



# Vine & Branches

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

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## SUMMER 2025

### Rachel's Vineyard Team Updates & Announcements

#### COMING SOON!

We are THRILLED to share that our new Appendix is just about ready to launch!!! The Appendix will be live within the next few weeks. We have worked hard not only to make the Appendix more user-friendly, but to update the content as well. As we begin this launch, please note that there are a few documents that are still in the process of being updated. However, we felt it was most important to make this new Appendix available as soon as possible so that our teams could start utilizing these new resources.

If you have any input or ideas to share, we are always open to constructive criticism. We think you will all love the updates and changes that have been made!

If you have any questions or concerns, or need help accessing the Appendix, please reach out to Kelly (2Assistant@RachelsVineyard.org) or Kate (Assistant@RachelsVineyard.org).

Please remember to please keep our main office updated with your scheduled retreat dates so that we can add them to on our main website. We receive inquiries daily from people looking to find a retreat in their area. Keeping retreat information as up to date as possible will help us connect those people with an upcoming retreat.

Retreat dates can be sent to:  
Kelly (2Assistant@RachelsVineyard.org)  
Kate (Assistant@RachelsVineyard.org)  
Mary (Office@RachelsVineyard.org)  
They can also be called in at 610-354-0555.

Thank you!!

“

Not all those who  
wander are lost.  
— J.R.R. Tolkien



## Healing After Abortion Finds a Papal Champion

By Dr. Theresa and Kevin Burke



"While Pope Leo XIV (formerly Bishop Robert Prevost) was born in Chicago, he spent much of his priestly ministry serving in Peru and is a naturalized Peruvian citizen.

In 2019 our Peruvian Rachel's Vineyard team met with then-Msgr. Prevost to ask for his blessing and support of their new Rachel's Vineyard (El Viñedo de Raquel) site in the Archdiocese of Lima.

Upon the election of Pope Leo, a Peruvian woman shared a beautiful reflection on her encounter with then-Bishop Prevost. Her message speaks powerfully to a connection between those who have experienced abortion healing in the Church and the [New Evangelization](#) — the call for Catholics to share the Gospel with those who may have drifted away, or feel alienated from the faith..."



*\*\*To read the full article on The National Catholic Register, [click here!!](#)*

“

Peace is built in the heart

and from the heart,  
by eliminating pride and vindictiveness  
and carefully choosing our words.  
- Pope Leo XIV



## The Healing Warrior

She's a true warrior, although not the kind you might first envision. Instead of a bow and arrow, she carries a notebook and pen. And with these instruments, she combats lies about men and abortion.

Her name is Dr. Catherine Coyle, and her journey has traversed a landscape most people don't even think about, much less venture into: the desert of pain men experience when their child is aborted. As she wrote in her book, *Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope*, "Although our legal system and society do not consistently acknowledge the fathers of children yet in the womb, those men are no less 'fathers' than those whose children are already born." And many of them had no power to save their unborn child.

But let's go back to the beginning. How does a woman dare get involved in such a topic?

Catherine explains that she was trained as a nurse psychotherapist but "fell into teaching." Apparently, the fall wasn't a hard one. She loved it and became a lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. While there, Catherine met Dr. Robert Enright, a pioneer in the study of forgiveness who developed the first scientifically proven forgiveness process model. She was immediately drawn to his work, calling it "amazingly relevant and having eternal value."

She decided to continue her education within the Human Development Graduate program, blessed to have Dr. Enright as her advisor. When preparing for her dissertation, Catherine surveyed literature looking for a topic that hadn't been adequately studied. At that point, nothing had addressed the impact of abortion on men. Not only would a study further validate Enright's model, it could also help to develop programs for men who experienced the loss of a child through elective abortion.

Catherine applied the Enright model and developed a forgiveness therapy program, implemented it, and then assessed its effectiveness. Her goal? To help men forgive the person they blamed for the abortion. And the assessment showed that as the men's forgiveness *increased*, their anger, anxiety, and grief *decreased*.

