

JUST NEWS

We answer God's call to transform human hearts and to make way for the Reign of God.

December 2000

Office of Justice and Peace

Focus on Post- Abortion

In this issue

ART of Justice & Peace	2
Pastoral Perspective	3
Post-Abortion Resources	3
Sowers of Justice News	4
Additional Reflections on Post-Abortion Healing	5
News & Notes	6
Calendar	7
Project Rachel	7
John's Story of Healing	8

Insert: 2001 Legislative Agenda & Death Penalty Update

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat: An Invitation to Healing

By Kay Marie Geiger

[Editor's Note: Rachel's Vineyard is a weekend retreat program established by Dr. Theresa Burke, a counseling psychologist in Pennsylvania, to help those afflicted by their experience of abortion to find healing. The Church of the Epiphany in Richmond has sponsored a series of Rachel's Vineyard Retreats over the past several years. Kay Marie Geiger is the founder of the parish's post-abortion outreach ministry and a team member who helps to organize and carry out this retreat program.]



A frequent comment we hear from inquirers about the retreat is, *I can't believe the Catholic Church is offering this to people like me.* What a privilege it is for us to offer the opportunity for reconciliation to those who yearn for forgiveness and peace but who fear it can never be theirs.

Anguish in abortion's aftermath comes from the loss of a child, personal responsibility for the death of the child, and the violation of one's own conscience. A Rachel's Vineyard Retreat provides a safe place to bring this trauma, and reveal it in the light of Christ so that abortion's destructive power over people's lives can be eliminated.

These retreats offer an experience of God's unconditional love. Living scripture meditations bring the Bible to life through vivid descriptions of people and their dilemmas. Participants are drawn into the stories, in relationship with Jesus.

The message of these exercises is that **SCRIPTURE LIVES TODAY**, not just 2,000 years ago. Jesus is speaking to each of us and his words are true. We can have faith in Jesus and the Word of God. We can be healed!

Retreat participants work through their unreconciled guilt and grief through meditations, storytelling, prayer exercises, sacraments, and times of reflection. The retreat process is dynamic and intense, and yet very gentle. We keep pointing the way to Jesus while we listen closely and validate their experiences of abortion.

Although there is suffering in this journey of healing, we always remain opti-

We accompany people in their sorrow, regret, and pain, so that they can attain a peaceful acceptance of Christ's unconditional love and mercy.

Featured Web Site:

Elliot Institute

<http://www.afterabortion.org>

Great info source on effects of abortion & post-abortion healing

Links to original research, testimonies, articles, & resources

(Continued from page 1)

mistic. For we know the joy that awaits all who persevere through their distress. The tears cleanse the deep wounds that abortion inflicts on mothers and fathers of aborted children, grandparents, siblings, and others who were involved in, or impacted by the abortions of others.

We accompany people in their pain, so that they can attain a peaceful acceptance of Christ's unconditional love and mercy. Reconciliation can be realized with God, the aborted child, oneself, and others involved.

The members of this post-abortion ministry are ambassadors for Christ's power. We have witnessed profound healing in peoples' lives!

To anyone who may be filled with shame or regret about their abortion experience, we say **WELCOME HOME** to this church! ✚

Post Abortion Ministry Church of Epiphany

The parish initiated its outreach ministry for healing after abortion in 1996. Over 200 people participate in the ministry as "Prayer Partners."

The parish has sponsored eight *Rachel's Vineyard Retreats*, with the next one scheduled for the weekend of March 16-18, 2001.

Support Groups for past retreat participants meet in Lexington and Richmond. For people waiting to attend a retreat, individual meetings and introductory sessions on healing are held as needed.

If you are interested in this ministry, contact:

- Kay Marie Geiger at (804) 330-3137
- Molly Smith at (804) 794-0222 or <msmolly101@home.com>.

Let Christmas Be Earthy!

The Ecological Working Group has produced a great resource to help families celebrate Advent and Christmas in a more simple and meaningful way.

The brochure is entitled, *Celebrating Christmas as if the Earth were really the place where the Word became Flesh*. It is printed on festive red, recycled paper and gives suggestions for reflection and action to embody the mystery of the Incarnation.

White copies are available for easier duplication. Contact OJP or AOJP for copies in either format.

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Sowers of Justice

is the membership organization of OJP. The *Sowers* Communications Team serves as editorial advisor for *Just News*.

