

Vine and Branches

The Monthly e-Newsletter of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries *February 2010*

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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Germany's Dilemma-The Other Side of Choice

By Anne Arthur

The distribution of Germany's population is seriously skewed. The population is ageing and there are few births. Lower-Saxony - one of the northern countries of the Republic of Germany - is badly in need of babies. Germany's birth rate is 1.38 per woman, and a rate of 2.1 is required to replace the population. Even with an increased number of immigrants, a replacement rate seems impossible to achieve.

Politicians are worried, but not just them alone. The people of Lower Saxony are being wooed by the media to produce more babies. With the slogan 'Baby Boom for Lower Saxony - The most romantic night of the year', Radio Antenne, a popular radio station in the northern part of Germany, spills its ads over the airwaves morning, midday and night.

Low birth rates affect all areas of life. In 2009, many companies were looking in vain for candidates for apprenticeships. Approximately 10,000 apprenticeship positions remained unfilled because of lack of candidates. And this year does not look better. This forebodes a future shortage of skilled workers to replace those who die or retire.

Encouraging pregnancies

Over the past two years, the German government has put a number of costly measures into effect to encourage couples become parents; increasing the number of kindergartens and after-school-care facilities, incentive pay for staying at home and having babies (up to €1,800 per month), plus an additional child allowance of €184 per child per month ... all of this with only slight success. The babies that are born are not enough to replace the population.

Is this an unforeseen backlash of liberal abortion laws? I witnessed those laws being passed. It is abundantly clear to me that there is a direct relationship between contraception, abortion and low birth rate - whether those who enact laws admit to it or not. The liberation of abortion laws resulted in the elimination of approximately 1,000 German babies each workday; just the number of births the country needed to keep the population in balance. More important, laws change culture with the passage of time. By facilitating unrestricted abortion, a culture of selfishness has developed, and adults cannot be bothered to take the trouble to raise children.

'Baby boom night'

Radio Antenne booked an entire hotel for young couples, offering massages, candlelight dinners, champagne, roses for the whirlpools' bathwater, candles that surround it, and a freshly arranged king-size bed for the night January 23 to 24. Candidates for this 'Baby boom night' can call the hotline and will be selected by the show's moderators. Hopefully, most of those who win will become pregnant and increase Lower-Saxony's population. Nine months after this romantic night, the radio station hopes to make the news again by reporting the births of many little Lower-Saxons ... hopefully.

The push for a 'right' to unrestricted abortion is being carried out in developing countries in order to bring them 'up to scratch' with more 'progressive' nations.

There are some lessons best learnt from the experience of others ... the self-extinction of the German population may just be one such lesson.

Anne is just finishing the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Translation into German. We know the importance of healing the trauma to help women and men value and appreciate the gift of life as a blessing. Please pray for our ministry in this country.

Anne Arthur may be contacted at amecarthur@yahoo.com

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A Note from the Pastoral Director

By Fr. Frank Pavone

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On Friday, January 22, I marched with Theresa, Kevin, Kelly, Amanda, and so many of you in the annual March for Life, an event which, thirty-four years ago, launched me into the pro-life movement. So often, in the marches I have attended ever since, I have heard the speakers at the rally declare, "Let the healing begin!" And nowhere has that cry been fulfilled more effectively than through Rachel's Vineyard.

Then, on the night of the 22nd, I flew out to San Francisco, and again marched with large numbers of people taking part in the West Coast Walk for Life, and similarly echoing the cry for healing!

At both events, so many of those who have been restored through Rachel's Vineyard held the signs saying "I Regret My Abortion" and "I Regret Lost Fatherhood." We were also gratified to

see so many of the new signs of our Silent No More Awareness Campaign, saying “Women do Regret Abortion” and “Men Regret Lost Fatherhood.” As you may have heard, we originally had planned to distribute 10,000 of these signs to those who would carry them either in the March for Life or the Walk for Life, or in pro-life rallies in other cities. We thought that would be a lot of signs to distribute. But requests came in for 42,000 signs, and that’s how many we distributed!

The reason, of course, is that the message resonates with the experience of so many people – which again points to the tremendous need for what Rachel’s Vineyard does.

Moreover, the large number of requests for these signs indicates something else. The pro-life movement wants to make it clear to the rest of the world that we are a movement of compassion, and that we, more than the advocates of abortion, are in touch with the real needs of women and men who wrestle with decisions about pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting.

May the Lord continue to give all of us the grace to respond to those needs!

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

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Letter from Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Participant

My name is Molly, and it was a little more than two years ago when our Lord placed in my ear a call to a vineyard. By coming back to the Church with a granddaughter who came to live with my husband and me, it all began. In a simple homily message, thirty plus years of denial about my abortion was awakened. I wondered, how did this priest know to reach into my heart and squeeze it? “God’s desire,” he said, “is to grant us mercy, forgiveness and love, softening our hardened hearts so that we can repent and have eternal life with Him.” He was telling us about Rachel’s Vineyard, a confidential weekend retreat for people exposed to abortion. I found myself shrinking down in the pew, wondering if people could see that it was me to whom he was speaking. I told myself he had to be talking to someone else, that it couldn’t be me because I didn’t need to bring it all back up again. I had buried it so long ago. So I ignored what I heard and decided I would pray for these people that they could be healed.

But I guess God wasn’t happy with my response. A few months later, He came to me again, once more inviting me. It was irritating how my conscience kept at me. Answering every reason I gave not to go, I eventually gave in. I finally laid down the fear I blanketed myself with so long ago, fear that I used to deny me access to my Lord.

