



*“Do not lose
heart,
for we have
a glorious
expectation!”*



Gazing at the image above, we are faced with the emptiness of the stable. Dirty, cold and dreary, it appears to have nothing to offer us. In fact, even the thought of spending time in it can cause us to feel its emptiness and despair.

Sometimes our lives can seem empty like that stable, leaving us grasping for hope. Whether we are healing from an abortion, the struggles of our economy, unemployment, illness, loneliness or the death of a loved one, we can sometimes get locked into what we “feel” in the here and now, unable to hope or wonder about the things to come.

But, in just one second, everything can change. Like the birth of Christ transforms the stable into a place of warmth, joy, hope, peace and love, our outlook too can be transformed if we allow His presence in our lives.

The presence of Christ has the power to change our thoughts of despair to those of hope, not because we will not have any suffering, but because even in our suffering we know He is there.

So sweep away the dirt and prepare the way of the Lord. Christ is coming and indeed, we have a *glorious expectation!*

T Bonopartis

UPCOMING POST ABORTION RETREATS

ENTERING CANAAN MINISTRY

Sisters of Life or
Theresa Bonopartis of Lumina
Contact: 866-575-0075 or 877-586-4621

Days of Prayer & Healing

January 16, 2010
February 27, 2010
April 24, 2010
Contact 877-586-4621 or 866-575-0075

Day of Prayer & Healing for Siblings

March 6, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Poor Pre Natal Day

For couples suffering because of an abortion
due to a poor prenatal diagnosis
April 10, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

Day of Prayer & Healing for Men

May 2, 2010
Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

<http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>

New Jersey

Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)
1/15/2010-1/17/2010
Contact: Michelle Krystofik at 732 388 8211

Cherry Hill

12/11/2009 - 12/13/2009
Contact: Stephanie Claudy 866-4-RACHEL
sclaudy@camdendiocese.org

New York

Long Island/Uniondale
Contact: Frank Gariboldi 516-523-0586
Call for dates

Connecticut

Fairfield County
Local host: Diocese of Bridgeport
Contact: Clarissa Cincotta at 203 218 0291
Website: www.rachelsvineyardbpt.com

Rev Benedict Groeschel, CFR

On October 18, 2009, a beautiful mass of thanksgiving, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Rev. Benedict Groeschel, CFR, co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Good Counsel, was held at Holy Family Church in Nutley, NJ. A wonderful video tribute to Father can be found here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-imwvky7224>



WLNY Cable TV Documentary on Abortion:

Lumina was blessed to be part of a documentary on abortion, produced by WLNY TV, which is to be aired some time in January. As of this newsletter the date was not confirmed, so please check the listing to find the exact date. <http://www.wlny.com/>

The "Into My Arms" and "The Silent Fall" Projects

Restoring the Heart Ministry, founded by good friend Julie Woodley, invited us, along with Fr Benedict Groeschel, CFR, to participate in the filming of their new series for those who have suffered the pain of abortion. This nine-part video series with accompanying curriculum is targeted at counseling professionals and lay people to lead them through the forgiveness journey after an abortion. Please check out their site for more information <http://www.rthm.cc/into-my-arms.asp>

At the same time we were also blessed to meet Roman Jaquez, and take part in the filming of "The Silent Fall". The Silent Fall documentary project is an honest exploration of the impact decades of abortion have had on the individuals, culture, society and economy of the nations. You can check it out here <http://silentfalldocumentary.com/directorsblog/about/>

Afternoon/Morning of Prayerful Remembrance

Each year as the anniversary of Roe v. Wade approaches, the truth that the wounds of abortion impact *each of us* in our respective communities manifests itself anew and in an ever more vigorous way, far beyond those directly involved in the act of abortion itself - whether it be one's co-worker, one's neighbor, friend, relative, fellow parishioner - *we have all been affected by the loss of each child aborted and the often hidden suffering of their post-abortive parents.*

An Afternoon/Morning of Prayerful Remembrance and Intercession (APRI) is a prayer service, created in the spirit of the New Evangelization, for the entire local community. Acknowledging abortion's universal impact through reflections and testimonies offered as part of the day, it gives the opportunity for all of us to come together in an extended period of prayer, contemplation, and intercession in the context of the Church's Sacraments, seeking forgiveness and healing for our entire nation. The day includes an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a period of silent, Eucharistic Adoration and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We are happy to say we will be having the service in two location this January:

A Morning of Prayerful Remembrance

January 16, 2010
9:00am -12:00pm

St. Patrick's Cathedral/Our Lady's Chapel, New York, NY

An Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance

January 21, 2010
12:00pm - 3:00pm

Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC

Year of the Priests

One of the greatest blessings of post abortion ministry for me, has been the wonderful priests I have been blessed to work with over the years. From spiritual directors to co-workers, to friends, it has been such a great gift to have them in my life.



Theresa & Fr Mariusz, CFR at the Mass celebrating the 40th Anniversary of his ordination.

I have known Father Mariusz Koch, CFR, for many years. He has been, and continues to be many things to me, and my heart feels full when I think of him and his priesthood. He is my co-worker in many of our retreats, especially the men's days, adverse pre natal and now the sibling. We have worked together for years doing priest

trainings. He has been a friend, and a spiritual father and adviser, and most of all, a most compassionate and loving priest to those we serve.

