



# Vine & Branches

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

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## DECEMBER 2015

### A Greater Mercy: Advent and Christmas in the Lord's Vineyard

By: Kevin Burke, LSW

*The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. (Luke, 1:35)*

As we close out the liturgical year and begin the advent season, there is an acute awareness of the passing of time. We experience the rapid progression of another year within our own personal and family journey. But we are also part of a larger mystery that is unfolding; the revelation of God within the human family and across human history. Both are dramas filled with great joy and suffering, times of peace and love among family and friends and times of war and conflict between peoples and nations. Within every life story there are times of loneliness and struggle when facing suffering, physical and emotional illness and other trials and temptations.

We see this reflected in the life of Jesus who is the power and glory of God incarnated in the womb of a humble Jewish virgin. Jesus was cared for and came to maturity in the womb of the holy family of Nazareth. He lived in a particular time and place within the unique historical drama of the Jewish people. Israel's story is filled with great manifestations of God's presence and power, but also times when this people would fall from grace and experience periods of exile and terrible suffering. Within their hearts God placed the deepest yearning for his Kingdom, for the fulfillment of his plans for them as a people. The vocation of Israel's special calling by God would find a particular fulfillment in the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the womb of the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Yet many of the leaders of Israel, despite the powerful revelation of God's power manifest in Jesus, were blinded by their own fear, sin and political agendas and they failed to recognize their King. Jesus wept over Jerusalem knowing the suffering that would come upon His people from this rejection that would leave them vulnerable to seduction by false messiahs. These false prophets and charismatic leaders brought down the fury of Rome upon Israel with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the roads lined with the crucified...just as Jesus predicted. Yet within this time of great miracles, political intrigue, chaos and tragedy was planted the greatest event in human history - the resurrection of the crucified Jesus from the tomb.

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We live now in this dual reality; Jesus has conquered death. We know that in the Father's time He will manifest this final victory over sin, death and Satan to the entire world:

*Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him-- even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. (Rev. 1:7)*

Like Jesus, we live in our own times of social and political drama and upheaval. We await this great revelation even as we live the *paschal mystery* of our own lives. We have our own experiences of great trials and suffering. Times we were tempted to say "my will be done!" The suffering all of us face when our anxiety, fear and the sin of others leads us to deny the will of Christ for our lives and the children he entrusted to us.

Yet we also discovered this great mystery; sometimes in our greatest sin and anguish - we discover an even greater mercy.

Those who have participated in the death of an unborn child, or have been intimately touched by this loss are deeply wounded by the [Shockwaves of Abortion](#); fathers, grandparents, siblings, friends, family, abortion center staff, politicians, pro life advocates and church leaders. When we entrust our broken and repentant heart to Jesus, God showers upon us the greatest mercy and grace, binding and gently healing our deepest wounds...bringing resurrection and new life. All who labor in [Rachel's Vineyard](#) witness this revelation of God's mercy on each weekend retreat.

Consider that the vehicle of God's manifestation of his saving plan for humanity was the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her faithful and righteous husband Joseph, and the family, extended family and community life of Nazareth. It is no accident that Satan has made the vehicle of our salvation, the womb of woman, and the procreation of human life, marriage and the family as the battleground for his worldwide diabolical agenda in "our times." His agenda (as always) is to drive a wedge between God and the human family, and to sow confusion and conflict in marriages, families and communities.

Rachel's Vineyard is very much part of that unfolding drama, working behind the lines in this battle as you provide a safe place to bring the healing of Christ to all those wounded by abortion loss. Here they encounter Jesus in Word and Sacrament within this beautiful process the Holy Spirit entrusted to Theresa...and in time to all of you who labor in the Vineyard. We know that Jesus is the only physician who can heal such a wound to the heart and soul. But the Lord continues to rely on your special gifts, your humble service and your prayers so that he can bring these souls His reconciliation and peace. Rachel's Vineyard is so blessed to have such amazing women and men with hearts filled with the deepest humility, faith and love serving in this ministry.

So rejoice dear sisters and brothers this Advent and Christmas Season. Even in our darkest moments of despair and death, we find in the little child of Bethlehem, in his life death and glorious resurrection, our own

assurance of final victory over those times of suffering and trial in our lives that, for a time, can darken our vision and dim our hope and faith.

As the houses in our communities begin to sparkle with Christmas lights they remind us of the glory that overshadowed the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. They draw us to an eternal beauty and light that awaits us as we breathe our final breath:

*Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. (Matthew 25:34)*



**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,  
good will toward men.”**

**~ Luke 2:14**



## **25 Years After Two Abortions Woman Finds Healing After Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat** *By Jen Reed, The Catholic Witness*

The altar in the chapel at the Undefeated Courage house, where silent prayer, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Mass are routine, and where men and women reconsidering their decision to abort can find a safe haven and counsel. The monstrance is in the form of the Blessed Virgin Mary, holding a broken Eucharist.

Twenty-five years of utter grief and guilt from two abortions before the age of 16 was more than Becky Biter could stand.

So relentless was her anguish that she planned to take her own life. “I started searching for a tree to slam my truck into, because I couldn’t take it anymore,” she recalls.

The tears come fast as she recounts the lowest points of her life, with her husband, Shawn, sitting close at her side.

“Abortion changed my life forever. You cannot take death back. I cannot get my children back,” she cried, striking at the heart of the issue. “It brought me to my knees many, many times, and there just wasn’t relief. There was so much pain and weeping; terrible feelings that I couldn’t let go of.”

