



In Praise of the Rachel's Vineyard Healing Retreat

NOVEMBER 2017

"I feel that I had disowned a part of myself because of the abortions. This has caused great suffering in my life and has affected my marriage. I feel a spiritual renewal and the grace of God at work. I have reconnected with my children in a deep and meaningful way and this has helped me to begin my healing journey in earnest."

"The retreat surpassed all my expectations. I came to the retreat feeling that I was beyond hope, and now I have hope!"

"This retreat was a wonderful opportunity to share my soul to a group of individuals who are very much in a similar state of grief, guilt, sorrow, lost of closeness to Jesus. All of this lost through the loss of our children through abortions. The blessing of healing, reconciliation, memorial service all helped reinforce that I was forgiven and loved by Jesus, as were my children."

"Thank you for loving me and my children. I did not ever think / picture myself receiving this much love and care surrounding my abortion. You have changed my life and I have so much hope for my future now. I cannot ever thank Project Rachel and the Catholic Church enough. Thanks be to God!"

"I have felt such incredible love and acceptance this weekend unlike at any other times in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"This retreat was life-changing for me. I'm so grateful for the compassion shown to me. The retreat took me step-by-step in a healing journey with Christ."

"The retreat exceeded all my expectations. The Living Scriptures are so well thought out & executed. I was profoundly touched in a special way by each one."

"I felt love & caring like I never felt before. I came to meet my beloved child, I met her & placed her in the Lord's loving arms & nothing could ever bring me more joy or peace."

"The Living Scriptures & exercises designed to give us what we could not otherwise have had...deep spiritual encounter with our own children & with God & with some truly beautiful souls we had not known before. The blessings have been beyond all I could have hoped for."

"I loved this retreat beyond words. This weekend was intended to care for & nurture us toward "turning a corner" & the facilitators achieved that goal. Every detail was impeccable."

"Writing a letter to my child was my most difficult step – not only the most difficult, but the most helpful and meaningful."

"The Living Scriptures were very powerful tools – the Memorial ceremony and writing letters to our lost little ones helped me immensely. The atmosphere of the retreat was safe, non-judgmental, very peaceful."

"Most helpful was the letter writing to my baby/babies. The safety, love & acceptance I felt was paramount to my being able to open up & receive God's grace, mercy & forgiveness. Fr. was such a beautiful representative of Christ and I am so thankful for him."

"I thoroughly felt uplifted and spiritually renewed. The staff was most helpful and supportive and particularly enthusiastic in helping us all. My faith was strengthened."

"The Rachel retreat is very well-conceived and structured, really thoughtful, EFFECTIVE. Special praise to the facilitators for such a beautiful combination of keeping to the program while also responding to all the unexpected unique moments that come up."





"Everything was helpful: sharing stories, the living scripture activities, meals together, writing & reading the letters to our children. Probably the most meaningful for me was entrusting our babies to God. It all works together as a whole."

"The Rachel's Vineyard retreat is a blessing. There is so much suffering out there regarding abortion. I only wish more people had access to this retreat."

"From the moment I got here I felt supported and loved. The accommodations were extremely comforting and lovely."

"The Rachel program had a profound effect on me. I especially loved all of the living scripture and meditation. The team was very gentle, supportive and loving."

AUGUST 2017

"This was one of the single most amazing, insightful, moving and spiritual events I've ever participated in."

"Amazing, beautiful, indescribable, touching, healing. The memorial service was incredible and a very necessary moment for me to participate in for the resting of my child in the Lord's arms. Thank you so much."

"The transformation from darkness to light in such a short time is remarkable. The small groups allow for people to open up and feel safe, to be vulnerable. The location felt comfortable and homey. The group discussions and group meals helped to foster the sense of belonging and community."

"The Living Scriptures, the quiet meditation allowed everyone to speak their truth and share their heart."

"My takeaway besides many things is that God loves me at my worst. And that is humbling to me. Thank you for illustrating that fact through the Rachel Project."

"This whole weekend was awesome and refreshing and mesmerizing. I loved the way we put ourselves in the living scriptures. Those scriptures were some of my favorites."

"Everything was wonderful. It was amazing and can reshape you as a person. It can profoundly change you as a person."

MAY 2017

"This retreat experience was a '10' better than I expected. I did not really want to come...fear!! I knew I needed it. Every exercise was thoughtful and meaningful, the order and flow of each exercise was perfect (very creative.)"

"It was meaningful and healing to be able to release the trapped emotions that I have carried for so many years in a safe and comfortable setting."

"This retreat was fabulous. We entered a safe and loving environment that allowed us to speak to our souls and God."

APRIL 2017 (en español)

"I learned that God never abandons us and that he forgives us truly for the mistakes we made in the past. I no longer feel unworthy as a woman. My past is over and today starts the first day of my life, one that makes me feel proud walking side by side with God."

"I never imagined I would feel so much peace and God so near me in such a short period of time. God illuminated my way."

"I felt liberated, renewed and have a deeper connection with myself."





"I was able to let go of resentment for the people who hurt me in the past and to forgive them."

