

# Lumina

Hope and Healing after Abortion

A post-abortion ministry & referral network



*A ray of light in abortion's darkness*

Spring 2013



*"... But it is in starting from the experience of this desert, from this void, that we can again discover the joy of believing, its vital importance for us, men and women. In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, with their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive."*

Pope Benedict homily -The Year of Faith.

Sometimes it is hard not to get discouraged in this world. It seems that everywhere we look there is violence, from the womb to war, from a person to society as a whole. Our moral compass seems to be slipping away. Nothing seems sacred anymore. Good is seen as bad and bad as good.

I recently was thinking of how the church is shown as the enemy because they continue to state the truth of the evil of abortion. The world cannot admit that abortion itself is wrong because it is so immersed in the evil of abortion, so they lash out at anything that will remind them of what it is we are doing... killing our own children.

Those who have had abortions are made to feel guilty if it bothers them, as if killing your own child is not a reason to feel guilty. It must be your faith we are told, or surely something else that is causing the guilt.

Everyone seems to want to do whatever they please with no thought of the harm to others or the consequences of their actions no matter how wrong they may be. Those standing up for truth and right seem to face more and more persecution.

Sometimes it is hard to keep our eyes on Jesus and His victory in the midst of all that is happening. To move forward day by day knowing we can never change the world, but remembering **He has already changed the world through His suffering, death, and resurrection.**

I love the season of Lent. The calling back to Christ of the people of the church. A church not filled with guilt and shame, but rich with love, mercy and forgiveness in spite of our sins. Some faiths now seem to accept sin and think that is being merciful or compassionate, but true mercy speaks the truth to free you from

your sin. We are all human, we all sin. It is only through His grace that we do any good. A grace that calls us to this truth, which there is only one of, but also calls us to redemption.

I am always amazed at how my greatest sin, my abortion, was the very vehicle Christ used to call me to Himself. That my son Joshua, whose life I took through abortion, was the very instrument He used to bring me to His mercy and a new life in Him. A mercy that taught me true love and gives me courage in the midst of any desert I may pass through in life, because my trust is in Him in spite of how I may feel.

*"And in the desert people of faith are needed who, with their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive."*

Christ is our hope, and through the new evangelization we are called to keep him alive.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan we read: "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

May we all, during this season of lent, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive so that countless souls will see that Christ is our hope, not only because of what we say but because they have learned for themselves He is truly the Savior of the world.

-TB

# ALL AROUND THE TOWN



Top left: Seminary Training Dunwoodie; top right, Kerry, Monsignor Reilly & Lynn; bottom left, Gail, Allan Parker and Rosemary; bottom right, Theresa and Allan Parker, Lumina Dinner



Afternoon of Prayerful Remembrance, Sacred Heart, Monroe, NY

Spanish "Evening of Prayerful Remembrance" St. Phil Neri, Bronx, NY



Advent Retreat

## WHAT'S NEWS

On Saturday, April 13th the Family Life Office of the diocese of New York will be holding its **FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE**. The keynote speaker will be Dave Reardon, PhD of the Elliot Institute, which performs original research and education on the impact of abortion on women, men, siblings, and society. The conference will be held at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, NY from 10-3:30pm. For further information contact Sr. Shirley: 646-794-3195

### OPPOSE GOVERNOR CUOMO'S "ABORTION EXPANSION BILL"

Governor Cuomo is fighting for the passage of the Reproductive Health Act which would:

- Permit more late term abortions
- Allow non-doctors to perform abortions
- Prevent parental consent
- Threaten religious freedom of those who do not want to be involved in abortion
- Make it impossible to limit abortion in NYS

#### TAKE ACTION!

- Send an email [www.nyscatholic.org](http://www.nyscatholic.org)
- Write a letter to the Editor of your paper
- Call Governor Cuomo at 518-474-2800 and tell him you oppose this bill!

*This bill will kill more babies and hurt more women and families – act now!*

# *The Courage of Moving Forward with Jesus*



Over a year ago I attended my first retreat with Theresa and the Sisters of Life. I remember how reluctant I was about the whole idea of spending a few days focusing on my abortions with other women who I didn't know and possibly had to share my experiences. I tried to come up with every excuse I could not to go, but for some reason, I ended up being and doing exactly what I was determined not to and it ended up being one of the best things I could have ever done for myself and my family.

