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Vine & Branches
The monthly e-newsletter of
Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

January 2013



You are subscribed as Bishop.Conley@archden.org

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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A Lifetime with Roe

by: Kate Walsh

At 29 years old, I have never known a world without abortion. My reality has been lived out within a “pro-choice” world. A world where the liberated woman has the right to terminate a pregnancy if she so chooses to, a world in which another woman who doesn’t want this kind of “liberation” is considered a threat to the movement. When you are born into a particular culture, you spend your whole life swimming in the ideologies of the times; for many of us, those ideologies are simply accepted as the way things are... or even embraced as the way they ought to be.

The media and groups like NARAL and Planned Parenthood portray abortion as the hard-earned right of the modern woman, a civil rights issue that is of paramount importance, and an utterly essential element to women’s health care. The voice of the pro-abortion ideology is heard loud and clear in our culture and many of us agree wholeheartedly with these ideas.

What is heartbreaking is that underneath the glamorization of abortion as the ultimate in women’s rights, is the crippling reality that lurks in the shadows. Nearly half of all American women will have an abortion by their mid-forties, a staggering number that is a testament to the success of the pro-choice movement to make abortion “accessible” to as many women as possible. The devastating aftermath: a child lost, and more often than most people are comfortable admitting, the mother is left wounded both physically and emotional. This “liberating, hard earned right” of the pro-choice movement is doing far more harm than good. Frankly, harm is too weak a word to describe the trauma that many women endure as a result of their abortion experience. Women are losing their lives on the abortion table and by their own hands, or they are forever changed: left to struggle through a lifetime of guilt, shame, depression, post traumatic stress and traumatic repeat abortions. Where is the liberation and freedom?

Beyond this, many women report feeling coerced to abort, receive little to no counseling before hand and are offered minimal, if any, follow up care after their abortions. Ironically, it is groups like Planned Parenthood who fight so vehemently against educating and counseling women who

are considering abortion, and who lobby against offering ultrasounds before abortion procedures. It's frustrating to me as a young woman to grapple with the juxtaposing perspectives of the pro-choice movement. On one hand, they demand that women be able to make their own decision about their bodies and their pregnancies, yet they simultaneously work to keep critical information about abortion and fetal development out of the hands of women contemplating abortion. Why?

At our core, what are women made for? To bare and care for children, it is the deepest part of our biology and what makes us distinctly female. Please don't misunderstand me, I am a well educated modern women and won't be accused of "living in 1953." However, I know the dignity of my femininity and the gift and miracle of carrying children. My identity is wrapped up in my womanhood, in my sexuality and identity as a woman. I think we can all agree that our gender and sex plays an enormous role in our self-identity. Now imagine the deepest, most powerful expression of your womanhood being stunted, removed and in many cases, never spoken about again. How can a woman escape that experience without being traumatized?

Abortion is not working for American women. How do I know? Because I have the privilege to work with an organization that saw a deep wound and seeks to mend it. Rachel's Vineyard is everywhere...all over the United States and the world, not because of excellent advertising, or prime retreat locations; it is spreading like wild-fire because women, men and families all over the world are being burned by abortion everyday and are desperate for help. In many ways, it's an underground, grass roots effort to reach out to women who are so ashamed and broken because of their "choice," that they often cannot even share their first name over the phone.

Abortion is not working for American women who are raised to believe it's our fundamental right, then left to pick up the pieces when we are devastated, childless and shamed. Or Chinese women who are forced to abort all subsequent children after their first born. Or Russian women who average about 6 abortions EACH in their lifetime. Or India women who are frequently forced to abortion their babies simply because they are little girls. I could go on. This January marks 40 years of abortion in America. Since the 1973 Supreme Court Decision to legalize abortion in the United States, a lot has happened, including the execution of over 50 million abortion procedures.

FIFTY MILLION.

That means fifty million missing children and fifty million wounded women.

If you or someone you love is one of the 50 million women over the past forty years who has endured the heartache of abortion, then you know just how high a price we've paid as a country for the "right to choose."

My hope for this country and the world is that by the time my tiny little girl is a beautiful, intelligent, modern woman, she will live in a world in which every mother and child are supported and cared for, where communities reach out and speak out against the unspeakable injustice and violence of abortion...where abortion is simply a thing of the past.