Becky endured a tough childhood. Her father was an alcoholic and a gambler who often left his family to fend for themselves, leaving her mother very bitter to the point where the atmosphere at home was even more unstable and full of anguish. By the time Becky turned 13, her life turned upside down when her family became homeless. Refuge was finally found in two local motel rooms because her parents separated once again; one parent living upstairs, the other downstairs, and Becky back and forth, being forced to decide on whom she loved more. No

longer able to deal with her parents, she left one night and went to live with a childhood friend.

Searching to fill the void for love that she couldn't find from her family, Becky entered a physical relationship with a boy when she entered high school.

When she became pregnant, the boy told her she had to have an abortion. He dropped her off at a clinic and drove away.

At the time, Becky didn't know what abortion was, so when the lady at the clinic offered to pay for it with her own money, she accepted. She was 15 years old.

The abortion procedure proved unsuccessful, and Becky had to return to the clinic to endure it again. She was offered no counseling or follow-up. No one asked her about her situation. She was given birth control and sent home.

She continued her relationship with the same boyfriend, and became pregnant a second time, so she walked herself to the clinic once again, had another abortion, and went to her after-school job at the local hospital.

"I never gave it any thought," she told *The Catholic Witness*. "To me, it was the obvious answer."

Life went on. Becky continued with school and worked at the hospital in the evenings, first in the dietary department and then in the pathology department.

On the first day of Becky's job in the pathology department, a courier showed up, delivering what are known as POCs (products of conception).

"My job was to sort through the fetal remains and pick out certain items necessary to confirm a successful abortion," Becky recalled, the weight of the memory evident in her sobs. "I cried over those babies. I would hold their tiny hands between my thumb and index finger, and just caress them and weep. My eyes were opened to what I had done; my eyes were opened to the horrors of abortion."

To escape her past, Becky entered the Air Force after high school. "I just needed to get away. I buried everything in order to even function, and I kept my abortions a secret for 25 years," she said.

### **A Safe Place for Healing**

Becky and Shawn met during the Gulf War, and they married on Sept. 14, 1991. Yet, even as a wife and mother in a caring and committed family, and a convert to the Church, Becky found herself in the grips of despair, desperate for a lifeline.

"I was begging God to forgive me, but I couldn't even forgive myself," she said.

She found that long-desired mercy and healing during a Rachel's Vineyard weekend.

The worldwide ministry offers healing for people who have suffered because of abortion – including mothers, fathers and family members of aborted children, as well as people who have been involved in the industry.

The program gives retreat participants an opportunity to examine their experience, identify its impact on their lives, and acknowledge unresolved emotions.

Rachel's Vineyard retreats are Scripture-based, strictly confidential and non-judgmental.

“The best way I can describe a Rachel's Vineyard retreat is that it's a safe place,” Becky said. “No one judges you. There is only love, and you get a true understanding of God's love, mercy and forgiveness.”

She admits that she initially fought the idea of attending a retreat when she first learned of the program, for fear of shame and opening up old wounds.

While working at the Priests' Retirement Residence in Harrisburg, cooking breakfast and doing laundry for the priests there, she was talking with Father Clarence Olszewski about his plans for the weekend. He said he was preparing to minister at a Rachel's Vineyard retreat.

Becky hadn't known about the program, so she looked it up online, but wasn't convinced right away to attend. Soon, it surfaced again, this time when she found a Rachel's Vineyard information card in the ladies' room at a hospital.

“I realized it could be what I needed, but I didn't call the number because I was ashamed and I didn't want Father Olszewski to be there and see me,” she said.

She continued to suppress her emotions, and the Biters struggled in their marriage. Although Shawn was aware of Becky's abortions, neither recognized that those experiences were the cause of the stress in their relationship.

“We were active in the Church. We taught CCD for 17 years. Becky was baptized into the Church at the time when her infant son was baptized. We sat up front in church, raised our children in the faith,” Shawn said. “We were doing everything right, so why would our lives be such a mess?”

Becky was jealous of Shawn's friendships, mistrusted him, battled depression, and considered suicide.

“I was thinking, ‘I killed my children. My husband hates me. My kids don't love me.’ Thoughts like that are poisonous,” Becky said.

A visit with her parish's pro-life group to pray at the Hillcrest clinic in Harrisburg began to unravel all the bottled up emotions.

“Everything came back to me there outside of Hillcrest,” she said. “The wounds opened up, and I started crying right there.”

“Then at my lowest point, I dropped to my knees and begged Jesus to drown me in the sea of His mercy, and He embraced my soul and pulled me from the pit.”

She confided in a friend, who offered a sympathetic ear and suggested that Becky attend a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat. Before long, she was on the phone with Joy Crimmins, the local Rachel’s Vineyard coordinator in the Diocese of Harrisburg.

On March 28, 2014, Becky and Shawn began their weekend retreat experience together.

“One thing that men need to know is that they need healing, too,” Shawn remarked. “I had no involvement in her abortions; I didn’t even know her then. But right before the retreat, Becky asked me to spiritually adopt those children. And now, because she is my wife and because I’ve adopted the children, I’m invested too. Rachel’s Vineyard is not just for women who have had an abortion. It’s for anyone affected by abortion – husbands, boyfriends, family members.”

“When you arrive for the weekend, everyone is nervous, scared; blank faces with looks of despair. But as you get further along on the weekend, you find that the people there are probably the only people you’ve trusted, even though they’re complete strangers. And then you become very close friends,” he said. “By the end of the weekend, you don’t want it to end; you don’t want to leave the safety of it. It’s a sanctuary of love and protection.”