Although this was just the beginning of my journey toward a healing that I never believed I could attain, it was also the beginning of a "friendship" with Jesus. A friendship that I can now rely on and stay focused on when dealing with every day battles and struggles that come up along the way.

There are many different inner struggles that I've lived with and still live with since my first abortion. One of which is like an immediate pattern - a challenge comes up in my life and almost automatically my thoughts become the same "I'm being punished for this horrific sin...and I deserve it." I guess the good news is that for nearly 25 years of believing this, I can finally hear a different voice...his voice...the voice of truth responding simply, "No you're not and no you don't."

And hearing these words did not come very easily. I think one of the greatest challenges I faced at that first retreat was being able to just sit and be with Jesus. I always felt so uncomfortable in any "sacred" environment - so unworthy. And for me, prayer was just reciting something that I had memorized as a kid and getting it over with as quickly as possible. I never knew I could actually have a conversation with Jesus or how to have one for that matter. But over time, and of course with a lot of help from Theresa and a wonderful spiritual director, I have been able to learn how to just be in his presence and communicate in a way I never believed I could and it is truly the easiest and most comfortable part of my day.

I know that my life will always be filled with obstacles and struggles - doubts and fears. I know that tomorrow there will probably be a moment that I will hate myself because of my sin of abortion, but I also know that as each day goes by, the more I talk with him and get to know him and come to truly trust in him, the less those obstacles and struggles and doubts and fears will have a hold on me and my life.

- VR

## **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 for Women**

February 16, 2013, March 23, 2013

April 27, 2013, June 1, 2013

### **Day of Prayer & Healing for Men**

May 18, 2013

Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

### **Day of Prayer & Healing for Siblings**

For siblings of aborted babies

March 2, 2013

Contact Lumina: 877-586-4621

## **ENTERING CANAAN NATIONWIDE RETREATS**

### **Arlington, VA**

#### **Days of Prayer & Healing**

July 30, 2013

Contact: (888) 456-HOPE or email:  
projectrachel@arlingtondiocese.org .

### **New Orleans, LA**

#### **Day of Prayer & Healing**

April 6, 2013

Contact: Susan Mire  
smirewomansnewlife.com

### **Washington, DC**

#### **Entering Canaan Days of Prayer and Healing**

ENGLISH - June 8, 2013

SPANISH - April 27, 2013

### **RACHEL'S VINEYARD**

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

### **NEW JERSEY**

#### **Linden (Archdiocese of Newark)**

Contact: Michelle Krystofik

732 388 8211

### **Paterson, NJ**

Contact: Marie Ryan

973-777-8818 x264

rachel@patersondiocese.org

## DEFEND WOMEN – EDUCATE WOMEN – LOVE WOMEN & REPEAT

*I was in the middle of writing an article on feeling unforgivable when I took a break and came across this on FB. My heart breaks for this person whoever it is...a lot of the comments on the post were brutal and full of judgment even after reading what this girl had written!*

*When I read posts like those I feel sorry for the people doing the judging. Is abortion wrong? Of course, but they have no idea what prompted a person to abort or if they were coerced etc. God alone can judge. I wonder, do these people think they are without sin?*

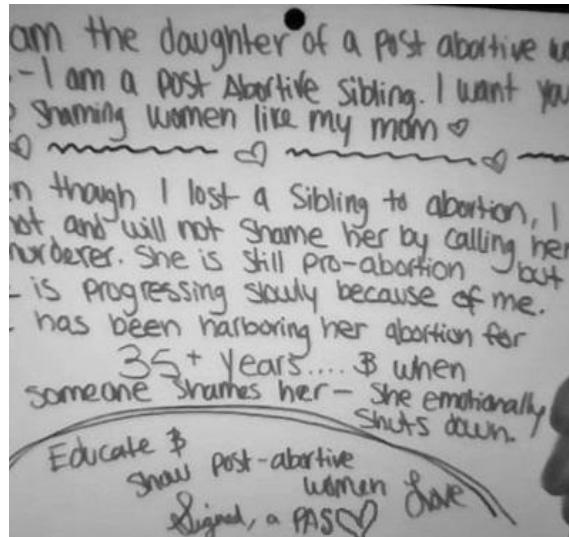
*This person says her mom is not ready to speak out. Of course not, if she feels condemned and judged why would she feel safe to come forward? If she is reminded at every turn about what she has done and called a murderer, why would she open her soul? I wish she would learn about the many great ministries she could come to for post abortion healing without judgment so she would not feel so alone and condemned. I pray she finds deep healing and peace in Jesus Christ, that will then surely give her the grace to firmly know forgiveness and allow her to speak out, because then she will not care what others say because she will know what He has done for her,*