Forgiveness clearly helped heal the men in her study. And Catherine learned a great deal about the effects of elective abortion on men. Eventually, she wrote a book about her findings that has since been used by groups and individuals to guide men through the forgiveness process. *Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope*, focuses on the areas of anger, anxiety, helplessness, guilt, relationship problems, and grief—and presents forgiveness as the remedy.

That begs the question, what *is* forgiveness? In her book, Catherine points out that the subject is especially relevant for Christians but is also equally applicable to people of any faith—or no faith at all. Forgiveness is not excusing, pardoning, forgetting, or (necessarily) reconciling with the person who hurt us.<sup>[1]</sup> Instead, it is a deliberate decision to let go of our resentment and our desire for retribution. It does not “demand that we ignore justice. In fact, we must have an adequate sense of justice in order to recognize when we have been treated unfairly.”<sup>[2]</sup> And it’s a process—not something that happens overnight. She describes it as “a truly demanding and difficult work of the heart.” Yet it’s one that not only frees us, it actually helps *heal* us.

Once she finished the book, Catherine sent the manuscript to Dr. Vincent Rue to get his feedback. Dr. Rue first recognized the potential effects of abortion on men in the 1980’s. He is now a co-director with Catherine of the “Alliance for Post-Abortion Research and Training” ([www.standapart.org](http://www.standapart.org)), which was formed to study the mental health risks of abortion and to inform the public about those risks.

Currently, Drs. Coyle and Rue, along with Dr. Martha Shuping (Adjunct Professor of Belmont Abbey, Psychiatrist, and former Rachel’s Vineyard site leader), are conducting an internet survey study to investigate the experience of miscarriage and/or elective abortion for both men *and* women. “To our knowledge,” Dr. Coyle states, “there is little published research comparing these different forms of pregnancy loss among men and women. We hope our findings will increase knowledge about how men and women experience pregnancy loss, so that we can develop healing programs for those who need it.”

Men and women may participate in this study by completing the anonymous surveys at [mypregnancyloss.info](http://mypregnancyloss.info). Their participation is invaluable and can help others who have suffered similar losses.

This latest study proves that although Dr. Coyle claims to be retired, she’s still a healing warrior, through and through.



### **For more information on men, abortion, and healing,**

- Go to [www.StandApart.org](http://www.StandApart.org) and [Rachel's Vineyard: Welcome Men](#)
- Read Dr. Catherine Coyle’s books:

“[Men and Abortion: A Path to Healing](#)”

“[Men and Abortion: Finding Healing, Restoring Hope](#)” (a free book from the Knights of Columbus)

and “[Peace Psychology Perspectives on Abortion](#)” (written by various authors, including Dr. Catherine Coyle and Dr. Martha Shuping; edited by Rachel MacNair author of (author of [Perpetration Trauma](#))

- Read Kevin Burke’s book, “[Tears of the Fisherman](#)”
- 



Love is not affectionate feeling,  
but a steady wish for the loved person's  
ultimate good as far as it can be obtained.  
— C.S. Lewis



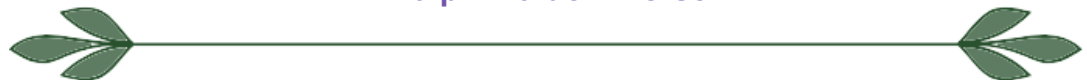
## Dr. Burke on "Just Ask Janet"

Throughout July, you can catch our founder, Dr. Theresa Burke, on "Just Ask Janet"! Each episode will cover a new topic, airing at **8pm EST** on [endabortion.tv](http://endabortion.tv).

- **July 9<sup>th</sup>** - Topic: Rachel's Vineyard and its impact on offering aftercare for abortion, miscarriage, etc., etc.
- **July 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Topic: Grief to Grace ministry and its relationship to the abortion decision and other types of related trauma
- **July 30<sup>th</sup>** - Topic: Duty to Heal ministry



Live in the sunshine.  
Swim in the sea.  
Drink in the wild air.  
– Ralph Waldo Emerson



## Dave knew something was wrong in his life; he just couldn't put his finger on it

By Kevin Burke and Reg Platt

"He arrived at the retreat center Friday and met the other six participants in the program. Each man had his own set of problems and sorrows. Yet, as Dave heard their stories, he began to realize they all had a lot in common.

