

Vine and Branches

The Monthly e-Newsletter of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

December 2009

Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats for emotional and spiritual healing after abortion are held internationally. Rachel's Vineyard welcomes women, men, couples, grandparents and former 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.

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is available on the web at www.rachelsvineyard.org and through our 24/7 help line 1-877-HOPE-4-ME.

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“And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”
~ Luke 2:7
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“Angels Among Us”

By Amanda Miner

Angels remain a beautiful motif during the Christmas season. For some, angels seem familiar all year round. Kathleen McNulty and her mother, Kathleen Garrity, have been making angels for the Rachel's Vineyard retreats since 1997. Kathleen attended her first Rachel's Vineyard retreat in June 1996. 13 years later, Kathleen shares her experience with this ministry:

“The retreat both saved and changed my life. I wanted to give back to the ministry but of course I had no idea how the Lord had planned to use my gifts. I stayed connected to Theresa through phone calls and I went to her office, which was in her home. I helped her get ready for future

retreats by making copies and basically doing whatever she needed me to do. In the fall of 1996 I made food for a retreat at Mother's Home and I helped serve it to the women.”

“In June 1997 I attended another retreat as a ‘helper’. It was prior to this retreat that I brought my angels with me. I had been making these angels and using them as a bow on a gift. My sister-in-law showed the angels to me one summer afternoon poolside at her house. The angels were a craft in a Country Craft magazine. I started to make them and thought that they were very simple and pretty. Prior to my serving on the retreat in June of 1997 I was making some angels for a friend. It was at that moment that I thought that an angel would be a nice token to give to each woman at the end of the memorial mass after each participant had given her baby back to God by placing their baby in the cradle. I brought the angels with me and ran the idea by Theresa. She loved them and thought it was a great idea. She suggested that we give each woman one angel regardless of how many abortions or miscarriages she had endured. The angels have been incorporated in Rachel's Vineyard ever since. I had no idea that my country craft angels would be literally flying all over the world.”

“Theresa then asked me if I could make the bereavement dolls because I knew how to sew. I took on that task as well. However, it was not long before I needed help. Rachel's Vineyard had started to spread across the United States and the requests for angels and dolls was more than I could handle by myself. My mom, Kathleen Garrity, offered to start making the babies, which she continues to do today. I think the "Baby Maker" fits her perfectly because she gave birth to 11 babies herself. I continued and still continue today to make the angels.”

Since June 1997 Kathleen has made over 7,500 angels. Her mom has made 5,000 babies for Rachel's Vineyard retreats all over the world. “Each one is hand-made and I think of each one on an individual level and not in gross numbers,” Kathleen shared. “Rachel's Vineyard saved my life, helped me to forgive myself and realize that my baby as well as all of the other aborted babies are all ‘angels among us’. Making the angels has been but a very small way to give back for the priceless gift Rachel's Vineyard gave to me.” This ministry came out of Kathleen's pocket and was truly a long labor of love and huge donation to those working in the ministry.

Starting in January of 2010, Kathleen and her mother will be creating a business called “Angels Among Us” and are asking \$5 plus shipping and handling for each angel. To order the angels/dolls please contact Kathleen at 610-667-1805 or yipperk@gmail.com. We thank Kathleen for all that she has given to Rachel's Vineyard in the past and all that she will continue to give through this new business.

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“Great little One! Whose all-embracing birth
Lifts Earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to Earth.”
~Richard Crashaw

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A Note from the Pastoral Director

Dear RV Family,

This time of year brings the season of Advent upon us, and it's a season of many powerful themes of life and healing.

The word itself means “coming,” and we think not only of Christ's coming at Christmas, but of his coming at the end of time, when all death will be conquered and all healing will be complete.

