-629-6626 tjen98@sbcglobal.net

February 15 - February 17, 2008 -- Kansas City, Kansas

Contact: Kathleen Ames-Oliver 785-760-0617 kames-oliver@ku.edu

February 15 - February 17, 2008 -- Kansas City, Missouri

Contact: Kathleen Ames-Oliver 785-760-0617 kames-oliver@ku.edu

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Long Island/Uniondale, New York

Contact: Frank and Lorraine Gariboldi 516-523-0586 fgariboldi@optonline.net

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Medford, Oregon

Contact: Lori Eckstine 800-249-8074 e2lori@aol.com

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Perth (Interdenom), Western Australia Australia

Contact: Colleen Tapley 08-459-4777 butterfliespupa@yahoo.com

Website: www.projectrachel.org.au

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Richmond, Virginia
Local Host: Post Abortion Healing Ministry, Epiphany Catholic Church
Contact: Kay Marie Geiger 804-330-3137 kmgeiger@comcast.net

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Saginaw, Michigan
Contact: Sandy Buza 989-797-6652 sbuza@dioceseofsaginaw.org
Or 800-453-2081 x652

February 22 - February 24, 2008 -- Sydney, New South Wales Australia
Contact: Julie Kelly 02-9440-7980 info@projectrachel.org.au

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Elkton, Maryland
Contact: Michele Heath 443-350-6196 cecilcountypc.rvretreat@verizon.net

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Evansville, Indiana
Local Host: Diocese of Evansville
Contact: Pam Robinson 812-838-4707 pamelawrite@sbcglobal.net

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Las Vegas, Nevada
Contact: Kathleen Miller 702-737-1672 katm419@aol.com
Note: Interdenominational Retreat and Catholic

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Las Vegas (Español), Nevada
Contact: Maria Vasquez 702-283-8379 shalom_m@msn.com
Note: Español

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Litchfield, Connecticut
Local Host: Archdiocese of Hartford
Contact: Mary Hayden 203-882-1326 mmhdfc@sbcglobal.net

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Prescott Valley, Arizona
Contact: Lisa 928-713-9504 leexavc@cableone.net
Retreat Location: Living Water Retreat Center, Cornville, AZ

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- Providence, Rhode Island
Local Host: Life & Family Ministry, Diocese of Providence
Contact: Kristin Caproni 401-421-7833 x119 rachelsvineyard@dioceseofprovidence.org
Website: www.dioceseofprovidence.org

February 29 - March 2, 2008 -- West Bend, Wisconsin
Contact: Laura Denk 262-224-5617 laura@hartford-pregnancy.com
Contact: Hartford Pregnancy Help Center 262-673-3733
Note: Interdenominational Retreat

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