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The ART of Justice and Peace for Parish Justice & Peace/Social Ministry

Act → Reflect



Transform

Issue: Post-Abortion Healing

ACT to serve human needs, giving issues a human face:

- ◆ Place Project Rachel brochures in your parish commons or brochure rack.
- ◆ Recruit parish volunteers for the local crisis pregnancy center.
- ◆ Collect baby clothes & accessories for women in crisis pregnancy situations.
- ◆ Organize parishioners to support a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat through prayer, financial support, or whatever else may be needed by the retreat team.
- ◆ Promote the diocesan Respect Life Collection in your parish during January.

REFLECT on social causes & principles of faith:

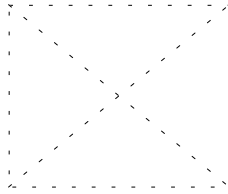
- ◆ Encourage your parish Social Ministry/Justice & Peace Committee to study Pope John Paul II's *The Gospel of Life* or the U.S. Bishop's *Living the Gospel of Life*.
- ◆ Organize an adult education session on post-abortion healing.
- ◆ Develop Prayers of the Faithful for those suffering from post-abortion syndrome.
- ◆ Encourage your pastor to preach on post-abortion healing & reconciliation.

TRANSFORM social structures:

- ◆ Join the diocesan Parish Legislative Advocacy Network (PLAN) and advocate for Informed Consent legislation in the 2001 session of the Virginia General Assembly; this bill would ensure that women seeking an abortion receive information on fetal development, alternatives to abortion, and legal responsibilities of the father.

A Pastoral Perspective:

People in Pain



By Fr. William Condon, a retired priest in Clarksville

In 1998 I had the privilege to serve as Chaplain to a Rachael's Vineyard Retreat designed for women who have had an abortion. Thirteen women -- ranging in age from sixteen to seventy years -- were present. This was one of the most profound experiences of my life. I heard these women tell their stories of opting for an abortion. They poured out the pain and agony of the event and the ensuing guilt and loss of self-esteem.

While each story was unique, a common thread ran through all. The persons in their lives, even family members, were NOT particularly helpful in the struggle. Many times those who should have been most helpful became promoters of the abortion. A deep sense of isolation and loneliness accompanied these thirteen women.

As the retreat unfolded, I saw these women coming alive again as the team offered non-judgmental and compassionate listening accompanied by healing rituals. The team's love and acceptance had a grace-filled effect.

Too often, we convey negative vibes that keep women from sharing their stories. We unwittingly keep persons who need acceptance from receiving it. Harsh rhetoric and condemnatory language is counter-productive.

This insight dawned on me years ago when I dealt with a young unmarried couple who were struggling with an unwanted pregnancy. I invited them to express what was going on inside of them. I listened for an hour as they poured out the anxieties and fears that troubled them. When they had finished and we sat in silence for a time, I asked, "Where are we now?" The response was very symbolic and almost knocked me off my chair. It was: "IN THE DELIVERY ROOM!"

I am convinced that women with unwanted pregnancies need to be surrounded by persons who establish an atmosphere of gracious acceptance. We must help to deal with their inner turmoil before any decision about the pregnancy is even attempted.

I thank God for Rachel's Vineyard Retreats. May women who labor with the pain, sadness, isolation, loneliness, and rejection following an abortion, be attracted there for a grace-filled experience.

Resources on Post-Abortion Healing & Reconciliation

Church Documents

The Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul II, 1995.
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/prolife/tdocs/evangel/evangel.htm>

Living the Gospel of Life, U.S. Bishops, 1998.
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/prolife/gospel.htm>

Pastoral Plan for Pro-life Activities, U.S. Bishops, 1985.
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/prolife/tdocs/paspl85.htm>

Copies of these & other documents are available from USCC Publishing Services at (800) 235-8722.

Books

David C. Reardon, *Aborted Women: Silent No More*, Loyola University Press, 1987.

Rev. Michael T. Mannion, *Abortion & Healing: A Cry to be Whole* [2nd edition], Sheed & Ward, 1992.

Pat King [ed], *Catholic Women & Abortion: Stories of Healing*, Sheed & Ward, 1994.

David C. Reardon, *The Jericho Plan: Breaking Down the Walls Which Prevent Post-Abortion*

Healing, Acorn Press, 1996.

Manual

A Pastoral Response -- Dealing with Crisis Pregnancy and Post-Abortion Trauma

16 page manual produced by the Office of Justice & Peace to help parishes, schools, and campus ministries welcome women & families struggling with pregnancy or the trauma of abortion. Includes resource list. Updated in 2000. \$1 donation requested for postage & handling.