The Biters, members of Our Lady of the Visitation Parish in Shippensburg, are now team members for Rachel’s Vineyard retreats, helping other women and men to work through their grief and guilt and find healing. They’ve also found genuine love and a renewed marriage.

“The Holy Spirit is at work at a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat,” Becky said. “I had never felt true joy before in my life,” she remarked. “Yes, when my children were born, I was happy. But I never experienced true joy knowing that God loved me. I couldn’t fully laugh, didn’t want to experience happiness because I hated myself. I built a wall and didn’t want to share good times. But after the retreat, it’s amazing the burden that is lifted.”

### **Love Conquers Abortion**

One in three women will be a victim of abortion by the age of 45 – a staggering statistic that crosses all cultural, economic and religious backgrounds. You can’t tell who they are just by looking at them. But they’re in our lives – in our families, our workplaces and our churches.

This is why Becky willingly shares her story, and why she offers her time and efforts to bring awareness of Rachel’s Vineyard to women and men leaving the Hillcrest clinic in Harrisburg.

“I don’t want them to have an abortion, and, if they do, I don’t want them to have to carry the burden for 25 years like I did,” Becky said. “We want them to know that God loves them very much and that a healing retreat is available to them, even if they feel that they don’t need it.”

The “prayer warriors” and “alley counselors” at Hillcrest and at Planned Parenthood in York find sanctuary in the “Undeclared Courage” houses near the clinics. The pro-life contingencies who give prayerful witness there made efforts to lease the houses, where silent prayer, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Mass are routine. The houses also offer a safe haven for women and men seeking counsel or resources when they reconsider their decision to abort.

“Some people are receptive to our presence, some lash out at us, some completely ignore us,” Becky said. “We know we’re meeting them at a very difficult time in their lives. Women don’t just wake up one day and want to kill their children... what we know is that abortion is a symptom of other trauma, and when they show up at an abortion clinic, they’re already broken and suffering. We are ‘alley triage,’ and our goal is to connect them to the resources they need in order to choose life. Our intent is to win a woman’s heart and the baby will come along with her. She is our focus; she is the one in crisis because she is the one who is rejecting the precious gift that God is trying to give her. Women need to know that their child has a destiny and a purpose just like she does. We empower her and lift her up: ‘You are beautiful, you are special, you are loved!’ Seeing the ultrasound image and hearing the heartbeat of her child is essential and heart-changing.

“I know that not everyone is going to be receptive to us, but I want to be a lifeline for those who need it,” Becky continued. “I know that if someone would have intervened or tried to help me when I entered the clinic, I would have broken down and accepted their help. But there was no one there for me.”

The Biters stressed the importance of being acutely aware of the words they use in counseling near clinics, serving at the retreats and talking about abortion.

“We all need to be aware that in speaking against abortion or talking about healing and forgiveness, we need to refrain from judgment, name-calling or harsh words,” Shawn said. “Look around. It’s likely that someone near you has experienced an abortion or knows someone who has – a mother, a daughter, a sister or a friend. Harmful words can do even more damage to them.”

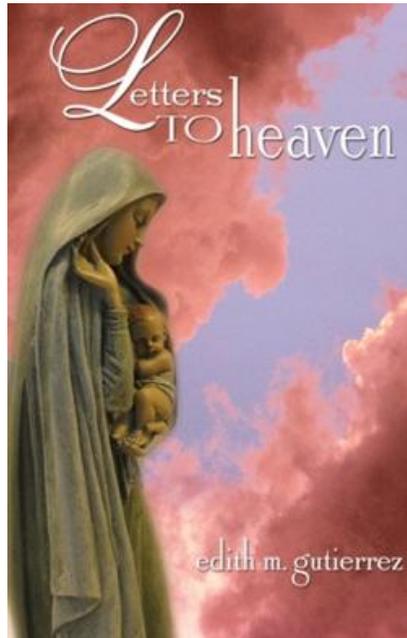
“The prayer warriors at Undeclared Courage are the hands and feet of Christ who reach out in love to those who seek abortion. This is the only way we will change hearts and foster healing,” Becky said. “I’ve walked down that road, I’m still on the journey, and that’s why I want to help others.”

“I want to be for women today the person I wish was present for me when I entered the abortion clinic. For Mary Grace and Joseph Michael, my precious babies in heaven, I do this so that others may live. Love conquers abortion,” she said.

*(For information on Rachel’s Vineyard, contact Joy Crimmins, director and facilitator for Central Pennsylvania and Maryland, at 717-788-4959 or [rvpamd@gmail.com](mailto:rvpamd@gmail.com). All inquiries are confidential. You can also find additional information online at <http://www.hbgdiocese.org/respectlife/respect-life-rachels-vineyard/> or [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org).)*

"Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of Christ."  
~ Sheila Walsh

## Rachel's Vineyard Recommends: Letters to Heaven



Letters of love and sorrow from Mothers and Fathers to their children lost to abortion.

These letters are tender and sweet and full of compassion.  
This is a book about forgiveness and mercy.

It is sweet, compassionate, tender and hopeful, providing insight into the hearts and minds of mothers and fathers who regret the loss of their children through abortion.

A portion of the proceeds benefit Rachel's Vineyard Colorado.  
To order your copy please go to: [www.edithgutierrez.com](http://www.edithgutierrez.com)

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern,  
is very simple: loving others."  
~ Bob Hope

# Our Lady in Yugoslavia?

By Theresa Burke, Ph.D.