I went to the weekend retreat, and through the living scriptures, I came face to face with Jesus. As I shared with the group, I remembered all the sins that piled up over the years, and with my eyes closed, feeling vulnerable, afraid and full of shame, I cried once more in fear that He would see me as I saw myself, dirty and unlovable.

I continued to feel His presence in the leaders who guided us through the weekend. When I finally emptied myself of all the pain, I felt Jesus wrap his arms around me and weep with me. He took my hand and told me that He loved me and that I was forgiven. He asked me to forgive myself and told me that a very dear child in heaven was praying for me and was waiting to be reunited with me. When my tears and sobs slowed down, I found that all I hated in myself seemed to be dying, and thoughts of new life, filled with His love, rose up in me. He turned something ugly and sinful into a joyful and beautiful awakening of His love and mercy.

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries believes that Jesus calls us to walk with Him and to spread the news of His forgiveness. I am grateful for the gift of support it offers to singles and couples, men and women alike, all ages and faiths. I am grateful it is an international organization with 650 retreats held annually in 47 states and 22 countries so that many like me, and someone that you may know, can find healing too.

Very often, I have to remind myself once again, that no sin is greater than God's mercy. My father does not ask me to lie in the trenches and mourn forever and a day or to be pitied or to lose hope. He asks me to carry my cross of sorrow and sadness with a joyful heart, for through the pain His love can come forth.

You may know someone like me but wonder how can I help? You can help by becoming informed on what Rachel's Vineyard is about. You can become a Counselor of life and become educated in life before birth. It is likely many of us are connected in some way to abortion, as it is a known fact that one in four men or women is suppressing this.

I believe God wants us to love each other, reach out to each other, and bring those in pain to the path of His mercy. When we step outside of ourselves and help others in need, even when we do not know who they are, His grace may begin to set them free. We're looking to offer seeds of hope. God waits patiently for all of us to be merciful, generous with forgiveness, and filled with His love. I believe He is waiting to heal each and every one of His children spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

*Published in Life in Focus Newsletters
Fall 2009*

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"I think in terms of the day's resolutions, not the year's."
~Henry Moore
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New Educational Series

An Educational Series on the Psychological and Spiritual Impact of Abortion is now available through Rachel's Vineyard. The series is called *Abortion Loss and Unresolved Grief*.

The set includes 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 including "The Parish-Home for Healing, Healing for the Abortionist, and Facing the Need for Healing."

A Course Guide has been developed to use with the DVD set that provides an outline of each talk to help facilitate discussion as well as a course syllabus and sample exams. This set was made possible by a grant from Our Sunday Visitor. It also includes suggested reading and discussion questions for each lesson.

Suggested Donation: \$60.00

[Click here](#) to order or for more information.

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A Valentine's Appeal

February is the month of love. You can help to give someone the loving gift of healing offered through a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries is a non-profit organization. We are able to minister to those affected by abortion through your contributions and prayers.

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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"The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul"
~GK Chesterton
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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 [Click here](#)

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Rachel's Vineyard- A Year in Review

Read about all our news, new sites, trips and projects of 2009 in our "Year in Review" newsletter by clicking [here](#).

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"So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."
~2 Corinthians 5:17
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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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"He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away. The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true."
~Revelation 21:4-5
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Overus~Supports Rachel's Vineyard

By Keith Miklas

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 those affected by the earthquake in Haiti, may they find peace, consolation and safety. May the Lord prompt the world to respond with generosity and compassion.

For **Wilma Lombardo** as she undergoes radiation and chemotherapy for cancer. We pray this last phase of treatment will be successful.

We pray in thanksgiving for:

For **Michelle Krystofik** and her team in Newark, NJ as they celebrated their 50th Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

For our new sites in **Temecula, CA** (interdenom), **Northwest Territories, Canada** and **Paris, France**. 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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Upcoming Events and Trainings

March 5-6, 2010

Clinical/Regional Training-Spokane, WA

Speaker(s): Theresa Burke, PhD and Kevin Burke, LSW

Contact info: Sherri Olsen 509-868-7207 sheri@lifeservices.org

Event details: CEUs available

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Upcoming Retreats

February 5 - February 7, 2010 -- Amarillo, Texas

Contact: Christina Sasas 806-679-3370

Contact: Stephanie Frausto 806-678-4673 ts_frausto@yahoo.com

Note: Interdenominational Retreat

February 5 - February 7, 2010 -- Denver, Colorado

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

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

February 5 - February 7, 2010 -- Hays, Kansas

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

February 5 - February 7, 2010 -- Joliet / Romeoville, Illinois

Contact: Kay 866-994-GIVE corcoran-family@sbcglobal.net

February 5 - February 7, 2010 -- Saginaw, Michigan

Contact: Sandy Buza 989-797-6652 sbuza@dioceseofsaginaw.org

Contact: Sandy Buza 800-453-2081 x652

February 19 - February 21, 2010 -- Phoenix (Español), Arizona

Contact: Margarita Marquez 480-820-3593 margarita1960@msn.com

Note: Español

February 19 - February 21, 2010 -- Sacramento, California

Contact: Debbie Anderson 916-733-0161 projectrachel@diocese-sacramento.org

February 26 - February 28, 2010 -- Allentown, Pennsylvania

Contact: Maryann Dunn M.S. 866-372-2435 mdunn@allentowndiocese.org

February 26 - February 28, 2010 -- Cherry Hill, New Jersey

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

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

February 26 - February 28, 2010 -- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Contact: Toni Jester 412-621-6953 toniafj1@comcast.net

Contact: Toni 412-352-5348

February 26 - February 28, 2010 -- Rock Hill, South Carolina

Contact: Christy 803-554-6088 grace4healing@gmail.com

Contact: Kathy 803-546-6010 postabortionhealing@gmail.com

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