Useful Web Sites

NCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/prolife/index.htm>

Association for Interdisciplinary Research in Values and Social Change
<http://www.abortionresearch.com/>

Elliot Institute
<http://www.afterabortion.org/>

Project Rachel - Hope After Abortion
<http://www.hopeafterabortion.com/>

Sowers of Justice Seedlings

Activities of the Catholic Community and Friends Working for the Common Good

Tidewater Update

By Candice Neenan

On October 3, sixty *Sowers of Justice* and Old Dominion University students and faculty attended a presentation on globalization by Witness for Peace speaker Marcela Orozco Contreras. The talk was followed by a lively concert by Jolie & Colleen, which focused on closing the School of the Americas (SOA).

On October 26, twenty-two people came to a *Sowers'* non-violence training in preparation for the Vans from Virginia trip to the demonstration at Ft. Benning, Georgia to close the SOA on November 17-19.

Our *Sowers* group has endorsed "Action for Iraq Packs," an idea conceived by Patrice Schwermer, to protest the continued U. S. bombing and economic sanctions of that country.

Enclosed in the pack are bright pink postcards to be mailed each month to Congress. The cards read:

"Another month has gone by and 4,500 more children have died. How many more children will die before we stop the sanctions against Iraq? Please work to end the economic sanctions."

Please contact Patrice at (757) 583-0291 or <patrice1@juno.com> if you would like to join in this effort.

Sr. Mary Ann Grzeskowiak, Robin Meyers, Patrice Schwermer, and Candice Neenan are meeting with the Charitable Choice Task Force, led by Lieutenant Governor John Hagar. These four women continue to be an active presence on the Virginia Beach Welfare Reform Forum.

Voices That Challenge

By Patrice Schwermer

On October 1, twenty-eight youth and adults gathered in community and prayer. They developed a calendar of educational and experiential justice and peace activities for *Voices That Challenge*.

In January many *Voices* will attend the regional death penalty conference (see box on this page for info) to hear Sr. Helen Prejean, and learn more about capital punishment and efforts to abolish the death penalty.

A Catholic Relief Services program -- *Food Fast* -- is targeted for February or March. Participants in this 24 hour lock-in will learn about global hunger and poverty through activities, and eat foods that are staples in Third World countries.

In the spring *Voices* will explore environmental issues as we kayak through the Outer Bank's waterways to help clean the Sound.

Next summer *Voices* plan to continue their annual tradition of participating in a gleaning project either on the Eastern Shore or in the Tidewater area.

Voices will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to educate ourselves, plan events, share calendar events, have fun, and support one another in our justice commitments.

The next *Voices that Challenge* meeting will take place on Sunday, January 21 at 4:00 P.M. at St. Pius Church. Please call Suzanne Felty at (757) 340 - 8451 or Patrice Schwermer at (757) 583 - 0291 for more information.

Victory on Debt Relief

No one thought we could do it. The House had allocated \$225 million for debt relief; the Senate \$75 million. In a startling victory for the poor, Congress passed a foreign aid bill with the full \$435 million that advocates had sought. It is a major step toward meeting the Pope's call for debt relief during the Jubilee Year.

Experts attribute this victory to a grassroots debt relief campaign led by the religious community. Special thanks go to all parishes and parishioners who responded to Bishop Sullivan's call to write Congress during this Great Jubilee Year.

Our goal was to send 2,000 letters by the end of 2000. At least 1,226 letters were sent, and the actual total was probably much higher. More importantly, Congress has listened. Many poor nations will have the crushing burden of debt lifted.

After two years of tireless effort to push for debt relief for the world's poorest countries we can now celebrate and PROCLAIM JUBILEE!

Death Penalty Conference in Virginia Beach on January 12-13, 2001

Tidewater *Sowers of Justice* and St. Nicholas Parish will present a conference entitled *A Challenge of Faith: The Death Penalty*.

Sr. Helen Prejean, author & activist, will speak on Friday evening.

The Saturday session will feature national and regional figures recognized for their work on the issue.

Registration is not required for the Friday evening keynote address, but there is a \$15 fee for Saturday.

For more information, contact Candice Neenan at (757) 340-7231 or <candin@stnicholasvb.com>.