"The team protected our privacy. You respected me as a human being and you never left me alone. You were always caring for me and made me feel like family."

"The team was committed to serve us. It impressed me how you welcomed us and gave us the confidence of feeling at home. Thank you for your love, kindness and respect that you demonstrated along the way."

"It was very useful to have Father Jose as a spiritual coach – it gave me the confidence that God was taking my cross. I left with a lighter cross and with more energy to live."

"I can't find words to describe what I feel. The retreat team welcomed me without judgement, without pointing at my sins and miseries. You all opened your arms to welcome me with so much love."

"Before the retreat, I concentrated on my sins, kept distanced from God and ignored his mercy. God has given me the gift to live again for him and with him."

"The retreat was a gift. I feel physically renewed with lots of energy. I know God walks side by side with me and I now think that when I was in despair, he was carrying me. I feel like a new person, with more faith, hope and love for my Lord Jesus Christ."

"Each activity lifted my spirit and helped bring my faith back."

"The welcoming reception impressed me a lot. You were all very kind. Each exercise was very helpful and allowed us to see beyond our blindness."

"I feel I have more energy to live and to serve God in everything I can. God gave me the opportunity to feel better and to believe in him even more. I feel myself to be a stronger person today."

"I am grateful for the team's hospitality, the personalized service each of you gave us was spectacular. I felt like a queen. The program was very well organized. Everything was beautiful."

"I was able to let go of resentment. I feel an amazing energy to share my experience with my partner. Spiritually I feel lighter and I am leaving with more faith."

MARCH 2017

[From a wife who attended with her husband]

"Most helpful was being given the opportunity to acknowledge the reality of my child in order to properly grieve. Before the retreat, sleep was difficult to come by; now I am able to sleep. I had stopped caring about my health – not eating, not exercising, not wanting to shower, etc. Now I am renewed in my drive to be healthy. Before, my emotions were in chaos with no direction, rhyme or rhythm. Now, since taking the time & energy to look inward, I have clarity. Before, I had no recollection of feeling. Now, I can feel again! My relationship with everyone, especially my husband & God, were at a near complete stop. Now, my relationships have been rejuvenated."

[From a husband who attended with his wife]

"The retreat was a great experience. I was able to meet some truly wonderful people who shared their story of sadness. My wife and I are closer after this experience. I have a better understanding of my wife and the emotions she has wrapped up in the decision we made. I was able to take away a feeling of love and understanding that I did not think possible."





[From others]

"This retreat was a safe place. We were guided by the team into places of the heart which we had blocked and repressed. The location was beautiful and peaceful.

Having the whole weekend allowed us to keep our hearts & wounds open to continue exploring our emotions."

"The process of discovery, peeling back the layers was more productive than I would have anticipated. I had several "ah ha!" moments that I didn't anticipate and learned so much about myself. I discovered the "root" of my anger & inability to forgive. And because of that, I was able to reconcile with myself & those that have hurt me."

"Emotional improvement & relationship with God has been repaired. My heart has been reopened to the voice & will of God. I feel like my anxiety will be reduced as I have found comfort & peace with my life."

*"This retreat was wonderful – more than I could have hoped for, and I was hoping for a lot!
It was well run, thoughtful, inclusive; very hard but very much worth it."*

"The scripture readings and meditations were most helpful and meaningful because they reminded us who Christ is – healer, teacher, God. Having a priest present helped a lot because we can talk to him, confess, and celebrate Mass. Being able to interact with the other participants was especially helpful."

"What I found most helpful were sharing our stories, the living scripture exercises and ceremonies for the babies – naming them & reading our letters."

"I was surprised at the healing that was done. I got closure that I didn't think I'd get. I realized I wasn't alone."

"This is an important ministry, valuable and life affirming. It needs to continue to help heal the women who come here."

*"I feel a relief that the burden of guilt and self-hatred have been abated or lessened.
I have hope for the future and ongoing healing."*

*"This retreat was wonderful – more, way more, than I imagined it would be. Very, very healing.
I was able to feel, belonging, and a better connection to God and others."*

OCTOBER 2016 (en español)

"Creo que en un aspecto estaba muerta en vida y ahora estoy resucitado. Dios fue muy generoso conmigo."

"Nos hace poder sacar todos esos secretos que guardamos en lo profundo de nosotros. Nuestros sentimientos que hemos reprimido por tanto tiempo. Los pudimos expresar a Dios nuestro Señor para que nos pudiera perdonar."

"Este retiro es lo más importante y hermoso que me ha podido suceder en mi vida. Es maravilloso y realmente emotivo y súper constructivo. Realmente superó mis expectativas. Es mucho más de lo que esperaba."

"Este retiro es un regalo de Dios para nosotros las mujeres. Gracias por todo este proceso. Dios las sigas bendiciendo por todo este proceso de sanación y esperanza para las mujeres en esta situación."

"In one respect, I was among the living dead ... and now I am revived! God was very generous with me!"

*"We were able to share all those secrets we had buried deep within ourselves, the feelings we had repressed.
We could express them to God so that He could forgive us."*

