



Vine & Branches

Rachel's Vineyard
Healing the Pain of Abortion
One Weekend at a Time

MAIN MENU

[Home](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Retreats](#)

[Contact US](#)

[Our Store](#)

ARTICLES

[Advent - How Long Oh Lord Must We Wait?](#)

[I am a Post-Abortive Father and Here is my Story...](#)

[A Christmas Reflection](#)

[A Christmas Appeal](#)

[Note From the Pastoral Director](#)

[Rachel's Vineyard Social Media](#)

[United in Prayer](#)

[Upcoming Grief to Grace Retreats](#)

[Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Training Events](#)

[Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreats](#)

UNSUBSCRIBE

Advent -- How Long Oh Lord Must we wait?... and wait...and wait..

By Dr. Theresa Burke

Advent is the season of waiting, expecting, longing, and hoping for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

So, *what are we waiting for?*

We are often in an incredible hurry. But God is not. We want things to happen now if not sooner. God seems to take His time... have you noticed that? And sometimes His time seems like eternity!

Every day someone contacts our office in tears, wondering if a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat might help them -- We could ask: "*What are you waiting for?*" They express fear and a lack of courage to face a pain and grief that has been buried and denied for far too long.

If you ask victims of abuse seeking to attend Grief to Grace Retreats, "*what are you waiting for,*" you will hear their hopes for a voice, justice, to be heard, a sense of safety and protection.

The prophet, Habakkuk asked a similar question... "How long, O, Lord?"

I cried out to God on hundreds of sleepless nights begging the same question... How Long Oh Lord?... as I struggled through Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, a very painful and debilitating illness trying to manage hundreds of treatments and physical therapy appointments that left me feeling exhausted and in utter despair and disgust... praying for a promised miracle that seemed like it would never happen.

My friends struggling through cancer treatments and other diseases know well the uncertainty of trying to trust when there is no guarantee our prayers will ever be answered... wondering if they were even being heard.

If I asked my friends in war torn countries, "*what are you waiting for?*" they may say: We are waiting for our police force to provide protection instead of promoting corruption and killing. We are waiting for justice and peace in our neighborhoods.

And to those who fight against abortion, they are waiting for laws to make the killing of innocent human beings unthinkable!

We are a people who have deep-seated anticipations and longings for the world around us to be different.

While we may participate in the race to nowhere, we want to be taken somewhere.

While we may wait through suffering in silence, we long to be delivered.

How long, O Lord? Have you forgotten about me?

Like the Jewish people awaiting freedom from captivity, we are to remember our stories like the oppressed and enslaved people in Egypt, liberated from Pharaoh, and delivered through the waters of the sea.

This led to the Torah story and the gifting of God's people with a way of being in the world through the Law. They were to remember *this story* and live in *this story* as God's called and covenanted people, a light to the surrounding nations.

In other words, **the liberated people out of Egypt were to be a liberating community in and for the world, especially for the poor, oppressed widows, orphans, immigrants, and those who were outcasts.**

The real story of ancient Israel was of waiting. *What were they waiting for?* They were waiting for deliverance. Waiting for salvation. Waiting for peace. Waiting for fair and balanced economics. Waiting for direction. Waiting for hope. Waiting for a home. Waiting for God to act and make all things new and right.

Does this sound familiar?

And so here we are in Advent as 2014 draws to a close. Advent is a time to go beyond your mind consumed by sufferings. Prepare the way for God to act with a new understanding of what life with God is all about.

What are we waiting for to extend radical hospitality to our neighbors in need?

What are we waiting for to share resources and healing opportunities to alleviate suffering in our communities and around the world?

What are we waiting for to speak on behalf of those on the margins, the widows, the orphans, the homeless, the aborted and the abused and those who have long been silenced by those in power?

What are we waiting for to extend compassion to those who grieve and comfort to those who suffer? To give our time and attention to those who suffer physically, emotionally and spiritually?

What are we waiting for to look towards Jesus as the one who can set us free from addiction, free us from fears, and move us towards a new family as one body in Christ.

What are we waiting for? **Christmas!**

This Christmas may we repent from our waiting and proclaim with our lives that in Jesus good news has come and dwells among us!



WARNING.....WARNING: ADVENT VIRUS

Be on the alert for symptoms of inner Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to this virus and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of The Advent Virus:

A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.

An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.

A loss of interest in judging other people.

A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.

A loss of interest in conflict.

A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)

Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.

Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.

Frequent attacks of smiling.

An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.