That's what Project Joseph does. Since 2014, it has helped men recognize, from their unique, individual perspectives, that the damage done by abortion is universal. Loss, grief and guilt are at the core of every story, regardless of how the man was involved."



\*\*To read more of Dave's story, and to learn more about Project Joseph, [click here!](#)

“

What we once enjoyed and deeply loved  
we can never lose,  
for all that we love deeply  
becomes part of us.  
— Helen Keller



## Site Leader and Facilitator, Marie Laffin, Announces Retirement from Rachel's Vineyard



I am privileged to have been the Site Leader and Facilitator of Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats for the past 14 years. I cannot express enough how grateful I am for having had this opportunity.

I was invited to take on the role of site leader and retreat facilitator by the Program Director of the Respect Life Office in the Archdiocese of Hartford, CT in 2011, but I did not expect it would have such an impact on me personally. Being present and journeying with the women and men who came on retreat seeking forgiveness from themselves and God for their abortion decision, seeking emotional and spiritually healing, and renewing (or maybe developing for the first time) their relationship with God, resulted in a strengthening and renewing of my own person faith journey. Words cannot adequately explain the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit one feels on these retreats. To witness the encounter with God that each woman and man experienced created a powerful faith encounter that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

As I retire from this ministry, I want to thank all of the staff who oversees the Rachel's Vineyard Program, and all that this entails, and for all who have been on team and all who have prayed, supported and encouraged me during these years.

May each person who is blessed to have an opportunity to labor in this special vineyard feel the same spiritual growth, and be able to continue this fruitful ministry, so that others may experience a growth of faith and healing of hearts and a grow closer to God.



*\*\*Thank you, Marie, for your many years of service and dedication. We are so blessed to have you as a part of our RV family!!*

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“Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.”  
— Theodore Roosevelt



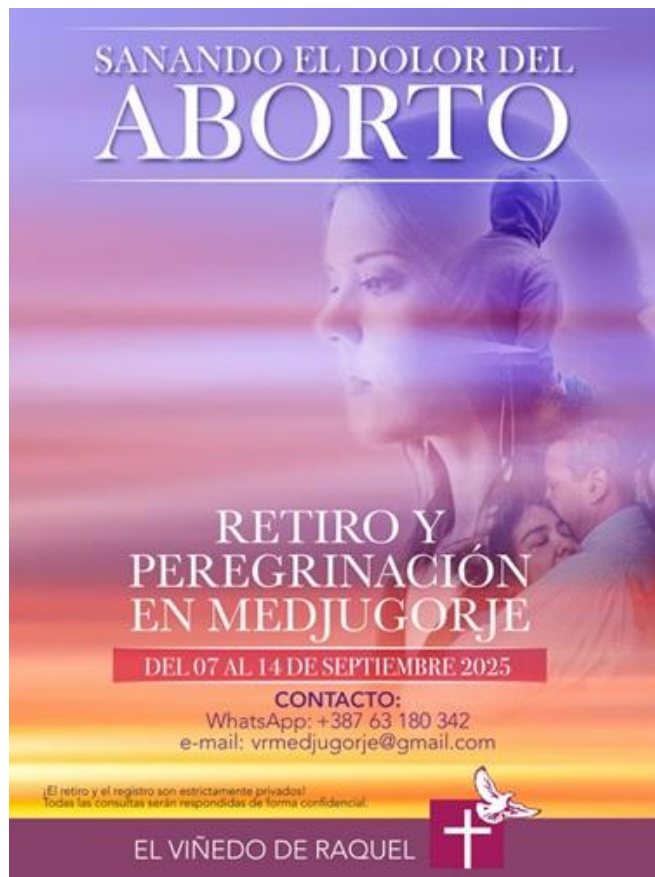
## Events of Interest



Have you ever wanted to visit the "Great Shrines of France?" Now is your chance!