In Advent, we wait by the side of Mary for the birth of the child conceived at her “Yes” by the Holy Spirit. We also wait in joyful hope for the Lord's return. This waiting symbolizes what so many undergo as they await healing and deliverance from evil and despair.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” The lights of the Advent wreath grow in brightness as the season progresses, symbolizing the hope that grows in the hearts of so many through ministries like Rachel’s Vineyard. The light of healing and forgiveness conquer the darkness of abortion. So many remain in darkness; we must hasten to them with the light of Christ by growing this ministry effectively!

For more of my reflections on the connection between Advent and the cause of life, see <http://www.priestsforlife.org/preaching/advent-christmas.htm>.

With prayers,

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

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50 Retreats and Counting

By Amanda Miner

Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries wanted to recognize those sites/site leaders who have celebrated around 50 retreats. It is such an accomplishment to have put so much time and effort into bringing healing to both men and women affected by abortion.

Two women who have been with Rachel’s Vineyard for a long time and who have recently celebrated close to 50 retreats are Michelle Krystofik of the Linden, NJ and Staten Island, NY sites and Valerie Jacobs of Washington who is involved with many of our sites in Washington state.

Michelle will celebrate her 51st retreat in January when her Archdiocese celebrates its 50th. She recently shared how she experiences Rachel’s Vineyard as an enormous gift. “Rachel’s Vineyard has been an incredible gift to me personally and to the Respect Life ministry in the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ. I have met incredible men and women through this ministry and feel so blessed to have been a part of it. I thank God for the gift of Rachel’s Vineyard as an instrument of His healing and mercy for those who attend and for the constant renewal of my faith as I experience the Paschal Mystery enfolding every single weekend. Thank you to Kevin and Theresa for their incredible “yes” to God!!”

Rachel’s Vineyard sites are usually started with a call from the Holy Spirit. Michelle experienced this call at her first retreat. “There are so many powerful miracles that occurred over the last 12 years! The most powerful and life changing moment for me actually occurred when I went to King of Prussia, PA to make my initial retreat in the Spring of 1997. Not having had an abortion, I really had no idea what I would encounter. I just knew God was calling me to “go and see” so that I could determine if it was feasible to run Rachel’s Vineyard in the Archdiocese of Newark, NJ. Needless to say, I was blown away by the intensity and healing that I encountered both personally and in others.”

Having 50 retreats under your belt also brings with it some learned “dos” and “don’ts” of the ministry. When offering advice to those who may have less experience with Rachel’s Vineyard, Michelle shared: “the hardest thing for me was to let go of control! I have to follow my own advice every retreat-although I must admit I am a much different person now than I was after my first retreat. It was really hard to get my head out of my belly button and realize that it wasn’t all about me!”

When asked about her retreat experience, Valerie took a different route. She wanted to share a story that came from one of her many retreat experiences. The following is a letter from a couple who attended one of her retreats in 2002:

“Making the commitment to attend a Rachel weekend with my husband was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I had recently been to the women’s only weekend and felt drained of

all emotion surrounding the abortion. I didn't want to go and cry for hours on end again. But, I wanted my husband to feel the power of forgiveness and the healing of grace that I had experienced weeks before. I think he was so relieved to finally have a safe outlet for his thoughts and feelings about the experience. There are so few places for men to talk about these kinds of things."

"When we arrived, we met [Fr. John] who was chatting with all the couples. This immediately put us at ease and helped to break the ice with the other men and women. Once we began the meeting and learned everyone's story, we no longer felt so strange and alone in the world. My husband shared our story last out of the group. Everyone was crying (even the men!), because they sensed the agony in his voice."

"Years of built-up emotion and sorrow, guilt and shame came flooding out. But in this environment it was safe to discuss because the presence of God was in the room and His grace came pouring down. The watch the wash of relief that came over my husband's face when he prayed and received Father's blessing is like a moment suspended in time because it was the moment he became free from the bondage that accompanies an abortion experience. It was the moment our marriage could begin to normalize."

Like so many site leaders, Valerie found that some of the best things about Rachel's Vineyard retreats are the stories and experiences that come from the participants. Valerie felt that the best way to share her retreat experience was to share an actual story that came from one of her retreats.