This past September, Father celebrated a mass of Thanksgiving for 40 years of the priesthood. No surprise that the church was filled to overflowing with others who love him! Thank you God for the gift of Father Mariusz and all the hearts that are touched and brought back to You through his love and fidelity to the priesthood! – Theresa



Fr. Tom Carzon, OMV "I needed a lot of help to try and trust in Our Lord, and Fr Tom helped me. Fr Tom taught me that Jesus was with me all the time, especially when I needed Him most. He once told me that Jesus speaks to our hearts in a way that we can hear Him, and, he is so right! Sometimes during direction the pain became so intense I did not think I could make it, but Fr Tom helped me to walk through the pain in order to heal and told me if I trusted with an open and willing heart, the Lord would give me many graces. Sometimes it was totally exhausting, but God gave me His strength.

My faith is now stronger than it ever was. My relationship with Jesus is better than it ever was. I have been taught to always keep Him close and I truly know what it is to have a conversion of heart! I thank God everyday for Fr Tom!" Donna



There I am chaperoning at a retreat with my youth ministry in hope of them receiving Christ with all their hearts and opening a new path of life. We're sitting during mass listening to the priest give an awesome homily. He started to explain the "cultures of death", and from his mouth came the word 'abortion'. Me, who, had this big secret tucked away, was so struck by the powerful punch of hearing that word! I was wondering if anyone was seeing me squirm under my skin, my face breaking into pieces, and the guilt that masked my whole face from joy in seconds. The priest went into further explanation about the hurt and pains a victim of abortion feels. The more he spoke, the more I felt as if he knew the diary that was only written in my heart. My face was covered in anguish because it was about time I had to deal with a pain that had been buried for too long. At that moment I knew God was calling me through Fr. Juniper, a priest I have known for some years. When I spoke to him about my past experiences with my abortions, he didn't look disappointed, he didn't say anything close to "I expected better from you". All he did was talk about love, forgiveness, mercy, and healing. As wounded as I was, his graceful approach is what made me feel I needed to search for healing. From that search he pointed me towards Lumina which has, in many ways, allowed me to grow and grasp God's love and mercy so much more. Fr. Juniper is not only a priest that serves God's people, he's a friend. EB

ALL AROUND THE TOWN



Vicki Thorn, Founder of Project Rachel, Most Reverend William P. Callaban and Carl Anderson, Grand Knight at the 25th anniversary celebration of Project Rachel



Beth Lauwer of the St Louis Diocese, & Christina Schueger of New York, at the Project Rachel Anniversary Celebration



The wonderful women of "Silent No More" outside of Fox News in New York City, October 13th.



Mary, and Janet with Alveda King, of PFL and Janet Morano, of PFL & co-founder of SNM

WITNESS

From the Death of Misery, to the Birth Mercy

Christmas, a time that always used to be wonderful and happy, became a terrible time for me since 1979, the time when my aborted daughter, Nell, would have been born. It is also the anniversary of the death of my husband, who died on December 22, 1979 and was buried on Christmas Eve. It is all particularly relevant because I had the abortion as a result of my husband threatening to leave me if I didn't. The thought of raising my other children alone scared me to death, so I gave in and aborted our daughter. It's ironic that my husband left me alone anyway by dying. My thought has always been that it was God's punishment for having the abortion. At times, I still fall back into that kind of thinking, even though I know better now.

I'm sure I am not alone in my negative thinking about Christmas. Christmas can be a major abortion connector for post abortive people just by the fact that it celebrates the birth of a baby, but for me, the connectors were numerous. My sons were 3 and 8 years old at that time and while I know that the 8 year old remembered that Christmas in 1979, I'm also sure that the 3 year old had no memory, although I am sure they both must have felt the effects of my reactions to Christmas as the years went on.

After the death of my husband, my sons became my priority. They needed my care and I tried to give them a normal home, but the truth is, I was depressed, alcoholic and suicidal. During the Christmas seasons, I would be so down that I would self medicate by drinking to excess. My anger would boil up and sadly, rear its ugly head against the boys, but in spite of my behavior, my sons grew up to be wonderful men, so, perhaps I succeeded somewhat in hiding my negative characteristics from them.

Then in 1994 my youngest son went away to college, and I now had the time to reflect. It was as though I had just had the abortion. I became very depressed and sought psychiatric care. The medical professionals kept telling me that the depression I was experiencing was not caused by the abortion. Being told this made me even more confused because I knew in my heart it played a huge part, so my spirits became even lower as I felt there was something wrong with me. I could not bring myself out of the depression as my feeling continued to be denied and spent time in partial psychiatric programs and in house hospitalization. When I finally "believed" the psychiatric diagnosis it made me even more severely depressed and suicidal. I thought at that time that this was the end for me.

By the grace of a very merciful God, in planning my own suicide I learned of the Sisters of Life and the Entering Canaan mission. In September 2002, I attended a "Day of Prayer and Healing". Thirteen women who had abortions came together that day to find that they were not alone. I learned that many, many women were suffering after having had abortions. Suddenly, I felt hope and not crazy after all!

That day, I discovered that there was healing from the pain I was suffering. There was forgiveness for my sin and hope for a normal life ahead. What a wonderful message from the Father of Mercy and Forgiveness. For me, Christmas could now begin to mean something completely different than what I had been experiencing for more than 20 years. Christmas was now the birth of Mercy Himself, and a sign of His forgiveness for me.

I am so thankful for all the wonderful people who have come into my life to show me the way toward healing. Theresa, the Sisters, the priests and friars, and the many women sharing their experiences have helped me to be in a better place. It's as though the manger of darkness that I was living in has become a palace filled with light and hope for the future.

Thank you all so much
Mary

Donations to Good Counsel's Lumina Program are tax deductible. Your gift today can be multiplied many times over in bringing those hurting to the healing mercy of God.

Lumina, 1955 Needham Avenue, Bronx, NY 10466