From the small villages in the South of France to Paris, you will experience Lourdes, Lisieux, Paray Le Monial, La Salette, and Ars, just to name a few. **Fr. Ben Cameron**, a priest of the Fathers of Mercy and the **Team Leader of Rachel's Vineyard in Kentucky**, will be the Spiritual Director of this once-in-a lifetime pilgrimage from **August 25 - September 6, 2025**. He would love to have some friends from Rachel's Vineyard join him, so [book your spot here!](#)





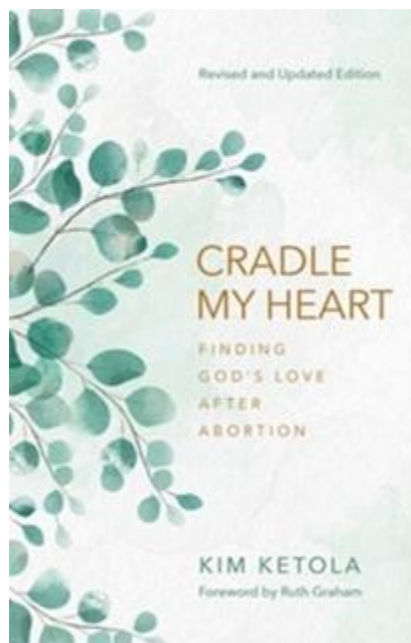
[Click here](#) to see the Medjugorje retreat schedule!

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“The best way out  
is always through.”  
— Robert Frost



## RV Recommends



**A timely revised and updated resource on abortion recovery**

While more than half of the women who have had abortions are affiliated with Christian religions, they believed that abortion was the solution to their problems. Then many of them suffer in silence, wondering if they committed an unforgivable sin. Living with shame, regret, and unacknowledged grief, they are afraid to turn to their church for support. After her own painful battle, Kim Ketola wrote the book she needed in her darkest moments.

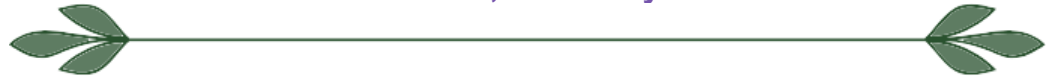
Through practical steps, biblical retellings, and personal experiences, Kim weaves a narrative of empathy and compassion that encourages women to stop living in the shadows. At the end of each chapter, readers will have the opportunity to reflect on God's love and providence, develop a loving conversation with Jesus, respond through nourishing exercises, and retune their minds with handpicked songs that demonstrate God's love and purpose.

In this revised and updated version, Kim paves the way out of darkness and into the light of God's grace. She proclaims that it's possible to find freedom in forgiveness and to experience peace in the loving arms of Jesus.

To Purchase *Cradle My Heart - Finding God's Love After Abortion* by Kim Ketola, [click here!](#)



**Though much has changed, this remains:  
God can take your worst mistake,  
your gravest sin, and use it to bring himself glory.  
- Kim Ketola, *Cradle My Heart***



## **Rachel's Vineyard Presentation at St. James Catholic Church**

To more than 60 parishioners at a pro-life breakfast, Kelly Dunne and the Lancaster Spanish team (led by Indhira Garcia), gave an overview of Rachel's Vineyard retreats. In their presentation, Kelly and Indhira shared a brief history of the ministry as a grassroots organization, the development of the spiritual and psychological methodology that supports the retreats, and some components of the weekend. One of those components is the use of Living Scripture exercises. Margoth Alvaro, the team therapist, and Deacon Jorge demonstrated the first exercise used in the retreat on Friday night. Later, two former participants, Maria Caba and Vanessa Aguilar, gave their testimonies and described the effectiveness of the retreat weekend.

