



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
**Office of Human Life,
Family and Bioethics**



Sincere Repentance and God's Mercy

My name is Brianna* and I give thanks to God that He has given me a very blessed family. I am a mother of four and have been blessed with a very good and understanding husband. I lived a life of sin, where I fell into the deepest part of a black hole in which the Lord in His mercy pulled me out of.

Now my present life is a blessing, full of peace and freedom, thanks to the healing experience I lived during Rachel's Vineyard.

A few years ago, I had my first encounter with the Lord and that meeting changed my life, before I was a "Catholic" person. I say Catholic because my parents baptized me and I was confirmed, but from then on it was in name only because I was not practicing my faith and I wasn't going to Mass nor receiving the Eucharist.

I give thanks to God for calling me back to the Church through the blessing of making the Rachel's Vineyard Retreat. I was able to confess my sins that had been haunting me for many years, especially the one that broke my heart and soul, my abortion. Before the retreat I was living together with my partner and was not married. After the retreat I went my parish priest and by the grace of God my husband and I were married. The fruits of the retreat were just pouring out one after the other.

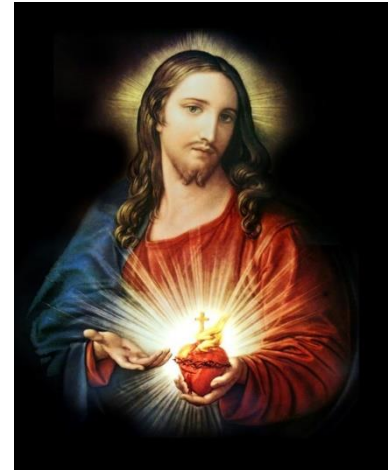
I had been invited several times to go on the retreat and I really did not see that it was necessary since I had been on other retreats and I really did not see how this one would help me.

One day in the prayer group that I belong to, I gave my testimony of my very dark past and of God's mercy and when I mentioned about how many children I had, a great pain came over me. I felt as if my life of sin and God's forgiveness that the Lord given me was like a trophy I had earned, it was not a sincere repentance. I felt like I was bragging about the mercy of God, and at that moment I realized that something was going on inside of me that was not good. I started to meditate at that moment, and I felt that something was wrong inside of me. I was repeating 10 or 20 times the same testimony and I was always talking about the mercy of God as it was something to brag about, but inside of myself I was not feeling this forgiveness that I so desperately needed.

From that moment, I decided that I had to have a more intimate and intense approach with the Lord through prayer, the Rosary, the Mass, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament requesting that the blinders be removed from my eyes and my soul. I asked God to enlighten me so I could know what was needed to be free of those feelings and find forgiveness and freedom from my mistake. I knew I needed to forgive myself with a sincere repentance and I decided to go to the retreat my soul so long ago needed, Rachel's Vineyard. I needed the healing from my abortions to stop the bleeding in my soul. The first opportunity that came up to go, I couldn't because of my work, the second time my husband had an accident and on the third occasion I begged the Lord to grant me the grace to be able to go and He answered my plea.

This very important moment in my life arrived to go to Rachel's Vineyard and live the unique experience where feelings and memories were found in those moments of meditation where I realized that a part of me not was healed and that it is a process of continuous conversion.

Thanks to this encounter with the Lord, He gave me the opportunity to amend my mistake. I was able to have a spiritual encounter with my children, hug them, giving them names, crying with them and asking them for forgiveness. I told them I was so sorry for not giving them the opportunity



to be born with sincere repentance this time, culminating with a dignified memorial service and learning the great value of life.

I give thanks to the Lord for his infinite mercy, for His faithfulness, for His freedom, for His love because He never abandoned me in difficult moments in my life and always held me in His arms when I was falling. "Now He goes in front of me enlightening me on the path of Truth, Life and showing me His Holy Will."

I want to thank Donna and all the team members who so lovingly showed all of us the mercy, love and compassion of God. May you continue your life saving work in this ministry of God's love and forgiveness.

Now I have made a commitment to work in promoting the message of pro-life and I wait for the day that I enter Heaven by the grace of God and will be able to embrace my children and say to them and Our Lord, thank you for helping me with the mission you have entrusted to me and I will always proclaim; "Say Yes To Life!"

*Name Changed Retreatant
Rachel's Vineyard