Post-Abortion Healing: Additional Reflec-

A Counselor's Perspective

By Bill Devlin, Commonwealth Catholic Charities

Women who have experienced abortion carry trauma and emotional pain on a daily basis. They feel the loss of innocence as well as vicious self-recrimination. Many try to gain self-worth by pleasing others and giving up their true selves in order to avoid conflict, anger and abandonment.

Many post-abortive women are sexually promiscuous and abuse drugs or alcohol. Sexual promiscuity manifests their need to be accepted since they cannot accept themselves. Drug or alcohol abuse is an attempt to avoid the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

Post-abortive women often come to a counselor asking for help with depression. They do not connect the depression with their abortion. By unconsciously repressing their feelings, they carry on with the tasks of daily life.

Post-abortive women often feel alienated from the people in their lives. They feel cut off from God, their church, and their aborted children. In fact, they feel cut off from an essential piece or part of themselves.

The journey of post-abortion healing allows women to connect with their repressed feelings, to vent them positively, to unburden their secrets, and to finally mourn for their lost children.

Let me add that post-abortion healing is not only for women. Brothers, husbands, and fathers are also affected by the abortion decision. Many men repress or deny their feelings about an abortion and avoid dealing with their feelings of anger, guilt, and pain.

In the abortion experience there is never just one victim. A caring community must be aware of this, and support people in their struggles for healing and wholeness.

A Parish Staff Perspective

By Molly Smith, Church of the Epiphany

I was vaguely familiar with the Post-Abortion Ministry at Epiphany when I first took the staff position as Minister of Human Concerns. I felt that it was important for me to find out more about post-abortion trauma and healing, and to be supportive of this ministry.

In learning about post-abortion trauma, I sensed that the feelings of loss and grief experienced by post-abortive men and women were the same as those felt by the refugee families with whom I had previously worked.

While planning our parish's first Rachel's Vineyard Re-

treating, I was struck by the support that was given by the staff at Epiphany. There was great sensitivity to the hurt that had been experienced by people who were calling about the retreat. The staff also knew that confidentiality was of the utmost importance.

Everyone helped, from the pastor on down -- hearing confessions, providing music, serving food, and moving furniture. Prayer Partners spent 14 days in prayer for retreatants and team members. Many continue to be involved in the retreats and recruit other volunteers.

The need for this ministry is growing and so we need more workers in the vineyard. It takes willing hearts, hands and voices in continuous prayer. Please pray for us and for all the women and men who are suffering from the terrible tragedy of abortion.

Dorothy's Story

I carried the pain and agony of my abortion for 37 years. My carefully guarded secret was never revealed because I was so ashamed of what I had done.

The sacrament of reconciliation held no meaning for me. I feared the wrath of a priest if I told my secret. I could not cope with condemnation. So I lived with my secret.

I hoped that one day I would meet Jesus "in heaven." Then I could ask for forgiveness, and maybe he would forgive me. What a horrible person I must be, if I could kill someone so defenseless! How could anyone love me?

When I read in the bulletin at my church that there was a Catholic retreat for women who had suffered the trauma of abortion, I began to consider that there might be hope for me. The church was inviting me to become reconciled.

The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat was a chance for me to look at my abortion. Although I made a tragic decision at nineteen, the merciful God was waiting to forgive me now and welcome me back to my church family.

That weekend was a time to experience God's presence, mercy, love and acceptance. I was restored. I was valuable and I was loved -- loved so deeply that even my abortion could be reconciled. I was overpowered and touched to my core, a core I did not even know existed.

Rachel's Vineyard is a path for those burdened by their past abortion, to find the love and acceptance of the Church and to be reconciled with God, a God who is always with us, even in the darkest moment of our life.

News & Notes Around the Diocese

Soul in a Coffee Filter

By Clare McBrien,

One can easily get turned off to politics hearing candidates these days. So I am happy to report a very positive form of political discussion recently here in Wytheville.

Members of the Roundtable on Poverty and the Virginia Organizing Project held a legislative advocacy session, led by the Rev. Fletcher Lowe, Executive Director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. During that session, Rev. Lowe handed us a coffee filter and asked us to write the word JUSTICE in its center. He told us that every political decision needs to be filtered through a screen of justice, because every decision is a justice issue.

The next day several members attending the advocacy work session met with Delegate Tommy Jackson and Senator Phillip Puckett's Legislative Assistant, David Larimer, to discuss some issues on the legislative agenda for 2001 that concerned them -- capital punishment, housing & homelessness, and poverty & the working poor.

