



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics



Rachel's Vineyard Retreat

"Being a Cyrenian for Others"

By Deacon Matt Yellico



You're never as close to another as when you suffer together. Sharing a burden with someone is often a blessing in disguise. We don't realize the gift we are given until after the sorrowful moment has passed. **Saint Simon of Cyrene was entrusted with helping Jesus carry a burden too heavy for us. In a similar way I was blessed to be trusted to walk with people who still suffer the horrible effects of abortion on their lives and to see the damage abortion has caused to individuals, marriages and families.**

About a month and a half ago I went on a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat. It was a three day weekend retreat for women and men who have been wounded by abortion. A number of the participants were women who have had an abortion, but there were other men and women who were there because a family member experienced the effects of abortion. As with many new experiences and when meeting new people, there was a sense of caution at the beginning of the retreat. As the weekend progressed, through the well-thought-out dialogue and shared experiences, we began to develop a deeper and deeper respect for one another. This opened the way for us to feel safe telling our stories. Knowing we were with friends we could trust that were also looking to have their pains, sufferings and wounds, caused by abortion, attended to by others who respected each other and

understood the priceless value of each person present helped us nurture close nonjudgmental relationships.

As we traveled together from one moment to the next, I was inspired by the beauty and courage of each soul there. When someone trusts you with what is important to them they are giving you a piece of their heart, which is God's treasure. I felt a humble gratefulness to be trusted with what lies deep in another's heart. When a parent gives you their priceless child, they are trusting you with their most valuable gift. **We are God, our Father's treasure, and it is of utmost importance to care for each other with tender hearts for healing to begin.**

Healing is the act or process of making or becoming whole, sound or well. Our Father gives us this ability as His children to help each other heal by sharing our lives together in a tender loving way. **To love is to will the good of the other. The Rachel's Vineyard Retreat is the beginning of relationships meant to love and help each other heal from the wounds caused by abortion.** I am blessed to now have such friends that show me a greater depth of love because of the heavy crosses we help each other carry.