“I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine towards the souls of sinners. Let the sinner not be afraid to approach me.” (Divine Mercy in My Soul, St. Faustina Diary, 50)

Some of the wonderful priests we work with…


Afraid? I was terrified to approach God. It was years after my abortion until I dared to even step foot into a church, and then it was only because my son was about to be making his first communion. I was sure the walls would fall down around me, and that everyone would know I had killed my unborn child.

My feelings are not unique. Over the years I have heard this sentiment from countless women and men who have participated in abortion.

Yet, it was in the church, through a servant of God in the form of a priest that I embarked on my journey of healing and understanding of the mercy and forgiveness of God. The priest was a sign of God’s love for me, a ray of hope in my hopeless world. There are no words to explain the importance of their role in post abortion healing.

Since that day years ago, I have been very blessed to know and work with some very wonderful priests, and I have had the privilege of seeing countless post abortive women and men reach healing, many of whom were aided by these men. Through the patience and unconditional love they have shown, sometimes by hearing the same abortion confessed over and over again in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, they have been a sign of God’s mercy and forgiveness. Standing side by side with these souls through the battles of post abortion syndrome, they often go down to the pits of hell to pull these people out of the grasp of despair and have given these women and men the courage to move forward assuring them all things are possible with God, even self forgiveness! There is nothing that can compare to the peace of seeing those who have suffered so deeply finally knowing they have been forgiven in the sacrament, the first time! Often, these women and men have been away from the church for years, and need to learn the faith, sometimes for the first time. The compassion and understanding these clergy display reflects to those who go to them the love of the person of Jesus Christ.

Whether it is in the ministry, the retreats or trainings I have participated in, I am so grateful to God for these men. Often overworked and very often underappreciated, they strive to be a sign of God’s love in our suffering world to those they are called to serve.

As we enter into this Lenten season, may we all say a prayer of gratitude for the clergy. May we show them our appreciation not only by our prayers but by our words and works. Thank you Fathers, for your help in bringing the mercy of God to those suffering from a past abortion. May our children in heaven intercede for you until they greet you in paradise!

TBonopartis
Commission on the Status of Women


The women will be lobbying International Delegates and Representatives from the nations, countering the pro choice lobby to make abortion a woman’s right globally. Along with lobbying, they will be conducting workshops at the UN on the abortion breast cancer link, depression, suicide, and substance abuse, sharing studies proving that along with taking the lives of their children, abortion hurts women. The team of women will also be sharing testimonies.

For more information contact Women for Life International, 254-933-8416 (office) or email info@womenforlifeintl.com

Mothers Mural

A giant image (40ft x 23 ft) of Our Lady of Guadalupe is being hand painted on the side of Our Lady of Angels Friary of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, 427 East 155th St in the South Bronx. The image has been divided into 600 spaces (12in x 18in) which are being “adopted” for a suggested donation of $35. The dress of Our Lady is being reserved for those who have suffered an abortion or miscarriage and there will be a book of perpetual remembrance recording all of the intentions of each donor. All of the owners of spaces will be personally invited to the unveiling which is planned for April 2nd.

The painting will cost $20,000 and will be a “photo realistic” image. 600 spaces at $35 will raise $21,000. The remaining $1,000 will be used for administration and plans for the grand opening. Anyone interested in adopting a space in memory of their children should contact Br Francis at Most Blessed Sacrament Friary, 375 13th Ave, Newark, NJ 07103. Please call (973) 622-6622 to reserve your space and check availability.

Needed...a few good priests

If any clergy are interested in learning more about post abortion work or helping out at “Entering Canaan” retreats please contact Lumina 877-586-4621 or Sr Marija Joseph at 203-595-0075

Operation Outcry Declaration

If you are post abortive, your testimony in a declaration can be used in legal cases and in state legislative efforts to end or limit abortion, such as an abortion ban, informed consent, parental consent, etc. To maintain confidentiality, initials only can be used if you wish. Personal contact information is never released. A declaration form and instructions are available at: www.operationoutcry.org

WHAT’S NEWS

Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance

We tend to think of abortion in terms of the mother and baby and sometimes the father, but so often we fail to look at the entire picture of how abortion has affected our nation. As a post abortive woman who was coerced into an abortion by my parents when I was 17 years old, my road to healing was long because no one would acknowledge my pain. It took me years before I found the help I needed.