*Originally published in 1983*

Events of the past 27 Months in a tiny village in the southwestern part of Yugoslavia are changing thousands of lives and making the Communist government nervous.

The name of the village is Medjugorje, which means “between the mountains”. It is an agricultural community of some 300 souls, mostly Croatian in nationality, and strongly catholic.

Almost every night since June 24, 1981, if one accepts the reports coming out of Medjugorje, the Blessed Virgin has been appearing to six young people from the area. The youngsters, four girls and two boys, ranged in age from 10 to 17 at the time of the first claims appearance of the Blessing Virgin.

The Church has thus far refrained from any official pronouncement on the authenticity of the claimed appearances of the Mother of Jesus. Local clergy and the people of the area, have no doubt that the apparitions are factual, and they are responding with an inspiring demonstration of faith. I had been working abroad throughout the winter of 1982-1983, and I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to make a backpacking pilgrimage to Marian shrines and Catholic sites in Europe. In Rome, I became aware of reports that the Blessed Virgin had been appearing in Yugoslavia, it seemed natural to cross the Adriatic to see what I could learn.

Religion is a touchy subject in Communist countries. The incidents in Medjugorje, in particular, have been causing great headaches for government officials. So, before entering the country, I had been wisely advised not to reveal to border authorities my destination or the purpose of my visit. Otherwise I might well have been denied entry.

Since the apparitions began, there have been reports of miraculous cures similar to those at Lourdes and Fatima. Claims of miracles were quickly followed by an increase of interest and devotion. People from other areas began visiting the mountain where thousands claim to have witnessed mystical phenomena.

In August 1981, people at the site reported that the sun began to spin and move toward them as the earth began to darken. On another occasion, a fire blazed on the mountain. When police rushed up, they could find no sign of anything burning. All who were there saw the word MIR (“PEACE”), written across the evening sky in the letters of light.

On other occasions, a brilliant light appeared around a huge stone cross that had been erected on the mountain peak. This cross is said to have been spinning in rainbows of light almost every day, and these reports were confirmed by parish priests and nuns of Medjugorje.

Communist officials are extremely alarmed over the vast numbers, both young and old, who are demonstrating their faith. All this in a country in which hundreds of churches have been turned in historical museums that school children are taught to regard as relics of previous “dark ages.” Any revival of interest in religion is looked upon as a threat to state security. Persecution of the Catholic Church is part of Yugoslavia’s national tradition, and there is always the possibility of more.

The local government’s response to the rekindling of interest in religion has been to offer a program of evening entertainments, movies, and dances, to woo young people from their devotions. The young people of Medjugorje, however, are opting for religious services and Bible studies instead.

In utter frustration, the government’s next move was to discourage pilgrimage by cutting off public transportation, blocking roadways, preventing motor vehicles from entering the area. Yet crowds continue to flock to the site on foot through the rugged, mountainous terrain. Government officials have used barbed wire to fence off the mountain where the Blessed Virgin first appeared to the village children. Anyone who ventures into the fenced-off area is subject to arrest.

The local police have forbidden the pastor to conduct any religious assembly except within the church building. Since that time, prayer meetings as well as apparitions have been taking place *inside* St. James Parish. One of the Religious, with some irony, remarked: “We have the best government in the world: they tell our people to go to church.”

Shortly after the mountain was declared off limits, the Communist government increased its repressive tactics. The parish’s former pastor, Fr Jozo Zovko, OFM, was arrested. He was offered a choice; admit to fabricating stories of apparitions and persuading the children to go along with them in order to embarrass Communist authorities and promote Croatian nationalism, or be sent to prison.

Father Zovko answered that he would stop the apparitions if he could, but he had no control over heaven. On October 23, 1981, Fr. Jozo Zovko was sentenced to three-and-a-half-year term for “acts of hostile propaganda which attacked the security and unity of the country.”

The young visionaries were picked up by the police and severely threatened. Authorities tried without success to make them deny the apparitions. The children were unafraid. They said that Mary was right there and that the police could with them as they wished.

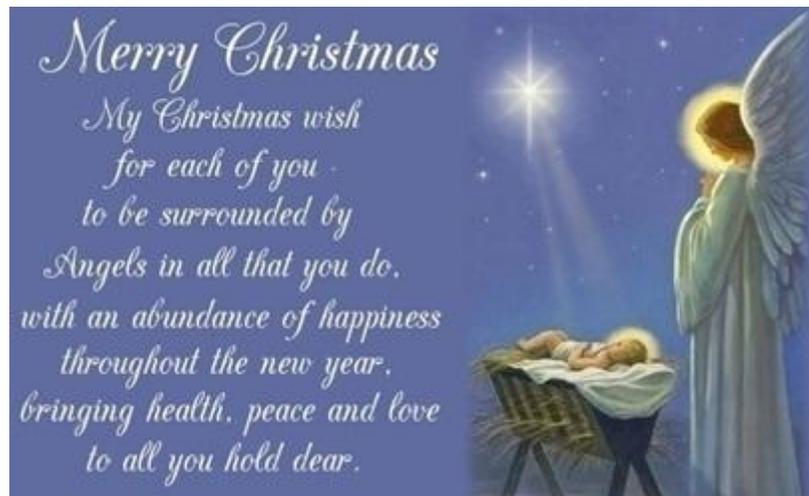
More than 50 others have been imprisoned on charges relating to the apparitions at Medjugorje. During my visit, one of the priests had to leave for an interrogation that lasted nearly six hours. Nuns of the area are subject to similar treatment. Ye the Religious continue their work in a peaceful spirit. They confine their activities to religion, staying strictly away from politics.