An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

Please send this warning out to all your friends. This virus can and has affected many systems. Some systems have been completely cleaned out because of it.



***"And then all her former fear falls away,
and she knows clearly that she is free,***

and sings with joy to see herself
in such serene and tranquil peace."

John of the Cross
"The Dark Night of the Soul"



I am a Post-Abortive Father and Here is my Story...

By: Deacon Mike Woiwcode

Abortion is not just a pro-choice or legal issue, it is a moral issue. Abortion causes pain, grief, shame, guilt, anger and death. Legally, mothers who abort and the doctors who do the abortions are protected from civil punishment. However, the right to life for the baby and the rights of the fathers to protect the babies is nonexistent. I know all this first hand. I have walked the devastating path of destruction abortion leaves behind.

My journey started over thirty years ago. In May of 1983, my wife and I faced an unplanned pregnancy. We had been married for almost ten years and were the parents of two children. I accepted the fact that we would now have three children. She didn't. Her solution was an abortion. My wife and I were pro-life, so this solution caught me by surprise and disbelief. I spent the next week trying to talk her out of this choice. My wishes, concerns and beliefs seemed unimportant to her. So, I tried to stop her legally and found out that I had no legal rights as a father. Next, I turned to my church and there I found strength and hope. My pastor, over the next six weeks, assured me that I must trust in God and believe that God will not let this happen. The next six weeks would be a roller coaster ride of hopefulness after talking to my pastor, then hopelessness after fighting with my wife all week long. But I was able to keep trying to convince her to keep our baby. My wife was firm, No Baby! Time was running out. At the encouragement of my pastor, I even took her to the clinic, which was over one-hundred miles away in order to use every last minute of opportunity to stop this abortion. I tried threats of leaving, pleading, and adoption. Nothing works. My last words to her as she was entering the doctor's office were, "Please, don't do this." I now feared that maybe God wasn't going to intervene.

In July nine weeks into the pregnancy, our baby was aborted. I was devastated. When she came out of the office I could see it on her face, she had gone through with the abortion. So many parts of me and my world died that day, besides my baby. Looking at her, all I could think was, I will never love you again. Our marriage was over. My ability to love or to even believe in love was dead. It was replaced with hatred for my wife and all women that have ever had an abortion. By the time

we arrived home, I found that I could not believe in a God that would allow this to happen. If that was the kind of God He was then I wanted no part of Him. It was easier to believe that God did not exist than to believe He did exist and would allow abortions. Yet, I knew He existed but my love for God and others has been replaced by an emptiness that hatred would soon fill. My view of who I was had completely unraveled. What kind of person, father, or man would let anyone kill his baby? Fathers are supposed to protect their babies and I had failed.

My life was now filled with painful losses, an overwhelming grief, shame, hatred and guilt because I wasn't able to stop the abortion. The life before the abortion was over; I knew that my life would never be the same again.

I couldn't touch my wife. And I couldn't leave her for fear of what she might do to the other children. I couldn't look at her or myself in the mirror without reliving the abortion. In addition to all this, I fell into a deep depression of darkness and worthlessness. I didn't care about anything anymore. I wanted nothing but to die. I couldn't help my baby and now I couldn't help myself. My future was over; I would have to live with this memory forever and being happy again would never be an option. I had to find way to bury the emotional impact of the abortion, so I became an empty shell in order to exist one day at a time. This was worse than death for me.

This was a very dark, cold, loveless and lonely time in my life. I felt dead inside. I didn't care what happened, either good or bad and it didn't matter to whom it would happen. I felt that my soul had left me naked of any spiritual or loving sense of realism.

What I know was a miracle – God – even though I was denying his existence; God still loved me enough to reveal His love for me. I was involved in an accident on the job site that should have ended my life. Although I was alone at the time this happened, I was pushed out of the way of a falling 1200 pound concrete bucket. It was the hand of God that did the pushing. During my stay at the hospital, I again found His love for me and my love for Him.

However, my anger and hatred towards my wife and the guilt and shame I still owned was slowly killing me. I would often get out of bed after she was asleep and go downstairs to the family room and sit in the darkness. I would bury my face in a pillow and scream hoping this would lessen the hatred, anger and pain growing inside me, and then finally, cry myself to sleep. I needed this hell to stop. I needed God to end this. I believed death must be the only way, either my wife's or mine. I would pray many nights that God would take either one of us, and it didn't matter which one, as long as He took one. When I woke up and saw my wife sleeping, I knew my hell would share my life another day. My relationship with God was the only thing keeping me going. Years later, after our two children left home,

we divorced, but that didn't stop this hell either.