In the Gospel of Life Pope John Paul the II states that we need to “Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly”. It is never cut and dry, an abortion decision is complicated, with many dynamics involved. Through healing, I came to recognize the impact my one abortion had, and the need for healing for countless people…my parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, my friends, my future children, and yes, society as a whole.

About 4 years ago while before the Blessed Sacrament, I was inspired to write a prayer service for everyone. A service where all could participate in reparation for the impact of abortion, no matter what their role. I brought the idea to the Sisters of Life and together we developed “An Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance”. “An Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance” involves short testimonies of many key people regarding their roles in abortion and is a safe place to mourn and pray together without anyone knowing if you yourself have been involved in an abortion or not.

With the Sisters of Life from the Archdiocesan Family Life Office of New York, we have been moving the prayer service to different parishes throughout the New York diocese each year for the past four years. This year we were blessed to be able to host it at the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, on January 21st, the day before the March for Life, with the help and support of the Basilica staff, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-life Activies, and Rev Mariusz Koch, CFR. It is three hours in duration but feels like one hour as you truly “enter in” to the prayer.

Each year, on January 22nd, at the March for Life, tens of thousands of people are in DC to commemorate the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, however, there are thousands more people unable to make it to Washington. It is our prayer and hope that other parishes and diocese across the country will begin to offer this three hour service of “prayerful remembrance” so we will all be interceding before God and people in our communities will experience Mercy Himself in the prayer and the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. For further information please call me at Lumina 1-877-586-4621 or email lumina@postabortionhelp.org

- TBonopartis
ALL AROUND THE TOWN

It was great to meet up with other post abortion groups at the March for Life in DC on January 22nd!

Cindy Collin, Clayton Trotta, & Lisa Dudley of Operation Outcry

Georgette Forney of The Silent No More Awareness Campaign

Theresa and Kevin Burke of Rachel’s Vineyard

Matching Grant

Lumina’s mission is to bring others closer to God’s loving, merciful forgiveness. With each healing, not only is that person freed, but the truth of abortions destruction, not only to the unborn but to everyone, reaches more and more people. More priests and counselors are trained to speak out, which in turn brings more men and women in for healing and ultimately saves the lives of more unborn children.

In these difficult financial times, we have been given a $25,000 matching grant. For every dollar you give now, up to $25,000, a foundation will match your gift. To be truthful, it is very humbling for me to even be writing this asking for your help. Being coerced into an abortion as a teen by my parents, for years after my own abortion I would not ask anyone for anything. I was locked in the isolation and despair of feeling abandoned and alone, not unlike those still out there suffering. Writing this is something I never would have imagined I would do. Yet, this is further proof of the magnitude of the good that can be done once someone has received God’s mercy and healing.

Pope John Paul II said in The Gospel of Life, that post-abortive women can become “the most eloquent defenders of human life”. Dave Reardon of the Elliot Institute for post abortion research always says “Who better to speak for the unborn than their parents”. And so I ask you, to help us reach as many as possible. Is it your friends or relative we are reaching? I don’t know, but I can promise you this much, the life of someone you know has been touched by abortion whether you realize it or not. Lumina is on a quest for souls but we cannot do it without your support. Please help us to bring them the message of peace that God is longing to give them.