All the government’s efforts to cool the religious fervor have failed. The apparitions have continued, and thousands are being converted. This

year, some 300,000 pilgrims traveled to Medjugorje on June 25, the date the Madonna of the apparition reportedly requested to be set aside as a new feast day honoring her as the “Queen of Peace.”

The virgin’s messages to the faithful, as relayed through the children, are always Christ-centered. She urges reconciliation and conversion. She promises peace for those with faith. She begs for our sacrifices and prayers. She asks us to read the Gospel and live according to its message. She reminds us, as she did at Fatima, to pray the Rosary and to receive the sacraments.

To read the full article [Click Here](#).



## Event's of Interest

**ROME-ASSISI-MEDJUGORJE-2016**  
**APRIL 10-22 (13 DAYS) \$3,495 (2395 LAND ONLY)**



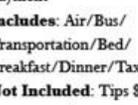
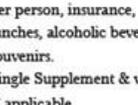
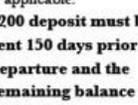
*"Tending the Vineyard with Mercy"*  
 Pilgrimage for Rachel's Vineyard Alumni  
 Accompanied by **Theresa Burke**



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**"To enjoy the fullness of life and obtain peace, you must turn back to God."**  
 P.O. Box 897 Hillside, IL 60162 Tel. 630-279-8424 Fax 630-279-8168 email: info@MED1.com

**ITINERARY**

	April 10 <b>Leave JFK</b>
	April 11    Arrive in Rome - Visit <b>St. Paul's Basilica</b> + <b>St. Mary Majors</b> . Overnight in Rome.
	April 12    Tour Rome. <b>St. Peter's Basilica</b> , <b>Holy Stairs</b> , <b>Church of the Holy Cross</b> , and more.
	April 13    Papal Audience, depart for Assisi. Visit St. Mary of the Angels.
	April 14 <b>Day in Assisi</b> . See St. Francis & St. Clare Basilicas, San Damiano, and more.
	April 16    Arrive in Split in Croatia at 8am. Bus to Medjugorje.
	April 16-21+ <b>Medjugorje</b> (Overnight in Medjugorje 6 nights.) +Visit St. James Church +Listen to Visionaries +Climb Cross Mountain - Apparition Hill
	April 22    Depart Medjugorje for Airport --Arrive in JFK PM.

**PRICE: \$3,495--\$200 Deposit due October 10, 2015--Remaining balance due Dec. 10, 2015**  
 Latecomers are welcome to try and get on the trip.

<p>Payment  <b>Includes:</b> Air/Bus/                  Transportation/Bed/                  Breakfast/Dinner/Taxes  <b>Not Included:</b> Tips \$125                  per person, insurance,                  lunches, alcoholic beverages,                  souvenirs.                  Single Supplement &amp; visa fee                  if applicable.  <b>\$200 deposit must be                  sent 150 days prior to                  departure and the                  remaining balance 120                  days before.</b></p>	<p>Print Clearly: include name                  (as is spelled on passport),                  address, phone and options                  desired with your <b>\$200                  deposit</b>. (Include with                  deposit a copy of Passport                  photo page.)                  Sign up by credit card by                  visiting <a href="http://www.medj1.com">www.medj1.com</a>.                  Or mail Checks payable to:  <b>Totally Yours Co.</b>  <b>P.O. Box 897</b>  <b>Hillside, IL 60162</b></p>	<p><b>Refund Policy-</b>                  Cancellations from                  departure date:                  Before 150 days-Full Refund                  149-100 days-Total less \$200                  99-30 days-50% Refund                  29-3 days-10% Refund                  *If airline tickets have been                  purchased, this amount will                  be fully deducted from the                  refund. Totally Yours Co.                  has a limited liability policy.                  Priests (Chaplains) Free;                  Religious Brothers and                  Sisters 33% off.</p>	<p><b>Travel Insurance&amp;Visas</b>                  For additional travel                  insurance, Contact us at                  1-630-279-8424. US                  Passport is required for                  travel. Non US citizens must                  contact our office at least 90                  days before the pilgrimage                  for obtaining a visa. \$110 for                  assist &amp; processing plus                  direct embassy fee applies.                  (It is the responsibility of the                  traveler to obtain a Visa.)                  Prices, dates, and locations                  are subject to change                  without notice.</p>
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### Rome, Assisi & Medjugorje Pilgrimage

On April 10-22, 2016 Dr. Theresa Burke will attend a Pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and Medjugorje. She would like to invite anyone who has attended a Rachel's Vineyard retreat to attend this pilgrimage with her. This includes but is not limited to those who are members of a Rachel's Vineyard team. This Pilgrimage is being hosted by Totally Yours Pilgrimages. For more information please contact Guy Murphy, Monica-Pia, Beth, Linda, Jackie or Colleen at 1- 630-279-8424 or click here [http://www.totallyyourspilgrimages.com/totally\\_live\\_upload\\_version\\_066.htm](http://www.totallyyourspilgrimages.com/totally_live_upload_version_066.htm)



NEW ZEALAND / AUSTRALIA

## Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Conference 2016

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

### **Rachel's Vineyard Leaders Conference - Australia and New Zealand**

17 February to 21 February 2016

Location: Wellington, New Zealand

Contact: Suzanne O'Rourke or Wendy Hill

Email: [rvnzretreats@gmail.com](mailto:rvnzretreats@gmail.com)

Website: [www.rachelsvineyard.org.nz](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org.nz)



**"For by grace you have been saved through faith.  
And this is not of your own doing; it is the Gift of God."  
~ Ephesians 2:8**



### **A Christmas Appeal**

As we prepare our hearts and homes to celebrate Jesus' birth, we are reminded of those who may find this season difficult. For those suffering after an abortion, this time can be a reminder of the loss they have endured. By donating to Rachel's Vineyard this Christmas, you can help someone receive the beautiful gift of God's healing love on a Rachel's Vineyard retreat weekend.