*I am so grateful to know the unlimited mercy of God. A God who forgives and offers healing and wholeness. We are all sinners in need of His mercy and anyone who thinks they don't is in for a huge surprise. Anyway, I am going to post what this sibling wrote. I hope she comes to our sibling day...no one will judge her mom there and she will be able to freely express her feeling surrounding loosing a sibling to abortion without fear...her mom must be very proud of her...I know I am.*

Women are guilt tripped, forced, coerced with lies from every angle, and in the end they are completely TRAPPED when they abort their children. Why do you think abortions happen? -- My mom feared for her life when she was pregnant - as a teenager, so that is why she aborted. She feared that her dad would either beat her or disown her. I do not condemn her and you shouldn't either. She expressed to me recently that she fears condemnation. She told me this with tears welling up in her eyes (she even was speaking of herself and her abortion in 3rd person). She was so scared of what I would say back to her.

I educate her in LOVE and you should do the same with other post abortive women. (EVEN IF THOSE WOMEN ARE BEING HARD-HEADED! I KNOW IT'S HARD SOMETIMES, BUT YOU GOT TO KEEP ON, KEEP YOUR COOL, KEEP YOUR COMPOSURE.)

For you to call out a woman a MURDERER or any other harsh word to describe what she did to her child, that is an UNFAIR label. It's not her fault that she was backed into a corner with no one to help her (she felt there was no one to help her). My mom had felt unloved. My mom felt like the lowest piece of scum on the earth. My mom admittedly said she felt like she wanted to die because she was so scared when she got pregnant as a teen. She understood it was wrong when she was sitting in those stirrups about to have her almost 3 month old pre-born baby ripped apart. My brother or sister. She understands now wholeheartedly that it was a mistake. That is why she gets so defensive when I try to bring it up. She felt that she had NO-CHOICE when she made her choice to abort. That is called being trapped and then on top of that coerced. You're going to verbally condemn a woman? Seriously? That's lowest of



the low. How on earth do you think that would make her feel? She may need a push at certain times, but there are limits and then there are certain things that you NEVER SAY.

You are not needed to remind her that it was wrong to abort: no matter who you think you are or what agenda you may be pushing. She knows it was wrong deep in her heart. It takes time for it to surface.

My mom told me that she already made amends with God and she doesn't need anyone's approval. Which is correct, I agreed with her and I hugged her - but I asked her why doesn't she try to advocate the right to LIFE for other babies, and try to help other women out so that other women won't feel the same as she did and

make the wrong decision? She said she's not ready for it. She's still not healed yet and it would be too painful to "get out there and help others not make the same decision she did". We need to respect this with ALL post-abortive women. It's been 35+ years and I'm not even 2 years into trying to get her healed up. It's going to be awhile.

She will extend her hand to me (since I gained her trust) to help her heal from the death of her child (my brother/sister) - on her own time. And ONLY on her own time: not a second before.

You should not consider a person who is scared, confused, many times put under pressure by other people (even their own families, who should be supportive instead of threatening), who is lied to, and who feels like she truly has no other choice and is all alone in this, to be a murderer. To commit a crime or to sin, you must know that what you're doing is wrong AND you have to commit that freely. What freedom is there on someone being put under tremendous pressure by everyone around, who is lied to about that baby, threatened to be kicked out of her home, feeling like there's no one to turn to for help (both material and spiritual)?

– Katie

## DEFEND WOMEN – EDUCATE WOMEN – LOVE WOMEN & REPEAT

*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*