Delegate Jackson openly admitted that he struggles with the death penalty all the time. A large percentage of his constituents favor capital punishment. On the other hand, his wife is a strong advocate against the practice. One could tell he was listening and truly hearing what was said. He was using that justice filter.

The group also pointed out that full time employment at minimum wage generates \$10,300 in income before state taxes and FICA is deducted. Over 300,000 Virginians -- including 171,000 children -- live in working poor families. Rent for an average apartment requires 80% of income from a full time minimum wage job.

Many years ago St. Thomas Aquinas said, "A politician must know more about soul than a doctor knows about the body." Somehow I felt this dialog with our legislators had a strong element of soul because it was full of feeling -- of passion and compassion. Soul has a certain mystery about it. There are few absolutes and many doubts. Above all, to have soul is to be searching for knowledge and understanding, doing serious reflection.

Neither Tommy Jackson nor David Larimer would have used the word "soul," but they were impressed that groups like ours care about the issues brought up. They encouraged us to continue to lobby and work for changes in the Commonwealth of Virginia. There is a lot of hope with legislators and aides like Tommy Jackson and Philip Puckett using filters of justice in their work.

Jubilee Spirituality & Justice

By Muzaffar Fazaluddin,

Director - Appalachian Office of Justice & Peace

During July I helped to teach a course -- *Celebrate Jubilee Spirituality and Justice* -- at St. Anne's Parish in Bristol. The six sessions helped parishioners understand the biblical call to justice, and how to live out that call.

The participants were energized to do something practical. They named their group, "Jubilee Journey Committee," and drafted objectives for future involvement:

- Meet every two weeks to share concerns,
- Work on the campaign for world debt relief,
- Organize two justice retreats for spiritual growth,
- Write a one page newsletter -- "Jubilee Journal" -- to be inserted into the parish bulletin, and
- Raise money for their twinned community in Haiti.

It is very encouraging that other parishes in southwest Virginia have "*opened wide their doors*" to this course. The support from pastors is incredible!

Affluenza

By George Cosmo

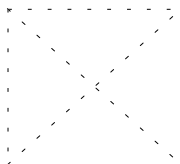
Fifteen parishioners from St. Edward's Parish in Richmond -- ranging in age from 35 to 75 -- gathered for a five week journey focused on the issue of consumerism, with Pax Christi's *Affluenza* process. My heart was moved as this group gathered each week for ninety minutes to read Scripture, pray, learn, and reflect on how consumerism influences and affects their lives.

Affluenza helped us to examine our purchasing habits with a "Buying Journal" where we listed our daily purchases. We came to realize that we really did not need to make this or that purchase. Although we varied in age and political persuasion, all participants began to question the assumption that "more makes us happier."

We learned about Catholic Social Teaching, the biblical Jubilee, the environment, and sweatshop business. The group encouraged each other to begin removing the layers of consumerism in our lives.

My heart was moved, as these few people began to question a society founded on affluence and wealth. Hopefully each will begin to share the insights from *Affluenza* with others in their lives and in our parish.

CALENDAR



DECEMBER

1 World AIDS Awareness Day

Contact OJP for details.

2 Prison Ministers Gathering

in Charlottesville. Contact Stephen Lenton at (804) 353-1450 or <prisonministryrc@gateway.net>.

6 Execution of Christopher

Goins. See the web site of Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty <www.vadp.org> for details.

25 Catholic Charities Christmas Collection

JANUARY

1 World Day of Peace

Contact OJP for details.

12-13 Challenge of Faith: The Death Penalty

-- Conference at St. Nicholas in Virginia Beach. Keynote address by Sr. Helen Prejean. [See page 4 for details.]

15 Martin Luther King, Jr.

Holiday. For resources on racism, contact Michael Stone at (804) 359-5661, ext. 128 or <mstone@richmonddiocese.org>.

21 Respect Life Collection

21-27 Respect Life Education

Week. Contact Michael Stone at (804) 359-5661, ext. 128 or <mstone@richmonddiocese.org>.

22 March for Life, beginning at noon in Washington, DC

29 Catholic Advocacy Day at the Virginia General Assembly. \$5 fee includes lunch & materials. Contact Steve Colecchi at (804) 359-5661, ext. 125 or <scolecchi@richmonddiocese.org>.

FEBRUARY

Black History Month

3-11 Haiti Solidarity Week

For worship resources, contact Kathleen Kenney at (804) 359-5661, ext 129 or <kkenney@richmonddiocese.org>.