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

Here's how to make a donation:

Online: [www.RachelsVineyard.org](http://www.RachelsVineyard.org)

By Phone: 610-354-0555

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



**"For unto us a child is born. His name shall be called Wonderful  
Counsellor"**



## Message from the Pastoral Director

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

December 8 marks the beginning of the *Jubilee Year of Mercy* in the Catholic Church, lasting through November 20, 2016. What a wonderful gift this is, for the whole Body of Christ and the whole world, and for Rachel's Vineyard. Our work is all about mercy: proclaiming it, inviting people to it, experiencing it! And now, with this special focus on mercy at every level of the Church, our work really takes center stage and is in a position to experience more affirmation than ever.

Moreover, as the meaning and implications of mercy are preached, written about, and discussed more often in these coming months, we can expect more people to experience the need to come to Rachel's Vineyard to finally experience that mercy. We all know the real struggle with ambivalence that afflicts those who attempt to come to an RV retreat. Getting through the front door is the better part of the battle! It is my hope and expectation that all the attention being given to the Year of Mercy will give to those we serve an upper hand in that battle with ambivalence, and encourage them to take hold of mercy, despite the fact that, paradoxically, doing so is painful!

My brothers and sisters, I am always encouraged by your commitment to Rachel's Vineyard. Now more than ever is our moment, in the Church and in the world. This ministry has been raised up for such a time as this!

Mercy is being proclaimed with a louder trumpet than ever! Let us echo it, let us gather together the wounded, and let us with legitimate pride offer to the world the treasure that is Rachel's Vineyard!

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

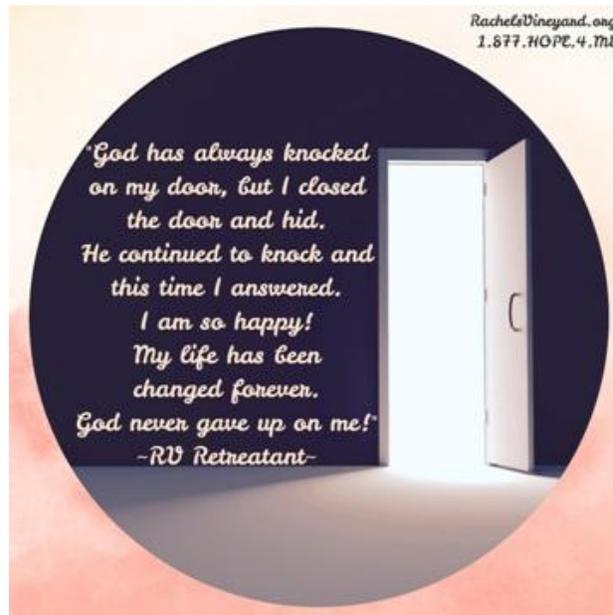


**"The World gave life to everything that was created,  
and His life brought light to everyone."**

**~ John 1:4**



## Rachel's Vineyard in 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](http://www.facebook.com/rachelsvineyard)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/rachelsvineyard](http://www.youtube.com/user/rachelsvineyard)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/RVHealing](http://www.twitter.com/RVHealing)

Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com/rachelsvineyard](http://www.pinterest.com/rachelsvineyard)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/rvhealing](http://www.instagram.com/rvhealing)

**"Each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus!"**  
~ Neal A. Maxwell

## United in Prayer



We are happy to announce the birth of Anne Arthur's granddaughter. Anne is the retreat site leader in Germany. We welcome **Elodie Charlotte Séraphine** with love and prayers for a happy and healthy life.

Please pray for **Lairen Vogan**, Executive Assistant at Rachel's Vineyard and her husband, Ian, as they are expecting their first child in March 2016. They are overjoyed and would appreciate your prayers for a healthy delivery and baby.

Please join us in praying for, **Celia Ryan**. She has been diagnosed with advanced lung cancer which has metastasized to her brain. Celia has served as a therapist and team member on Rachel's Vineyard teams in many locations including Washington, DC. She has also taught at many of Leadership conferences and is a beloved friend to many. Lord, please hold Celia in your arms and grant her a miracle of healing in whatever she needs during this difficult journey.

If you would like to reach out to Celia you can do so by mail or email:  
4759 Lightkeeper's Way #14-A  
Little River SC 29566-7988  
[celiaryan@griefworks.com](mailto:celiaryan@griefworks.com)

Please pray for, **Ric Glanton**, husband of Shelley Glanton, Rachel's Vineyard retreat site leader in North Carolina. Ric has been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. His life expectancy is 6-8 months without treatment and possibly 2 years with treatment. But miracles happen and we are trusting in God. Please keep him in your prayers.