If you have every thought about volunteering, donating, or sharing your story: NOW IS THE TIME. What will we be remembering 40 years from today? What is the story that we will tell our grandchildren? Will we look around at a nation that is better than how we found it? The emotional wound of abortion permeates deep and wide, let's extend a healing hand and mend our nation's broken heart.

To learn more visit us at www.rachelsvineyard.org

~Kate Walsh is the administrative assistant at Rachel's Vineyard International Office. She and her husband are expecting their first child, a daughter, at the end of this month!



Rachel's Vineyard Blooms Barrels of Fruit in France!

by: Theresa Burke Ph.D.

The day after Thanksgiving, I boarded a plane to conduct a Grief to Grace Retreat for Healing after Abuse in London. Our retreat was exceptional! Following the retreat I recorded a series of EWTN television interviews, met with Bishops and held a number of clinical and team trainings. Once across the pond, as they say, I was so close to France, how could I resist hopping the Bullet train to Paris to visit my dearly beloved French comrades and check up on the growth of the Vineyard since my last visit in May, 2011. ([Vous pouvez lire l'interview de ma dernière visite ici](#))

The impact of Rachel's Vineyard in France has exceeded everyone's expectations. It was well worth the effort to witness and hear about so many lives that have been changed! Thanks to the heroic last minute efforts of Laetitia Pouliquen, a two day clinical training was held at the Jerome LeJeune Institute in the heart of Paris. Laetitia wrote to us following the training and shared: "60 people in the room stood in awe of Theresa's experience, ministry and peace. She was very convincing, articulate and detailed, thus helping each of us understand what is at stake and to nail down Post Abortion Trauma symptoms."

Jean Marc and Sabine Poujade , who have been spreading Rachel's Vineyard as part of Mere de Misericordia, a diocese-based healing ministry which offers the support of every diocese and every Bishop in France, shared that they are working toward the goal of offering one

retreat a month taking turns throughout every diocese throughout the country. C'est Magnifique!

As a result of the training, The Beatitude Community is also joining efforts to offer Rachel's Vineyard Retreats. Other sponsors include the L'Arche Community founded by Jean Vanier and a local crisis pregnancy center and the French National Pregnancy Hotline founded by Marie Senti. The two new teams will be in addition to the 3 teams already in place that received training during my trip in May 2011. Needless to say, the Vineyard is flourishing in France, which is surprising many because it's a country where atheism has taken up strong roots and the culture is generally skeptical of programs and treatment models that would highlight the needs of the soul. Another exciting development is that a number of people who traveled down from Brussels are also getting Rachel's Vineyard finally off the ground in Belgium!

Thanks to the efforts of Anne Helene O'Malley, who translated the Rachel's Vineyard manual and the Silent No More Campaign video into French, I had the opportunity to do two radio interviews with Notre Dame Catholic Radio. I also met with film-maker Matthieu Chauvin, to discuss collaboration on a film discussing the traumatic effects of abortion. After a two week stay in Europe, with one week long Grief to Grace Retreat, two trainings, a number of EWTN television interviews, two radio interviews, one meeting with a film maker and several meetings with various Rachel's Vineyard Leaders and those helping with Grief to Grace, I returned to the USA, on December 8th.... just in time to continue renovations on our home that was damaging in a flood.... that works is still going on – so I can save that update as another chapter for my next book!

All I can say is that I am thrilled to be back doing what I love and able to get around much better... with a little help from my friends! And special thanks to Marie Lucie Bouffand, my very special friend who helped with translation in all the places my French is lacking – Let's just say the whole trip was a giant "group effort!"

To view the new French Rachel's Vineyard Website, click [here](#).

Rachel's Vineyard Penang – Oct 2012

by: Anne Sherston

Early last year I was contacted by the site leader in Singapore to let me know there were people in Penang who wanted to start a Rachel's Vineyard site there. So after being in touch with them there was much preparation which included Skype meetings (thank God for Skype) and emails. October of last year I had the privilege of traveling to Penang, Malaysia for their first retreat.