St. James Catholic Church was established in 1917, is located in Lititz (PA), and is currently served by Fr. Stephen Weitzel. In 2017, they celebrated 100 years of being "A Eucharistic Community of Life and Love." And the mission of the parish has remained the same: "to know God, love God and serve God in this world to be happy with Him in the next" (taken from the Baltimore Catechism). To that end, they offer several ministries and devotions and support local organizations like Women's Concern (which provides pregnancy and parenting resources to women and families), House of His Creation (a maternity home for women), and Northstar Initiative (who work to

stop human trafficking and then provide services for survivors).

The presentation was very well received by the parishioners, with many of them staying after the presentation to speak with Kelly and the Lancaster team.



*Indhira Garcia (Site Leader-Lancaster Spanish Team)*



*Maria Caba (RV Participant)*



*Kelly Dunne (RV Headquarter)*



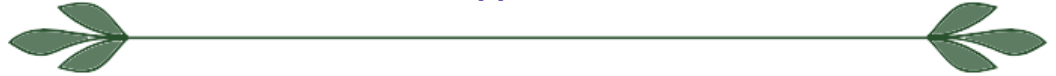
*Vanessa Aguilar (RV Participant)*



*Margoth Alvaro (Lancaster Team Therapist)*

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Healing is a matter of time,  
but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.  
–Hippocrates



## United in Prayer

### In Loving Memory - Mary Alice Schonberger



Mary Alice Schonberger passed away on March 14, 2025 at the age of 79. In the early days of Rachel's Vineyard, our greatest gift was Mary Alice! She played a critical role as the person who volunteered to run our hotline. Kevin and I were creating a young family, with babies, pregnancies and ongoing newborns. As time moved forward, in truth I could not have kept things going without her! Mary Alice's role was absolutely indispensable. Before Mary Alice, I had run the hotline in my home. We all know how important it is to have someone answer the line when someone gains the courage to reach out for help... but with young children it would have been nearly impossible.

What most callers never knew is that Mary Alice was confined to a wheelchair and rarely left her home. But as God brought hundreds of hurting people into her space, she was filled with gratitude to be able to have a meaningful vocation where she could serve those in need of hope. These calls were a blessing, and her joy served as the best medicine as she witnessed the rapid growth of our ministry and saw how God was using her. It never mattered what time it was... It could be day or during the wee hours of the night, Mary Alice would pick up that phone and with her calm and gentle voice to provide comfort, reassurance and hope. Mary Alice would listen to them as they unburdened their grief alongside her tender and caring heart.

For our local retreats, Mary Alice handled all the registration calls and would type up a neatly organized contact sheet for those who were planning to come. She would accompany them with encouragement before, and touch base afterwards to see how their retreat went. Many of our participants continued to stay in touch – and for some she became a mother figure whom they could reach out to for prayers and advice.

As Rachel's Vineyard continued to spread throughout the world, Mary Alice and Joe's little row home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania became Grand Central station for callers from distant places. She was a gem of a woman with a heart so big. Mary Alice managed our hotline from 1989 until 2004 when her husband Joe retired and

they moved to Florida.

She left a profound impact on all who knew her and on the lives of those she touched through her selfless service. Despite her physical limitations, she embodied the essence of compassion and generosity. Her dedication to Rachel's Vineyard and its hotline was exceptional, and she became an integral part of the organization's foundation and growth.

Mary Alice and her husband, Joe, formed a dynamic duo, with Joe's technical expertise complementing her empathetic nature. Together, they supported the development of the weekend retreat manuscript, with Joe helping lay out the entire document in a computer, before I even knew how to use one!

The legacy of Mary Alice Schonberger is one of service, humility and boundless kindness. Her impact extended far beyond her physical presence, and her memory will forever be cherished by those whose lives she touched. Her selflessness and dedication to others serve as a reminder that even in our darkest moments, there is always the potential for light and hope. Mary Alice's life is a testament to the power of compassion and the enduring impact it can have on the world.

Thank you Mary Alice and Joe. Well done, thy good and faithful servants.... enter into the joy of the Lord! We love you so much!

- Theresa Burke, Ph.D.