We would like to thank all of our site leaders and volunteers for all of the time, effort and love they put into the Rachel's Vineyard retreat weekends.

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Abortion Loss and Unresolved Grief

An Educational Series on the Psychological and Spiritual Impact of Abortion.

This is a 9 DVD set that comes with one course guide. Additional course guides can be ordered separately.

The product is a collection of professionally produced DVD's of many of our presentations that we use in our clinical and pastoral trainings along with a number of talks by Fr Frank Pavone on facing and proclaiming 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 provide a course syllabus and sample exams and also includes a section for discussion of our music presentations. It also includes suggested reading and discussion questions for each lesson. Copies of the passages that are suggested for reading are provided in the guide's appendix.

Suggested Donation: \$60.00

Click here to order or for more information.

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"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

~Luke 2:8-11

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Rachel's Vineyard Bumper Stickers

Don't forget to check out our new Rachel's Vineyard bumper stickers! Our bumper stickers are a great way to spread the word about our healing ministry.

To order our bumper stickers please visit: [Click here](#)

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Men Also Need A Safe Place To Grieve and Heal

By Kevin Burke

The fact that many men choose not to talk about their feelings does not mean that they don't have feelings, but rather that they don't have the words to express their feelings in the face of senseless and incomprehensible tragedy. [1]

Men also need a safe place to heal the complicated grief of abortion and reconcile with God, the Church and their aborted children. Men experience very deep levels of pain and grief from their participation in abortion just as women do. However, they may lack the experience and language to connect with, express and share these powerful emotions. Experiencing the deeper feelings of grief strips away any sense of control. It's important that any healing program for men allows that to safely access these powerful emotions while entering the healing process at their own pace.

Rachel's Vineyard features a weekend healing retreat where both men and women to travel together on the journey to healing. The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat has proven to be very effective in allowing men to enter and complete the grieving and healing experience after abortion. Is it safe and mutually beneficial for men and couples to attend an abortion-healing weekend together with other female participants? How do men experience the retreat and how are they received?

Michelle Krystofik, Associate Director of Respect Life for the Archdiocese of Newark, shares her initial concerns with men attending a post-abortion healing program together:

"When I first began facilitating the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat weekends, I was very wary of exposing the women who came on the retreats to men during the weekend. But I found that the participants who were most wounded in their relationships with men, were especially blessed by the presence of men on the retreat. When a woman sees a man express his own pain and grief from his abortion, this allows her the opportunity to forgive and heal from years of anger she held deep in her heart towards men. This dynamic of mixed groups is also a blessing for men. As they hear the stories and life experiences of women, they understand on a deeper level the impact of abortion, their role in the decision, and develop a greater sensitivity and compassion for the women. We will soon hold our 50th Rachel's Vineyard Retreat in the Archdiocese of Newark. With our upcoming retreats we will have served over 500 individuals of which 70 were men."

Here is additional feedback from a woman who attended a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat on the issue of retreats including male and female participants:

"I can't tell you how much the presence of men on the Rachel's Vineyard Retreats has helped me to heal. Abortion divides us. It divides mother from child and severs the love in many relationships. Through journeying with men in Rachel's Vineyard, I finally realized that I can forgive the many men in my past who had let me down. I have been able to accomplish this because of the strength and courage I have witnessed in men who come and share what they went through. I never realized that men suffer deep grief from this! I think we need each other to fully reconcile what this pain has done in our lives and to our relationships. The men who attended my retreat helped to restore my faith in men.... And that is a miracle!"

Male Grieving and the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat

The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat is particularly suited to a male experience of grieving. The retreat weekend involves exercises that are interactive and involve taking action as opposed to only sitting in a group (or counseling session) and discussing feelings, which can be intimidating to many men or not allow them to journey as deeply into their post abortion pain. The weekend allows a man to enter into the retreat activities at his own pace, but also challenges him in the exercises, scripture meditations and activities to get beyond some of the common intellectual defenses to experience his emotions and grief. Men enter deeply into the healing process, and grieve intensely for the loss of their children. This comes as a great relief for most men who have

been disconnected from their pain for years. The wound was buried deep but cut off from their conscious mind. They come to welcome this intimate encounter with their own heart, fellow retreatants and with the Lord.