As I write this article I really hope I am doing my visit and the Rachel's Vineyard team in Penang justice. The team I have been working with has been amazing, organised and truly listen to all the guidance I had to offer. Confidentiality is of the highest importance as we all know and because abortion is illegal in Malaysia it makes it difficult for the team to advertise freely even though Rachel's Vineyard isn't about promoting abortion. This being the case we still had a full retreat.

My trip to Penang was incredible. I have never met so many beautiful people, not just on retreat, but everywhere I went. Being in Penang has touched me in a very profound way.

While I was there I visited a place called St Anne's Pilgrimage Centre. This place has taught me to see my patron saint in such a different way. St Anne wasn't just the mother of Our Lady, Mary, but also mother-in-law of Joseph and grandmother of Jesus, she is also the patron saint for women who can't have children. This in itself has been very powerful for me. Personally, St Anne has become "real". People from all over come to visit this centre daily. Experiencing daily Mass there was really no different than anywhere else except for the higher numbers and the way people expressed their deep faith. This was so awe-inspiring and touched me deeply; it brought me to tears being part of this beautiful, faithful community. Being a westerner, people were very keen to talk to me and welcome me.

I was told on my arrival in Penang that the people of Malaysia hold Westerners in very high esteem hence the immense respect they had for me. The people I worked with as well as the people on retreat were nothing but a prime example of unpretentiousness and selflessness. Their hospitality was flawless. I feel that I am no one special in the scheme of things so this was a very humbling experience.

This particular retreat has shown me how sheltered I have been from so many things in life. The stories shared in that one room were enormous. I have said in a previous article, *Different Cultures, Sights and Sounds* "people in new sites don't just learn from me but I need to be open to learn from them" and learn I have. This retreat has really taught me the meaning of humility.

I also had the opportunity to visit the College General, the seminary in Penang. This was another amazing place. I learnt about the seven main Martyrs of College General and viewed their relics that are kept in the seminary's chapel. The chapel is perched up at the top of a hill and the only way up was to climb some very steep steps. Taking off my shoes before entering the chapel was a sign of respect that I was entering Holy Ground. It also has a wonderful museum that is being restored that holds many treasures of the past.

I had seen some very interesting ways of life being in Penang for eight

days. As we drove around it was very obvious that the rich lived on one side of the street and the poor on the other. Many people go out for breakfast, lunch and dinner because the food at the Hawker centres and restaurants taste so good. In some cases it works out cheaper to eat out than to prepare food at home. The variety was enormous so I never tried the same thing twice; it is a food paradise to say the least. The streets were always jammed packed with cars and motorbikes, so many motorbikes!!!

The more I learn about so many tragic experiences of abortion and people's history, I realise that I have lived a very sheltered life. It also affirms for me that there is no place for fundamentalism in Rachel's Vineyard. Yes, we can raise awareness about the aftermath of abortion but it isn't our place to take on the politicians and pro - choice groups, invariably doing this can disregard those we are trying so hard to help.

It was such a privilege for me to help spread the Rachel's Vineyard ministry further afield and I am so glad that I have been to Penang, Malaysia. So I leave Penang with great joy that Rachel's Vineyard is going to be in safe hands. I also leave with great sadness a place where I can be so in touch with the Lord's presence in everyone I met. Penang, Malaysia will always hold a very special place in my heart.

~ Anne Sherston writes from way down under in Tasmania. She is the site coordinator for sites throughout Australia. She is also the site coordinator for the Rachel's Vineyard Site in Hobart, Tasmania.



Light Bulb

by: Susan Swander

While saying my prayers one morning in December, I had one of those light-bulb experiences. The realization that I had may not be new to others, but it sure was to me.

December is kind of a rough month for me. For the last eight years, since my first Rachel's Vineyard retreat, I assumed it was because of the untimely death of my son, Benjamin, on December 26. What hit me this particular morning is that I was pregnant with Benjamin the entire month of December. I had a very weird sensation of almost feeling Benjamin inside of me. It was one of those fleeting moments that hit and was gone. It made me realize that I was carrying Benjamin all month long. I had never thought about this before.

At Mass that same morning, I experienced a sensation of "fullness." I found myself trying to remember if that is what it felt like to be pregnant. Wow - this all was very new and different. The words "full" and "empty" kept floating through my head most of the Mass.