A friend one day suggested I join a Beginning Experience Group. Here I began getting help in jump-starting my life. I met some wonderful, loving and caring people. I was starting to trust and believe in love again. A portion of my life that was damaged by the abortion was starting to heal. But I was still telling my friends and family that would I rather have cancer than to ever be a father again. I feared I would only fail again at fatherhood.

I met my future wife in this group. We drew closer as we were healing over the next thirty weeks. We married and now have a blessed and loving marriage. We were also blessed with an unexpected pregnancy. God knew the destructive perception of my view of fatherhood and He knew I needed to become a father again so that part of me could heal. This was a blessing. Our baby helped me to heal as a father because I learned that I am a good father. I was slowly getting closer and closer to the life I once had before the abortion.

God, in His wisdom, granted me my wish that I would rather have cancer than to be a father again. In 2002 I was diagnosed with cancer. This was a traumatic time for my wife and I. I struggled as to why God would allow this. As I was dealing with a major surgery and three months of chemotherapy, I found God was deepening my love of Him, my wife, my little girl and myself. I just couldn't get past the hatred I had for my ex-wife and women that had abortions. And this hatred was causing horrible stress and anxiety. I would go into bouts of depression whenever I saw or even heard the name of my ex-wife. I hated hating.

It was during this time that my mother encouraged me to attend a Rachel's Vineyard post-abortion retreat weekend. I was going through chemo treatments and was very sick but I knew I still needed to go. I was starting to see and feel the residual effects left on the women that had abortions. It was overwhelming to me to the point of being unbelievable. Their abortions had happened over twenty years ago and their pain, grief, shame and guilt was still very debilitating. They, too, were hurting like I was; only for them it was much worse. They, too, were victims.

At this weekend retreat, I was able to give my baby a name, a memorial mass and a certificate of life, recognizing her dignity and that she was a gift from God. My baby became a person, not a statistic. I learned to not only forgive myself but also the women that are going through the hell left behind after their abortion. And I was even able to forgive my ex-wife. The freedom I felt when I left that weekend was a life-changing moment for me. I was free and able to completely love again. I was able to believe in the future, to trust God and others, and become the man God intended me to be.

I am happy again; I have a wonderful marriage and a beautiful family. I am also a deacon in the church. Yes, I will always

carry the scars and the memory of the abortion. I will always support pro-life movements and I will always pray for the aborted babies and their mothers and fathers that are suffering from this immoral act. And I will never forget that "With God, all things are possible". God can and does resurrect lives destroyed by abortion. Thanks be to God.



"All I know is that when I pray, coincidences happen; and when I don't pray, they don't happen."

~ Dan Hayes



A Christmas Reflection

By Kathryn Walsh

We are all very familiar with the Christmas story. The story is told with such a poetic nature that we sometimes forget the reality of Christ's birth.

Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem in order to be counted in the census. While the betrothed couple was there, the time came for Mary, a young teenager, to give birth to a child that was not her fiancé's. All the local inns were packed and the only available space was in a barn behind an inn. Mary delivered her Baby on a bed of hay, mud, and who knows what else. When Jesus was born, they wrapped Him up tight and set him in the feeding trough in the barn. Hardly a regal entrance for the King of the Universe.

Imagine the emotional stress Joseph and Mary had been experiencing in the weeks and months before the birth of Christ. A crisis pregnancy, an engagement in jeopardy, the possibility of major embarrassment on both parts should word get out. But they both trusted completely. And on that very first Christmas in a barn behind a 1st century motel, God came to earth, in the sacred silence of the night. Imagine what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to gaze into the eyes of their own Creator. Imagine how their fear and anxiety must have melted away in that moment: all their travel plans, worries about the census, and uncertainty about the future faded to nothing in the midst of the tiny King in their arms.

This Christmas, in the midst of shopping, making plans, preparing meals, and balancing the holiday checkbook, let us remember what started the celebration in the first place: one tiny Baby, the Son of God, who calls each of us to the sacred silence of that very first Christmas to find hope, to find peace, to find salvation.



A Christmas Appeal

This Christmas let us always remember that Jesus Christ came to heal the world!

Your generosity allows Rachel's Vineyard to provide an opportunity for post abortive people to come face to face with the same Healer we praise and glorify this Christmas! Please remember Rachel's Vineyard during the Christmas season.