John shares how abortion impacted his life and later how his abortion healing saved his marriage (he was separated from his wife prior to the RV Retreat). However after his wife and attended an RV retreat, he wanted to see if the abortion they experienced early in their relationship was an area that he needed healing. John shared that he entered the RV Retreat completely disconnected from his abortion grief:

“The experience at Rachel’s Vineyard allowed me to break through to these feelings, honor the memory of my son, and made it possible for the Lord to restore my soul and give me the joy of salvation. I have struggled to put into words what happened to me... What happened to me was an authentic healing by the hand of God.”

“As I went through the retreat with the women and men who attended, I realized that my wife was just like all of these ladies. Her grief and sorrow over the loss of our son is authentic and real. I was the one living a lie and I didn’t even know it. Abortion carries with it grave consequences that cannot be ignored, denied, or dismissed; otherwise they will kill and destroy, again. My wife and I have fully reconciled. About an hour into sharing with her my retreat experience, I could see in her face that she knew God had done an incredible work. I told her that I would understand if it was too late, but her forgiveness and acceptance were immediate and complete. Two weeks after the retreat, on Easter Sunday, at her suggestion, I moved back in...a fitting day for the resurrection of our marriage. I have often heard that God will use us in those areas where we have been wounded the deepest. Today, it is undeniable. I realize now that the most traumatic event of my life was the abortion of my son. At least now I can see the wound...and see that He has healed it. I am struck by the thought that I am an ordinary guy...how many tens of thousands still suffering in silence. They need to know – His grace is sufficient”

There continues to be a gradual but steady increase in the number of men attending post- abortion healing programs. In a special way, clergy, religious, and counselors are in a powerful position to call men with love to repentance, reconciliation and healing of their participation in abortion. Without healing, men will struggle to embrace their vocation as husbands and fathers, with tragic consequences in families, parishes and communities. It is essential to heal the hearts of fathers touched by abortion so that, united with their wives, they can fully embrace their role as spiritual leaders in their marriage.

Please visit the men’s section of our website <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/men>, where you can find more information on how to reach out to men. You will also find contact and registration information for Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats.

[1] Elizabeth Levang, Ph.D. When Men Grieve. Fairview Press. 1998

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Music Video— Christmas Medley

This month’s music video is wishing you and yours a Blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year with songs by Clay Aiken and

[Click here](#) to view this video:

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“Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love!”

~Hamilton Wright Mabie

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Leadership Talks Now Available on CD

All of the talks from the Rachel's Vineyard Leadership conference in Malvern, PA were recorded live by Vincent & Barbara Sumoski (Love Tape/CD Ministry) and are available on CD for purchase. There were 45 excellent talks which may be purchased individually or by entire set. Each CD is a conference special price of only \$7.00 per disc and includes FREE shipping and handling. Other conference special incentives are available on the order form. Order forms may be obtained upon request at rvcds@sumoski.com, 601-779-8989, or in your 2009 Leadership Conference book.

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"This is Christmas: not the tinsel, not the giving and receiving, not even the carols, but the humble heart that receives anew the wondrous gift, the Christ."

~ Frank McKibben

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A Christmas Appeal

Christmas is a time of peace, joy, and charity. This Christmas, consider helping to give the gift of joy back to those who struggle to find it in their lives, through a donation to Rachel's Vineyard Ministries. You can help someone find the peace and joy that Christ gives through His birth this Christmas.

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is a non-profit organization. With your contributions and prayers, we can continue to minister to those affected by abortion.