Shortly before all of this occurred, I had read the Scientific American article, "Scientists Discover Children's Cells Living in Mothers' Brains." Maybe the Benjamin cells left inside of me do a dance in December.

This may sound a little strange, but it is not bad. In fact it almost feels like a relief to understand a little bit more about why December can be hard for me. Maybe now December will be a little easier. It already feels better.

Thank God for these light bulb moments. I do believe that God shows me what I need to see when I need to see it. Another step in my healing journey.

~ Susan Swander, Rachels' Vineyard Oregon team member since 2005, presenter at several conferences on "Alcoholism in the Vineyard" and also coordinates Companions on the Journey, the e-support group for post abortive individuals who have attended a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

To sign up for Companions on the Journey, click [here](#).



A New Year's Appeal

How often do we make a resolution that we really stick to? How often do we make a resolution that will impact the lives of countless others for the better?

This January why not decide to commit to a year of donating to Rachel's Vineyard? Any monthly amount you can offer is much needed, greatly appreciated and becomes the gift of healing for Rachel's Vineyard retreatants everywhere.

This year, let's resolve to make healing possible for anyone who needs it. Please consider making a generous monthly donation today. Your donation will make the difference for someone who desperately needs healing.

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



"A new year is unfolding – like a blossom with petals curled tightly concealing the beauty within."

A Note from the Pastoral Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have arrived at the completion of 40 years since Roe vs. Wade. In Washington, DC, on January 25, I will preach at the national memorial service in observance of this sad and tragic milestone. Various organizations are co-sponsoring this large prayer service, to be held in DAR Constitution Hall (see www.NationalPrayerService.com).

I will preach on the theme of "Recall Abortion," the title of Janet Morana's new book. The word has the meaning of "remembering" abortion -- especially on the part of those who have had one -- and of "calling back" a failed and faulty product.

Pointing out the damage abortion has done to children, moms, dads and entire families needs to be a key aspect of this 40th commemoration, and extending the urgent invitation to healing -- first of all through Rachel's Vineyard Ministries -- has to be a key priority of our ongoing activity.

Let's use this moment in time to recommit ourselves to this mission, and to thank the Lord for all who make it possible!

Sincerely,
Fr. Frank Pavone



Rachel's Vineyard Recommends: *Recall Abortion* by Janet Morana

Recall Abortion is the first book from Silent No More Co-founder and Executive Director of Priests for Life, Janet Morana. Click [here](#) to order your copy today.



"The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul" - G. K. Chesterton



Upcoming Grief to Grace Retreats

Grief to Grace-Healing the Wounds of Abuse- is a spiritual program for anyone who has suffered degradation or violation through physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual abuse. It is appropriate for anyone who has endured sexual abuse, rape, incest, or other forms of traumatic violation in childhood or adolescence. It is also appropriate for anyone who has been abused by clergy.

The program will be held **February 16th through the 21st of 2013 in Aston, PA.** Grief to Grace invites participants to journey through this program in the name of love—love for themselves, love for family and friends, love for those who have suffered unspeakable abuse and mistreatment, and love for the Church—the suffering body of Christ, who cries out for comfort and consolation in the midst of profound betrayal and abandonment. The program offers a very unique process for helping victims of abuse to grieve the past and discover spiritual healing and transformation. Dr. Theresa Burke who is the founder of Rachel's Vineyard—retreats for healing after abortion, composed the program and will serve as the facilitator for this retreat.

Visit www.griegtograce.org for more information. To request an application contact info@griegtograce.org or call 610-203-2002. Reserve your spot now as space is limited.



Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreats

Miami (Español), FL Contact: Jackie Guillen 305-302-9436
clamordevida@aim.com January 04, 2013 - January 06, 2013

Detroit Area, MI
Contact: Chris Elwart 248-494-6363
info@detroitrachelvineyard.org
January 04, 2013 -January 06, 2013

Fresno, CA
Contact: Jennifer Butcher 877-629-6626
butcher_jennifer@yahoo.com
Contact: Paula Davalos - Español 888-686-8537
paula.d@fbcares.org
January 04, 2013 -January 06, 2013

Providence, RI
Contact: Carol Owens 401-421-7833 x118
rachelvineyard@dioceseofprovidence.org
January 11, 2013 - January 13, 2013

Baltimore, MD

Contact: Deacon Frank Zeiler 410-299-9597 Fzeiler@archbalt.org

Contact: Denise Douglas, R.N 410-625-8491 rvbaltimore@archbalt.org

January 11, 2013 - January 13, 2013

Houston (Interdenom), TX

Contact: Shay Christophson 281-799-2002 shay@gulfcoasthealing.org

Contact: April 281-236-8719 april@gulfcoasthealing.org

Contact: Stephanie Walker 713-690-2210 steph@gulfcoasthealing.org

January 11, 2013 - January 13, 2013

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Contact: Nancy Blom 763-250-9313 rwr-nancy@usfamily.net

January 11, 2013- January 13, 201

Bowling Green/Owensboro, KY

Contact: Debbie Ward 270-683-6933 info@hopeafterabortionky.com

January 18, 2013-January 20, 2013

Pittsburgh, PA

Contact: Toni 412-352-5348

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

January 25, 2013 - January 27, 2013

Fort Worth, TX

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

January 25, 2013 - January 27, 2013

Dallas, TX

Contact: Lacy de la Garza 972-835-4736 healing@racheldallas.org

January 25, 2013 - January 27, 2013

Charlotte, NC

Contact: Deacon Tom Rasmussen 828-495-7234

deacontom@centurylink.net Contact: Maggi Fitzpatrick Nadol 704-

370-3229 MNadol@CharlotteDiocese.org Contact: Shelley Glanton

828-230-4940 sglantonop@charter.net

Language: English

February 01, 2013 - February 03, 2013

Tulsa, OK

Contact: Mary Lee Ingram 918-508-7142

mllingram@catholiccharitiestulsa.org Language: English

February 01, 2013 - February 03, 2013

Katy (Interdenom), TX

Contact: Mary Lee Mason 254-383-1717 ml.mason@att.net

Language: English

Denomination: Interdenominational

February 07, 2013- February 09, 2013

Santa Rosa/St. Helena, CA
Contact: Christine 415-260-4406 christinew@firstresort.net
Contact: Valerie Johnson Fish 707-967-1101
rachelsvineyard@gmail.com
Language: English
February 08, 2013- February 10, 2013

Lake Charles, LA
Contact: Marjorie Long 337-439-7400 ext317
rachels.vineyard@lcdioocese.org
February 08, 2013 -February 10, 2013

Longbranch, WA
Contact: (Español) 206-450-7814
Contact: Valerie Jacobs 800-822-HOPE valeriepr@aol.com
February 08, 2013- February 10, 2013

El Paso, TX
Contact: Lupe Aguilera 915-867-8016
rachelsvineyard@elpasodiocese.org
Language: Spanish
February 08, 2013- February 10, 2013

Denver (Español), CO
Contact: Rosalinda Lozano 720-320-2449
ElVinedoDeRaquel@comcast.net
Language: Spanish
February 08, 2013- February 10, 2013

Wichita, KS
Contact: Bonnie Toombs 316-269-3935
toombsb@CatholicDioceseOfWichita.org Language: English
February 15, 2013- February 17, 2013

San Bernardino, CA
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blmcguthrie@yahoo.com Contact: Mary Huber - (English) 909-475-5352 mhuber@sbdioocese.org
Language: English
February 15, 2013- February 17, 2013

Hamden, CT
Contact: Marie Laffin 203-631-9030 mlaffin@prolifeministry.org
Language: English
February 22, 2013- February 24, 2013

Trenton, NJ
Contact: Judy Warenkiewicz 732-536-6871
judywarren543@msn.com
February 22, 2013- February 24, 2013

Dallas (Español), TX

Contact: Eileen Kuhlmann 972-679-4760 sanacion@rachedallas.org

Language: Spanish

February 22, 2013- February 24, 2013

Saginaw, MI

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

Contact: Sandy Buza 800-453-2081 x652

Language: English

February 22, 2013- February 24, 2013

Denver, CO

Contact: Ameer Stadler (720) 271-7406

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

Language: English

February 22, 2013- February 24, 2013