"Look for Christ and you will find Him.  
And with Him, everything else."  
~ C.S. Lewis



**Upcoming Grief to Grace Retreats**  
Healing the Wounds of Abuse  
Reclaiming the Gift of Human Dignity  
[www.GriefftoGrace.org](http://www.GriefftoGrace.org)

**Philadelphia, PA**

Contact: [info@griefftoGrace.org](mailto:info@griefftoGrace.org) 610-203-2002  
May 1 - 6th, 2016  
August 28 - September 2, 2016

**Phoenix, AZ**

Contact: [info@griefftoGrace.org](mailto:info@griefftoGrace.org) 610-203-2002  
February 28th - March 4th, 2016

**Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN**

Contact: [Diane@griefftoGrace.org](mailto:Diane@griefftoGrace.org) 610-203-2002  
October 2-7, 2016

**Kelowna, BC**

Contact: [G2GKelowna@gmail.com](mailto:G2GKelowna@gmail.com) Call: 250-878-7603  
April 14-17, 2016

**London, UK**

Contact: [g2guk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:g2guk@yahoo.co.uk)

Call: 020 7937 4297 / 07849 029 442 / 07770 373 758

2nd- 7th February 2016

23rd - 28th October 2016



**"Let your hope make you glad, be patient in time of trouble,  
and never stop praying."**

**~ Romans 12:12**



## **Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Training Events**

### **Charlotte, NC - Healing the Family**

On **December 12, 2015**, Dr. Theresa Burke will be facilitating small-group and spiritual exercises aimed at healing the family.

On **December 13, 2015**, Dr. Theresa Burke will be holding a training covering topics regarding the healing of the family.

For more information, please visit [www.stpatricks.org](http://www.stpatricks.org) , or call 704-334-2283

### **Auburn, CA - Clinical Training**

**Saturday January 30, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will be conducting a Clinical Training for those interested in learning more about the pain and trauma and abortion, this includes those in the medical profession, therapists, the general public...etc.

For more information please contact Monica Ruiz-Durant at [Ruizdurant@aol.com](mailto:Ruizdurant@aol.com)

### **Binghamton, NY - Grief to Grace/Rachel's Vineyard Clinical Training**

**April 1, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will conduct a **clinical training** that is open to the public covering topics pertaining to trauma associated with Abuse and Abortion. Those interested in Grief to Grace or Rachel's Vineyard are encouraged to attend.

For more information please contact: Pamela Ludwig at [Ludwigpe@gmail.com](mailto:Ludwigpe@gmail.com)

### **Rome, Assisi & Medjugorje Pilgrimage On April 10-22, 2016** Dr.

Theresa Burke will attend a Pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and Medjugorje. She would like to invite anyone who has attended a Rachel's Vineyard retreat to attend this pilgrimage with her. This includes but is not limited to those who are members of a Rachel's Vineyard team. This Pilgrimage is being hosted by Totally Yours Pilgrimages. For more information please contact Guy Murphy, Monica-Pia, Beth, Linda, Jackie or Colleen at 1- 630-279-8424 or click here

[http://www.totallyyourspilgrimages.com/totally\\_live\\_upload\\_version\\_06.htm](http://www.totallyyourspilgrimages.com/totally_live_upload_version_06.htm)

## **Hobart, Australia - Conference, Clinical and General Trainings**

On **May 30, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will attend the National Conference. There will be a meet and greet for all Delegates.

On **May 31, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will hold a training for the National Conference. This is open to all Care agencies, hospitals, schools, School of Psychology.

On **June 1, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will hold a pastoral conference. This is open to the Clergy and Religious.

On **June 2, 2016** Dr. Theresa Burke will present an overview of Rachel's Vineyard and Greif to Grace. This event is open to the public.

For more information please contact Anne at

[info@griegtograces.org.au](mailto:info@griegtograces.org.au).



**"Christmas means giving. The Father gave His Son, and the Son gave His life.**

**Without giving there is no true Christmas,  
and without sacrifice there is no true worship."**

**~ Gordon B. Hinckley**



## **Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreats**

### **Vienna, Austria**

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

[info@rachelsweinberg.at](mailto:info@rachelsweinberg.at)

Language: German

Friday, February 12, 2016

Sunday, February 14, 2016

### **Bologna, Italy**

Contact: Italia-Nord Valeria D'Antonio 011-39-347-262-5321

[valedantonio@yahoo.it](mailto:valedantonio@yahoo.it)

Contact: Italia-Sud Monika e Domenico Montanaro 39.099.7724.518

[info.vignadirachele@yahoo.it](mailto:info.vignadirachele@yahoo.it)

Language: Italian

Friday, February 26, 2016

Sunday, February 28, 2016

### **Glasgow, England**

Contact: Andrea Fraile 07816942824

[andreafraile74@gmail.com](mailto:andreafraile74@gmail.com)

Contact: Marene 07505 904 656

[info@rachelsvineyard.org.uk](mailto:info@rachelsvineyard.org.uk)

Language: English

Friday, February 12, 2016

Sunday, February 14, 2016

**Mobile, AL**

Contact: Bridget 251-421-4313

[rachelsvineyardmobile@gmail.com](mailto:rachelsvineyardmobile@gmail.com)

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

[fatherdangood@me.com](mailto:fatherdangood@me.com)

Friday, December 04, 2015

Sunday, December 06, 2015

**Northwest Indiana, IN**

Contact: Rosanne Kouris 219-765-1396

[nwinrv@outlook.com](mailto:nwinrv@outlook.com)

Friday, December 04, 2015

Sunday, December 06, 2015

**Oklahoma City, OK**

Contact: Margo MacRobert 405-623-3844

[rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com](mailto:rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com)

Friday, December 04, 2015

Sunday, December 06, 2015

**York County, PA**

Contact: Joy Crimmins 717-788-4959

[Rvpamd@gmail.com](mailto:Rvpamd@gmail.com)