Here's how to make a donation:

Online: www.RachelsVineyard.org/donate

By Phone: 610-354-0555

By Mail: P.O. Box 140130 Staten Island, NY 10314

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"Merry Christmas" from the Rachel's Vineyard Staff

We wanted to wish you all a very joyful Christmas season in a personal way from the staff here in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. To watch our special Christmas video message click [here](#).

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OVerus~Supports Rachel's Vineyard

By Keith Miklas

Imagine that you are shopping for printer paper. The two cheapest brands both cost \$3.99 for a ream of 500 sheets. Most would just grab one and move on, but not so fast! There is more here than meets the eye. The first brand contributes to an abortion clinic, and the second to Rachel's Vineyard. This fact is not indicated on the package, but would probably influence your purchase decision!

OVerus is a certification mark—similar to kosher, fair trade, or organic—but it identifies brands that respect Christian values. The goal is to enable you to practice good stewardship when shopping: you can just look for our logo. OVerus is now supporting Rachel's Vineyard with a portion of its proceeds. Rachel's Vineyard encourages you to take a look at how your purchases can support Christian values.

For a list of certified brands, please see our Shopping Guide:

[Click here.](#)

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United in Prayer

We pray for the following intentions:

For all of our volunteers and their families, may they have a very blessed Christmas and be surrounded by the love and charity of the season.

We pray in thanksgiving for:

Our new sites in, **Honolulu, Hawaii** and **Ocean City, Maryland**. Please keep these site leaders and teams in your prayers as they begin Rachel's Vineyard retreats in these new locations.

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"Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas."
~ Dale Evans Rogers
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Newsy Notes

PFL Priests Covering The Parish for Priests Serving on your Retreat

Just a reminder that Priests For Life Clergy travel across the United States preaching on the Sanctity of human life and post abortion healing.

If you have a local priest who wants to experience or serve on your retreat, but is unable to be away from his parish because of lack of coverage for the weekend, one of our PFL priests may be available to cover their parish that weekend so they are free to serve on your retreat team.

Sample homilies and photo links with bio info on each priest can be found at www.Priestsforlife.org on the bottom right hand portion of homepage.

Please contact Kevin directly at k.burke@rachelvineyard.org and let him know if there is an interest after you speak with interested clergy. Given the schedules here, it would be best to begin the communication and planning on this ASAP if you think that a priest may be interested.

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Bronx Pro-Life Radio Show

A Spanish pro-life radio station called Radio Jesus Es El Señor based out of the Bronx recently broadcast a show featuring Marisol Villanueva and Freddy and Cristina Martinez from Rachel's Vineyard.

Marisol, Freddy and Cristina have been invited to host a show at the Bronx radio station on Saturdays from 1-2pm. The show will also feature Fr. Victor Salomon. Freddy, Cristina, and Fr. Victor will share segments on the 3rd & 4th Saturday of every month. They are requesting ideas for different segments and themes for the program. The broadcast will be in Spanish so all ideas will be translated. If you are interested in contributing ideas for this pro-life radio program please email Marisol at marisol.villanueva07@gmail.com .

For more information or to listen online

[Click here.](#)

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"When Christ entered our world, he didn't come to brighten our Decembers, but to transform our lives."
~Rich Miller

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Upcoming Events and Trainings

Friday, December 4, 2009

Clinical Training - Grand Rapids, MI

Speaker(s): Theresa Burke, Ph.D., LPC, NCP

Kevin Burke, MSS/LSW

Contact Info: Maggie Walsh

616-340-1824

MWalsh@ccwestmi.org

Saturday, December 5, 2009

Regional Training*- Grand Rapids, MI

Speaker(s): Theresa Burke, Ph.D., LPC, NCP

Kevin Burke, MSS/LSW

Contact Info: Maggie Walsh

616-340-1824

MWalsh@ccwestmi.org

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

Day of Prayer to End Abortion – Rose Mystica House of Prayer – Edmonton, NY

Speaker: Dr. Theresa Burke

Contact Info: Maureen Sullivan

516-624-9033 x101

*** Regional Training**

Dr. Theresa Burke offers Regional Skill Building Clinics to those who serve in Rachel's Vineyard Ministries who are looking to expand their knowledge of the retreat process, to sharpen their facilitation skills and to update the team on any new developments in the ministry as well as sharing best practices.