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

Online: www.RachelsVineyard.org/donate

By Phone: 610-354-0555 or By Mail: P.O. Box 140130 Staten Island, NY 10314



"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."

~ Charles Dickens



Note from the Pastoral Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Advent is upon us. The prayers of the Church, and the longing of the hearts of the disciples of Jesus Christ, are marked by the words, "Come, Lord Jesus! Do not delay!"

The Lord who came, and will come again, comes to us each day in numerous ways. We need him to come, now and in the future, because we need mercy, salvation, and healing.

In particular, as our work raises awareness of the multifaceted wound that abortion causes, and the widespread devastation to individuals, to relationships, and to our entire culture, we feel the need for the Savior more than ever.

The work of healing after abortion accents the urgency of the Advent theme! Jesus is the source of all healing, whether that is on the natural level with the assistance of the psychological sciences, or whether it is on the supernatural level through the grace he gives and the forgiveness he imparts. But it is all from

him, and only in him can healing be complete.

In working for healing now, we are, as it were, bringing the future into the present. We are anticipating, by slow, partial, and fragmentary steps, the full redemption of the new heavens and the new earth where "there will be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain" (Rev. 21:4).

So let us cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus! Heal us and heal our nation! And may we be vessels of that healing as we await your return!"

Sincerely,
Fr. Frank Pavone
Pastoral Director, Rachel's Vineyard Ministries
National Director, Priests for Life



"A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal."

~ Steve Maraboli



Rachel's Vineyard Social Media



Click the links below to visit Rachel's Vineyard social networking sites. Join today and send to your friends and family!

Facebook Fan Page: www.facebook.com/rachelsvineyard

Facebook Cause: www.causes.com/rachelsvineyard

Check out our YouTube videos:

www.youtube.com/user/rachelsvineyard



**“I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.”
~ Khalil Gibran**



United in Prayer

There is nothing quite like waiting for the arrival of a baby. Even while the expectant mother waits, God is at work within her forming and shaping the life of that baby.

Conception is the promise. Delivery and birth fulfill that promise. But between promise and fulfillment, there are months of waiting, expecting and planning, along with months of developing discomfort, uncertainty and even anxiety.

Please pray for **Kevin Burke Jr. and his new wife Emika** who have just conceived their first child!

Please pray for all those who have been serving in Rachel's Vineyard who are now pregnant and all of us who are becoming expectant grandparents.

Prayers for Mothers:

Let us pray for all mothers this Christmas.. Especially those who are enduring abusive relationships that they can find protection and a refuge of support and safety, protection, love, reassurance and healthy communication that will alleviate anxiety and abandonment.

I also pray for all mothers who are missing their children this Christmas, for whatever reason, and endure the grief that only a mother knows in that place in her heart that belongs to that child. We pray that they have the courage and faith to entrust their child to the Blessed Mother's Care and open their hearts to joy this Christmas.



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.



Upcoming Grief to Grace Retreats
Healing the Wounds of Abuse
Reclaiming the Gift of Human Dignity
www.GriefftoGrace.org

Phoenix, AZ - February 1 - 6, 2015

Contact: Jeanne Haines at info@griefftoGrace.org or by calling 610-203-2002

Dr. Theresa Burke will be the lead facilitator.

Philadelphia, PA - June 28th - July 3rd, 2015

Contact: info@griefftoGrace.org 610-203-2002

Dr. Theresa Burke will be the lead facilitator.



**“I learn to trust someone I love..
I learn to deal with heartbreak..
I learn to forgive him who hurts.
I never stop learning in this life.”
~ Toba Beta**



**Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Training
Events**

Lander, Wyoming - Wyoming Catholic College

On **Friday, December 05, 2014** Dr. Theresa Burke will be speaking at Wyoming Catholic College's Formal Lecture Series.

For more information please contact: Kyle Washut at kyle.washut@wyomingcatholiccollege.com

Houston, TX - Clinical and Rachel's Vineyard Facilitator and Team Training

On **Friday April 24, 2015** Dr. Theresa Burke will be conducting a **Clinical Training** for Mental Health Professionals.

