

Project Rachel: A Journey of Post-Abortive Healing

Abortion is one of the most common procedures in the US, experienced by millions of women, many of whom are Catholic. Abortion creates a wound in post-abortive women (and men), resulting in spiritual and emotional problems. The Project Rachel ministry in the Diocese of Raleigh assists women and men who have been wounded by abortion to find truth and healing.

If you would like more information, contact
Project Rachel at (919) 852-1021
or email Project.Rachel@raldioc.org.

For more information go to
<http://projectrachelnc.org/> (website).

Calls and appointments
are kept strictly confidential.

Project Rachel: Who We Are

If you are suffering from the effects of an abortion, we want you to know that there is help and there is hope. Through volunteers, professional counselors and clergy, **Project Rachel** helps women, men, and families deal spiritually and psychologically with their participation in an abortion and offers a means to extend the healing grace of God. In a caring and hopeful context, you will be able to move toward reconciliation—with yourself, God, family, and the aborted child.

About the Retreat

The weekend retreat is an opportunity to experience **God's love, forgiveness, and compassion** in a supportive and confidential environment. Through prayer, discussion, and Living Scripture exercises, participants are able to make their way through the critical steps of post-abortion **healing**. The sacrament of Reconciliation is available to offer the powerful and loving embrace of Christ, and the retreat concludes with a memorial service and a Mass of Resurrection. Though a Catholic Mass is celebrated, the focus of the retreat is a Biblical healing process, and women and men of any denomination are welcome.

Other Resources and Support Offered by Project Rachel

Project Rachel offers other resources and support besides the weekend retreat. We typically have two retreats a year, one in early spring and one in late fall. 2020 has been unusual and therefore we have only had one retreat. Between the retreats we hold support group meetings. Our next support group will begin in December so if someone calls us now, we can offer that resource. If someone calls Project Rachel now, we will meet with her or him personally and if the support group has not yet started, we will companion them until that happens.

We also stay in touch with the retreat participants after the retreat and have a reunion at least once a year for those who choose to come back.

Jackie Bonk, Director of Project Rachel
919-621-0916

Catholic Church Teaching on Abortion

God loves each human life from the instant of his or her conception and entrusts this gift to the protection of a mother and father. Abortion ends a human life and offends God. It also deeply wounds the women and men involved.

Excerpts from the “Resolution on Abortion” by the USCCB

“As leaders of the Catholic community in the United States, we acknowledge our right and responsibility to help establish laws and social policies protecting the right to life of unborn children, providing care and services for women and children, and safeguarding human life at every stage and in every circumstance. At this particular time, abortion has become the fundamental human rights issue for all men and women of good will. The duty to respect life in all its stages and especially in the womb is evident when one appreciates the unborn child's membership in our human family, and the grave consequences of denying moral or legal status to any class of human beings because of their age or condition of dependency.”

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“We who revere human life as created in the image and likeness of God have all the more reason to take a stand. For us abortion is of **overriding concern** because it negates two of our most fundamental moral imperatives: respect for innocent life, and preferential concern for the weak and defenseless. As we said ... in reaffirming our Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: "Because victims of abortion are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family, it is imperative that we, as Christians called to serve the least among us, give urgent attention and priority to this issue. Our concern is intensified by the realization that a policy and practice allowing over one and a half million abortions annually cannot but diminish respect for life in other areas.

No Catholic can responsibly take a "pro-choice" stand when the "choice" in question involves the taking of innocent human life.

We therefore call upon Catholics to commit themselves vigorously to the implementation of all three elements of the Pastoral Plan—an education and public information effort, pastoral care for pregnant women and their children, and a public policy program in defense of human life in all its stages, especially the unborn. Our long- and short-range public policy goals include:

- (1) constitutional protection for the right to life of unborn children to the maximum degree possible;
- (2) federal and state laws and administrative policies that restrict support for and the practice of abortion;
- (3) continual refinement and ultimate reversal of Supreme Court and other court decisions that deny the inalienable right to life;
- (4) supportive legislation to provide morally acceptable alternatives to abortion, and social policy initiatives which provide support to pregnant women for prenatal care and extended support for low-income women and their children.

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We urge public officials, especially Catholics, to advance these goals in recognition of their moral responsibility to protect the weak and defenseless among us.”

“Our concern about the national debate on the legal dimension of this vital issue should not distract us from the continuing need within our own community to educate, to form, to encourage people on life issues, most specifically, the right to life of the unborn. This right of the unborn to life demands legal protection and we will continue to insist on this. At the same time, we recognize, as we rightfully engage in this debate, that we must hear the issues the struggles, and the anguish of women who face issues ... As we continue to teach clearly and forcefully the moral evil of abortion, we must also ... speak to them a word of understanding and encouragement, a word of solidarity and support. Both in word and deed, we must inspire the entire community to help carry the burdens of all our sisters in need.”

Special Note: *From time to time, public figures such as politicians have appeared in the news and proclaimed that they are Catholic and pro-choice. Worse, there are also members of Catholic Church leadership such as bishops, priests and men and women religious who claim that it is permissible to be Catholic and support/ vote for pro-choice candidates. All such people stand in direct opposition to official Catholic Church teaching and do not speak for nor represent the Catholic Church's position on Respect Life.*