23 Sr. Helen Prejean will speak about the death penalty at Smith Auditorium, Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg at 7:00pm. For more info, contact Chris Barrett at (804) 544-8156 or <barrett_c@mail.lynchburg.edu>.

28 Ash Wednesday—Lent & Operation Rice Bowl Begins. For info, contact Kathleen Kenney at (804) 359-5661, ext 129 or <kkenney@richmonddiocese.org>.

MARCH

Women's History Month

16-18 Rachel's Vineyard

Retreat. See cover story for details. Contact Kay Marie Geiger at (804) 330-3137 or Molly Smith at (804) 794-0222 or <mismolly101@home.com>.

18-25 National Migration Week

Contact your local office of Refugee & Immigration Services.

31 Diocesan Haiti Gathering

For details, contact Adele DellaValle-Rauth at (540) 297-6493 or <delrauth@aol.com>.

APRIL

22 Earth Day

For info & resources, contact Muzaffar Fazaluddin at (540) 762-5050 or <mfazaluddin@naxs.net>.

JUNE

Project Rachel: Post-Abortion Counseling and Reconciliation

Project Rachel is a diocesan program to help those suffering from the aftermath of abortion to receive the healing grace of God.

It provides a caring and supportive environment where people can move toward reconciliation — with themselves, their unborn child, their family, their Church, and their God.

For Catholics the pain of abortion can be intensified by a sense of alienation from God and Church. We are a loving Church, reaching out in compassion and concern to those in pain.

Project Rachel is a private, confidential experience. Callers to Project Rachel, will be put in touch with a trained counselor from Catholic Charities. This counselor will meet with the person to discuss her/his situation. Counseling may be needed to help deal with unresolved feelings and conflicts.

People can be referred to a specially trained priest if they wish. He will help the person prepare for the sacrament of reconciliation, the final step in the healing process for many.

For help, call Catholic Charities and ask for Project Rachel ...

Catholic Charities of Hampton Roads

Virginia Beach	(757) 467-7707
Norfolk	(757) 625-2568
Chesapeake	(757) 484-0703
Newport News	(757) 875-0060
Williamsburg	(757) 253-2847

Commonwealth Catholic Charities

To make an appointment at any of the offices listed below, call this toll-free number: (800) 974-4494

Richmond	Petersburg
Charlottesville	Staunton
Roanoke	Radford Norton

John's Story of Post-Abortion Healing

My girlfriend and I were 17 when we met as graduating seniors in high school. Over the summer, before college would separate us, we gave into our infatuation with each other. It was 1975. The fresh rhetoric of Roe vs. Wade dominated our thoughts and the decision for abortion.

I was instrumental in the abortion decision even though the consent was mutual. I drove my girlfriend and her father to the abortion clinic that day. The experience pierced a hole in my heart. As a young man I was already groomed to guard my outward expression of heartfelt thoughts and emotions. The abortion was the catalyst for becoming a master at protection from the emotional risk of hurt and pain.

Unlike 70% of relationships destroyed after an abortion experience, my girlfriend and I were married three years later. We were graced with three more children.

In our middle adult life, we shared a deepening relationship with Christ and his Church. After 25 years, the light of Christ helped me to see the hole in my heart and the emotional chasm there.

In late 1997 and early 1998, I saw announcements for

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats in our parish bulletin and at other times in *The Catholic Virginian*. The invitations tugged at my soul and created a yearning. My wife and I had not spoken one word of the abortion since that terrible day twenty-five years ago.

It took nearly a year and a half to overcome my fear and to become vulnerable with my wife. Over pillow talk one night, she shared the same desires for healing with me. Three more weeks of staring at the telephone ensued before I could make the call to Rachel's Vineyard Ministry.

On a weekend in February 2000, I encountered Jesus in a new way. He walked me through my fears, pain and anguish. Jesus carried me through the suffering and death of abortion and led me to the fullness of life in his resurrection. The hole in my heart is sealed with his reconciling love and my soul is born again.

I pray that post-abortion healing will reach and unite all suffering parents with their aborted children in the light and love of our great creator God.

Office of Justice and Peace
Catholic Diocese of Richmond
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Richmond, VA 23220

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Richmond, Virginia
Permit No. 321

Catholic Advocacy Day

Monday, January 29, 2001
8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

St. Peter's Church - Richmond

Learn about the issues & meet with
your elected representatives in the
Virginia General Assembly

**See the enclosed flyer &
registration form for details.**