On **Saturday April 25, 2015** Dr. Theresa Burke will be conducting a **Rachel's Vineyard Facilitator and Team Training.**

For more information please contact Stephanie Walker at mktginperson@yahoo.com or go to

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/2015-Clinical-Conference-HOUSTON/1482716128663939>



Matthew 18:20

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”



Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreats

Culiacán, MSO, Mexico

Contact: Fr. Angel Francisco Flores 667-714-1554

padreangelfrancisco@hotmail.com

Contact: Josefina Mata 602-402-0867

josefinamatampm@yahoo.com

Language: Spanish

Friday, December 05, 2014

Sunday, December 07, 2014

Oklahoma City, OK

Contact: Joanne Forgue 405-623-3844

rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com

Friday, December 05, 2014

Sunday, December 07, 2014

Katy (Interdenom), TX

Contact: Mary Lee Mason 254-383-1717

rvinfo@newheartoftexas.org

Thursday, January 08, 2015

Saturday, January 10, 2015

Jacksonville/St. Augustine, FL

Contact: Jackie Love 904-294-1884

rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com

Contact: Rachel 904-221-3232 rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com

Friday, January 09, 2015

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Detroit Area, MI

Contact: English Retreat (248) 494-6363

info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org

Contact: Site Leader:

wendy_anderson@mydetroitrachelsvineyard.org

Contact: Spanish Retreat (248) 296-9011

info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org

Friday, January 09, 2015

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN

Contact: Nancy Blom 763-250-9313

rachels@rvineyardmn.org

Friday, January 09, 2015

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Phoenix (Español), AZ

Contact: Carmen Portela 602-354-2031

cportela@diocesephoenix.org

Contact: Josefina Mata 602-402-0867

josefinamatampm@yahoo.com

Friday, January 09, 2015

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Pittsburgh, PA

Contact: Toni 412-352-5348

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

Friday, January 23, 2015

Sunday, January 25, 2015

Newark, NJ

Contact: Cheryl Riley 973-497-4350 Cheriley@verizon.net

Language: Spanish

Friday, January 30, 2015

Sunday, February 01, 2015

Dallas (Español), TX

Contact: Eileen Kuhlmann 972-679-4760

ekuhlmann@prolifedallas.org

Friday, January 30, 2015

Sunday, February 01, 2015

Tampa, FL

Contact: Emma Boe 813-924-4173 projectrachel@ccdosp.org

Friday, January 30, 2015

Sunday, February 01, 2015

Long Island/Huntington, NY

Contact: Dn Joe and Joanne McNicholas 516-445-3927

Rvr@lifecenterli.org

Friday, February 06, 2015

Sunday, February 08, 2015

Miami (Español), FL

Contact: Jackie Guillen 305-302-9436 clamordevida@aim.com

Friday, February 06, 2015

Sunday, February 08, 2015

Lake Charles, LA

Contact: Marjorie Long 337-439-7400 ext317

rachels.vineyard@lcdiocese.org

Friday, February 13, 2015

Sunday, February 15, 2015

Vienna, Austria

Contact: Claudia Brandhuber (+43) 0699-1021-4241

info@rachelsweinberg.at

Language: German

Friday, February 13, 2015

Sunday, February 15, 2015

Saginaw, MI

Contact: Sandy Buza 989-797-6652

sbuza@dioceseofsaginaw.org

Friday, February 20, 2015

Sunday, February 22, 2015

Baltimore, MD

Contact: Deacon Frank Zeiler 410-299-9597

Fzeiler@archbalt.org

Contact: Johanna Coughlin 410-625-8491

rvbaltimore@archbalt.org

Friday, February 20, 2015

Sunday, February 22, 2015

Santa Rosa/St. Helena, CA

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

Friday, February 20, 2015

Sunday, February 22, 2015

Oakland /East Bay, CA

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

Friday, February 20, 2015

Sunday, February 22, 2015

Tulsa, OK

Contact: Mary Lee Ingram 918-508-7142

m Ingram@catholiccharitiestulsa.org

Language: Spanish

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Denver, CO

Contact: Ameer Stadler (720) 271-7406

Contact: Edith Gutierrez 303-775-4108 edieg2@aol.com

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

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Palm Beach, FL

Contact: Donna Gardner 561-602-4778 isaiah61@bellsouth.net

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Dallas, TX

Contact: Maggie Lopez 214-544-2273

mlopez@prolifedallas.org

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Janesville (Interdenom), WI

Contact: Pregnancy Helpline 608-755-9739

cheryl@pregnancy-helpline.net

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Allentown, PA

Contact: Sr. Meg Cole, SSJ 866-372-2435

mcole@allentowndiocese.org

Language: Spanish

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

Mobile, AL

Contact: Bridget 251-421-4313

rachelsvineyardmobile@gmail.com

Contact: Fr. Dan Good (251) 610-1847

fatherdangood@me.com

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015

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

Friday, February 27, 2015

Sunday, March 01, 2015