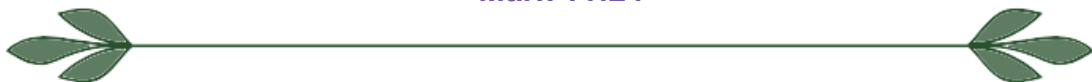


Please pray for **Bernadette Goulding** as she recovers from a heart attack. Bernadette is the national coordinator and co-founder of Rachel's Vineyard Ireland. She has been an instrumental part of our international growth, and we ask you to join us in praying for her strength, peace, and full recovery.

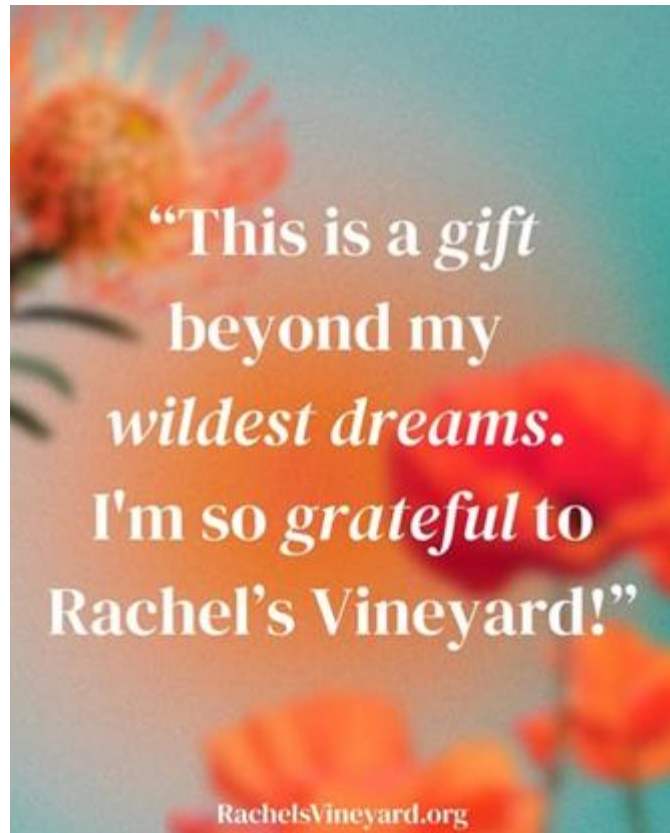


Therefore I tell you,  
whatever you ask for in prayer,  
believe that you have received it,  
and it will be yours.

- Mark 11:24



## Connect with us!! RV Social Media



Social Media provides a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with our teams, retreatants, and ministry supporters from around the world!

Please follow us to stay up-to-date with the latest from RV:

[Facebook.com/RachelsVineyard](https://www.facebook.com/RachelsVineyard)

Instagram [@RVHealing](https://www.instagram.com/RVHealing)

Twitter/X [@RVHealing](https://twitter.com/RVHealing)

[Youtube.com/RachelsVineyard](https://www.youtube.com/RachelsVineyard)

“

And so with the sunshine and the  
great bursts of leaves growing on the trees,  
just as things grow in fast movies,  
I had that familiar conviction  
that life was beginning over again with the summer.  
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*



### Additional Healing Programs from Dr. Theresa Burke

The founder of Rachel's Vineyard, Dr. Theresa Burke, has developed two additional healing retreats:

- Grief to Grace: Healing the Wounds of Abuse, Reclaiming the Gift of Human Dignity

- Duty to Heal: Finding Peace for a Soldiers Heart.

To see the retreat schedule for Grief to Grace, [click here!](#)  
For more information about Duty to Heal, [click here!](#)

“

**As my sufferings mounted I soon realized  
that there were two ways in which I could  
respond to my situation — either to react with  
bitterness or seek to transform the  
suffering into a creative force.**

**I decided to follow the latter course.**

**- Martin Luther King, Jr.**



## **Upcoming Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Weekends**

There are 61+ retreats happening around the world throughout July, August, and September.

To see our full retreat schedule, [click here!](#)

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**The secret of change  
is to focus all of your energy  
not on fighting the old,  
but on building the new.**

**- Socrates**