Friday, December 04, 2015

Sunday, December 06, 2015

**Richmond, VA**

Contact: Marty Montgomery-Jennings 804 704 0429

[rv4hope@gmail.com](mailto:rv4hope@gmail.com)

Contact: Maggie Carlson 804 432 2589

[rv4hope@gmail.com](mailto:rv4hope@gmail.com)

Friday, December 11, 2015

Sunday, December 13, 2015

**Jacksonville/St. Augustine, FL**

Contact: Jackie Love 904-294-1884

[rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com](mailto:rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com)

Contact: Rachel 904-221-3232

[rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com](mailto:rachelsvineyardjax@yahoo.com)

Friday, January 08, 2016

Sunday, January 10, 2016

**Miami, FL**

Contact: Kathy Weissinger 305-273-8508

[katforlife5@hotmail.com](mailto:katforlife5@hotmail.com)

Friday, December 04, 2015

Sunday, December 06, 2015

**Atlanta, GA**

Contact: Mary Ann McNeil 404-717-5557

[pathmcneil@gmail.com](mailto:pathmcneil@gmail.com)

Friday, January 08, 2016

Sunday, January 10, 2016

**Newark, NJ**

Contact: Cheryl Riley 973-497-4350 [rileyche@rcan.org](mailto:rileyche@rcan.org)  
Language: Spanish  
Friday, January 08, 2016  
Sunday, January 10, 2016

**Paterson/Morris County, NJ**

Contact: Marie Ryan [rvmaterson@gmail.com](mailto:rvmaterson@gmail.com)  
Friday, January 22, 2016  
Sunday, January 24, 2016

**Pittsburgh, PA**

Contact: Toni 412-352-5348  
Contact: Toni Jester 412-621-6953 [toniafjl@comcast.net](mailto:toniafjl@comcast.net)  
Friday, January 22, 2016  
Sunday, January 24, 2016

**Portland, OR**

Contact: Patricia Hutchinson 800-249-8074  
[ProjectRachel@CatholicCharitiesOregon.org](mailto:ProjectRachel@CatholicCharitiesOregon.org)  
Friday, January 29, 2016  
Sunday, January 31, 2016

**Lake Charles, LA**

Contact: Marjorie Long 337-439-7400 ext317  
[rachels.vineyard@lcdioocese.org](mailto:rachels.vineyard@lcdioocese.org)  
Friday, February 05, 2016  
Sunday, February 07, 2016

**Detroit Area, MI**

Contact: English Retreat (248) 494-6363  
[info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org](mailto:info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org)  
Contact: Spanish Retreat (248) 296-9011  
[info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org](mailto:info@detroitrachelsvineyard.org)  
Contact: Site Leader: [wendy\\_anderson@mydetroitrachelsvineyard.org](mailto:wendy_anderson@mydetroitrachelsvineyard.org)  
Friday, February 05, 2016  
Saturday, February 07, 2016

**Grand Rapids, MI**

Contact: Maggie Walsh 616-340-1824  
[mwalsh@ccwestmi.org](mailto:mwalsh@ccwestmi.org)  
Contact: Toll-free (MI only) 800-800-8284  
Friday, February 05, 2016  
Sunday, February 07, 2016

**Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN**

Contact: Nancy Blom 763-250-9313 [rachels@rvineyardmn.org](mailto:rachels@rvineyardmn.org)  
Friday, February 05, 2016  
Sunday, February 07, 2016

**Corpus Christi, TX**

Contact: Tammy Romo-Alcala 361-510-4684  
[ccrachelsvineyard@hotmail.com](mailto:ccrachelsvineyard@hotmail.com)  
Friday, February 05, 2016  
Sunday, February 07, 2016

**Monroe (Interdenominational), WA**

Contact: Barbara Olson 425-297-3225

[bj.olson\\_44@yahoo.com](mailto:bj.olson_44@yahoo.com)

Friday, February 05, 2016

Sunday, February 07, 2016

**Katy (Interdenominational), TX**

Contact: Mary Lee Mason 254-383-1717

[rvinfo@newheartoftexas.org](mailto:rvinfo@newheartoftexas.org)

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Saturday, February 13, 2016

**Peoria, IL**

Contact: Colleen Harmon 309-264-1489 [rvrpeoria@gmail.com](mailto:rvrpeoria@gmail.com)

Contact: Cathy Trowbridge 309-264-1489 [rvrpeoria@gmail.com](mailto:rvrpeoria@gmail.com)

Contact: Terri LaHood 309-671-1550 [tlahood@cdop.org](mailto:tlahood@cdop.org)

Friday, February 26, 2016

Sunday, February 28, 2016

**Baltimore, MD**

Contact: Johanna Coughlin 410-625-8491

[rvbaltimore@archbalt.org](mailto:rvbaltimore@archbalt.org)

Contact: Deacon Frank Zeiler 410-299-9597

[Fzeiler@archbalt.org](mailto:Fzeiler@archbalt.org)

Friday, February 26, 2016

Sunday, February 28, 2016

**Trenton, NJ**

Contact: Judy Warenkiewicz 732-536-6871

[judywarren543@msn.com](mailto:judywarren543@msn.com)

Friday, February 26, 2016

Sunday, February 28, 2016

**Fort Worth, TX**

Contact: Betsy Kopor 817-923-4757

[forgiven@racheltx.org](mailto:forgiven@racheltx.org)

Friday, February 26, 2016

Sunday, February 28, 2016