- TBonopartis

UPCOMING POST
ABORTION RETREATS

Entering Canaan Ministry
Sisters of Life
Contact: 866-575-0075 or 877-586-4621

Day of Prayer & Healing
April 18, 2009
June 13, 2009

Men’s “Day of Prayer & Healing”
Franciscan Friars of the Renewal & Rev George Stewart
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621
May 9, 2009

Poor Pre Natal Day
For couples suffering because of an abortion due to a poor prenatal diagnosis
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621
April 25, 2009

Rachel’s Vineyard
http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/

New Jersey
Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)
Contact: Michelle Krystofik
732-388-8211

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

New York
Long Island/Uniondale
Contact: Frank Gariboldi
516-523-0586
2/20/2009 - 2/22/2009

Spanish retreat
Contact: Donna Crean
631-258-5062
2/20/2009 - 2/22/2009

Connecticut
Fairfield County
Local host: Diocese of Bridgeport
Contact: Clarissa Cincotta
203-218-0291
Website: www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com
4/17/2009 - 4/19/2009

Litchfield
Contact: Mary Hayden
203-882-1326

Hamden
6/12/2009 - 6/14/2009

Litchfield
WITNESS

Thank You, Lord, for your holy priests!

When I think back to where I was eight years ago and where I am right now, I just wonder how I would have ended up if God had not brought into my life the blessing of Father Giovanni. I met Father in the confessional of my parish, a place I had not dared to visit for many years, not so much out of fear but because I truly thought that I was a lost case and my sins were unforgivable.

By late 2001 I was carrying the weight of five abortions, I was only twenty-four and I was convinced that my life had no meaning, no future. By the grace of God and the nagging of my mother for not having received the Sacrament of Confirmation, I resolved to go through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. Now, I see that it was through taking that one step back to God, that He began to put everything and everyone in the right path for me.

Part of the preparation for Confirmation was to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I knew that my life had been taking a turn for the worse, I was depressed and trying to break away from a very abusive relationship. At points I honestly thought ending my life was the easier way out. I knew part of all my troubles was the pain the abortions had caused me; now I see that it was not just a ‘part’ but the actual root of all my problems.

I remember how gently Father helped me to confess my sins and how compassionate he was seeing me cry while I tried telling my story. At the end of my confession he offered to talk to me again if I needed it. Deep inside I always hoped that God would one day hear my pleadings for a chance to start all over again. I did not pass up the priceless opportunity to have someone actually hear what I had to share about how shameful and regretful I was about my way of life and aborting my babies.

During the first meeting we had he gave me information about the Entering Canaan retreats with Theresa and the Sisters of Life, he assured me that they would be able to help me also… and they did! I have always been grateful that God gave me as a spiritual director a priest eager to base everything on the love of Christ and the teachings of the Church.

At the beginning Father helped me recover the dignity I had lost in so many loveless relationships; he always spoke to me about the redeeming power of the cross and how the love of Jesus was the only thing that would heal me and fill me up. I have to be honest, sometimes I thought that he was a little crazy and out of touch with reality! How was I going to stop all my unhealthy behaviors after having experienced and done all that I had? How could God simply forgive and forget without punishing me? How was I going to forgive myself and move on without hurting anymore? Poor Father, he probably never imagined how God was going to use him to save my soul. I am a very stubborn woman and I don’t learn my lessons easily.

I still made many mistakes under his guidance, but how patiently he listened and repeated things over and over again. Father always knew that God was using all my sins to bring me closer to Himself. Whenever I was ready to give up because God was not being clear as to what He wanted of me, Father would remind me of the little miracles I was already seeing in my life, and he would encourage me to keep on spending time in silence with Jesus. There are two things that I first learned from him; the power and healing love of God in the Most Blessed Sacrament and devotion to the Blessed Mother, my ‘holy shortcut’ to heaven.

I worked hard and, with the grace of God, I did put an end to most of my unhealthy behaviors. Two years ago Father was moved to another parish and so we stopped having our regular talks, but we remain friends and whenever I need his advice he is always there to help. After many years of praying and patiently trusting that God will show me His will, I had the blessing of meeting the right man for me and the joy of having Father Giovanni celebrate our Nuptial Mass. This is definitely not the end to my growing and healing; it is actually a whole new beginning, a new journey that I would not be able to walk without the help, prayers, and loving support of holy priests like Father Giovanni, Father Mariusz, Father George, Father Augustine, Father Anthony and many more. Holy priests who, without knowing it, have said or done something that reinforced that conviction in my heart –that the mercy of Jesus is far greater than my many sins. SA