A Regional Skill Building Clinic satisfies the required amount of continued training noted in the Rachel's Vineyard Licensing agreement.

For details and more information on how to host a regional training for sites in your area please contact Kelly Smith at Kelly@rachelsvineyard.org

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"Mankind is a great, an immense family... This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas."

~ Pope John XXIII

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Upcoming Retreats

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- Baltimore, Maryland

Contact: Denise Douglas 410-625-8491 projectrachel@archbalt.org

Contact: Deacon Frank Zeiler 800-286-4224

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- Lancaster, Kentucky

Contact: Sharla Wells 877-792-3330 sharlaky@yahoo.com

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- Paris, France

Contact: Anne-Helene O'Malley 09 52 79 97 37 omalleys@free.fr

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- San Bernardino, California

Contact: Blanca Leal-McGuthrie (Español) 909-238-4037 markblanca@sbcglobal.net

Contact: Mary Huber - (English) 909-475-5352 mhuber@sbdiocese.org

Note: English & Español

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- Tampa, Florida

Contact: Emma Boe 813-631-4370 eboe@ccdosp.org

December 4 - December 6, 2009 -- York County, Pennsylvania

Contact: Joy 717-788-4959 Rvpamd@gmail.com

Contact: Denise Douglas 410-354-6900 projectrachel@archbalt.org

December 11 - December 13, 2009 -- Cherry Hill, New Jersey

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

Contact: Spanish Retreats: Margarita 1-877-665-2974 popejp2rc@verizon.net

January 8 - January 10, 2010 -- Ilkley / Leeds, England

Contact: Marene 07505 904 656 rachelsvineyard.leeds@hotmail.co.uk

January 8 - January 10, 2010 -- Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

Contact: Nancy Blom 952-882-2072 rvr-nancy@usfamily.net

January 15 - January 17, 2010 -- Las Cruces, New Mexico

Contact: Martha T. Beasley 575-523-6923 bslmrpls@aol.com

January 15 - January 17, 2010 -- Linden, New Jersey

Contact: Michelle Krystofik 732-388-8211 arnewrespect@sjanj.net

January 15 - January 17, 2010 -- Miami, Florida

Contact: Christy Acevedo 305-479-9230 cloesq28@aol.com

January 15 - January 17, 2010 -- Santa Rosa/St. Helena, California

Contact: Valerie Johnson Fish 707-967-1101 rachelsvineyard@gmail.com

Contact: Christine 415-260-4406 christinew@firstresort.net

January 22 - January 24, 2010 -- Bowling Green/Owensboro, Kentucky

Contact: Debbie Ward 270-683-6933 rv.bgky@yahoo.com

Website: www.hopeafterabortionky.com

January 22 - January 24, 2010 -- Fort Worth, Texas

Contact: Betsy Kopor 817-923-4757 forgiven@racheltx.org

Contact: Macaria (espanol) 469-767-8669 misericordia@racheltx.org

January 22 - January 24, 2010 -- Savannah, Georgia

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

January 27 - January 29, 2010 -- Cache Creek, British Columbia Canada

Contact: Nancy Hadden 250-267-5081 rvkamloops@yahoo.ca

January 29 - January 31, 2010 -- Charlotte, North Carolina

Contact: Maggi Fitzpatrick Nadol 704-370-3229 MNadol@CharlotteDiocese.org

Contact: Deacon Tom Rasmussen 828-495-7234 deacontom@charterinternet.com

January 29 - January 31, 2010 -- Williamsburg, Virginia

Contact: Linda Riva 757-887-3144 lindajr2@yahoo.com

Note: Hampton Roads/Virginia Beach Areas

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