



*Dedicated to: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn*

# St. Juan Diego Women's Center NEWSLETTER

Website: <http://jds womenscenter.org>

*We welcome any comments or suggestions that will improve this newsletter.*

**Juan Diego Society**

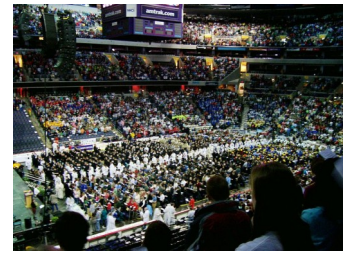
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**March / April  
2009**

## My Story (March for Life-2009) by: JDS Guest Writer

On January 22, 2009 I attended the 36<sup>th</sup> annual March for Life in Washington, DC. It was my first time attending the event and my friends and I numbered four among the 300,000 people present. For those of you who have never attended the March, I strongly urge you to attend at least once in your lifetime. The feeling of solidarity that one experiences in DC is indescribable. The atmosphere is definitely different in the east coast. It is *nothing* like the annual Walk for Life in San Francisco, where the opposition can become quite unruly and your safety feels compromised. Instead, as we peacefully marched, I could feel the strong support of the hundreds of bishops and priests who were present at the Mass for Life. I was surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people who were also protesting against the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision, which served as a catalyst for the largest genocide in our history.



**Youth Rally Mass  
March for Life  
Washington, DC**

It was the first time I was exposed to *Silent No More*, an organization for people to publicly share their painful testimonies of abortion. The women who stood in front of the Supreme Court and shared their stories did this not just for themselves, but for people everywhere. Abortion is a multi-faceted issue. This became more evident to me during one college semester when I stunned the class by presenting on the personal topic of abortion. I was surprised by the results. In lieu of the critiques my classmates were required to submit, I received written testimonies of their own painful experiences with abortion. There is a huge problem when more than half of a class—including the professor—can indicate they had unsupportive partners who threatened to leave them if they carried their pregnancy to term.

As a woman who is post-aborted, I can vouch for the regret. I was sixteen years old when my parents announced their divorce. It was an extremely difficult time for me that I further complicated through my involvement with an older man. My partner, who feared the potential conviction of statutory rape, did not take the news of my pregnancy well. To put it lightly, he continued to urge me to seek immediate relief of “the problem” unless I had plans of being a single parent. (continued on page 2)

**“Abortion is and will  
always be wrong.”**

## Our Finest Hour (Walk for Life WC-2009) by: Elizabeth Shearer, JDS volunteer

On January 24, 2009, the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Walk for Life West Coast brought together over 30,000 people for the celebration and defense of Life at its most vulnerable stage. This was the first year my husband, Andrew and I attended the Walk. As a mother with three young children, the idea of taking our family into the heart of San Francisco with its anti-life, anti-family track record was a little disheartening. Other considerations like traffic, parking, and threat of inclement weather were also on our minds, but not enough to deter us. As Mother Teresa once said, “God doesn't require us to succeed; He only requires that you try.” Our goal was to *try*.



**Elizabeth Shearer**

Things were very different this year, even more so than the year before. This was the year our country saw the installation of the most pro-death president in history. This was the year that our country commemorated the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision making way for the slaughter of 50,000,000 pre-born babies. This was also the first time in my adult life that I felt, at least in some small way, I was responsible for the state of our country because of my semi-inaction in the pro-life movement. There is always more work to be done! So we knew the stakes were high. We were being called to be examples for our children who are part of the generation which will be called upon to carry the torch for Life and then have the willingness to pass it on.

Our family arrived at Justin Herman Plaza just as the pre-Walk rally was beginning and were greeted by a sea of people with an array of signs and banners flapping overhead. An astounding number of the walkers were young people. Teens and 20-somethings, many children, families with babies, the aged and infirmed, from all races and ethnicities, all were assembled for this vital cause. Signs in the crowd proclaimed, “Abortion Hurts Women”, “Everyone Deserves a Birthday”, “Why Can't We Love Them Both?”, and the most timely one read, “CHANGE *Roe vs. Wade*, YES WE CAN!” (continued on page 2)

**“The children are the  
future of the pro-life  
movement.”**

## March for Life-Washington, DC 2009: My Story (continued from page 1)

Eight years ago I probably would have listed a number of reasons for considering abortion, but as I look back I can tell you that as a teenager I was young, foolish, and desperate to hold onto my partner. The reason I share this experience is because it is pivotal in explaining—not justifying—but *explaining* what may be going through the mind of the pregnant teenage girl who walks into the St. Juan Diego Women’s Center. The pregnant teenage girl who considers abortion is concerned with matters of the self, though she may not view the situation that way. She will try to convince herself that although she wishes the circumstances were different, abortion must be ok—after all, our society had legalized it. And she may allow that “rationalization” to take precedence over her conscience’s warnings, over God’s own law.



*Hundreds of Priests Marching for life*

This takes me back to my experience as a teenager when I walked into Planned Parenthood for a pregnancy test. Afterwards, they handed me a pamphlet on abortion and said, “Abortions are only performed on Mondays.” I wasn’t instructed on how to maintain a healthy pregnancy; I didn’t ask because I felt too ashamed. Planned Parenthood will not admit that you will carry a tremendous grief for many years. They will not tell you that abortion terminates a *baby*. It wasn’t until I found the Catholic Church, confessed my sins, and attended a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat that I began to understand the horrific act of abortion for what it truly is.

To this day, millions have been affected by abortion. The Rachel’s Vineyard retreat is probably the most emotional retreat one can ever attend. Why? Because the women and men learn that they have been deceived. God has a special plan for every life He creates; human law tells us this is not so. At the Rachel’s Vineyard retreat I attended, the oldest participant was seventy. There was a wide difference in our age range, but we all shared a common grief and their experiences mirrored my own. Most of us were surprised to see a middle-aged man present. As the only male at the retreat, he expressed intense remorse over pressuring his girlfriend to get an abortion twenty years earlier. He had since then married a different woman, yet his guilt and grief continued to consume him.

It was this experience that enabled me to better identify with people who feel isolation and fear. This experience made me more compassionate towards other people’s struggles, but it also strengthened my convictions that *abortion is and will always be wrong*. I am now at an age where I plan to start my own family, and this issue becomes even more personal. I want to be able to teach my future children that respecting life—the *full range of humanity*—involves serving as an advocate for the most vulnerable population, the unborn. Please, I urge you to show your support in the fight for life by attending the next annual Walk for Life in San Francisco, or the March for Life in Washington, DC. *I can guarantee that you will not be the same.*

## Walk for Life WC 2009: Our Finest Hour (continued from page 1)

The rally speakers were both inspiring and motivational. It was the rousing speech by Rev. Clenard Childress of Blackgenocide.org, that is with me even today. At one point the Reverend said, “*I say to you from the bottom of my heart, as a man of God, this your finest hour. This is the time that God has chosen for you to stand up as you have never stood up before... We’re going to shake some things up! It is our moment. It’s our season.*” The crowd erupted in cheers and applause. These words are still ringing in my ears. It was a call to action -- a call to *real* hope for all of us.



*Walk for Life WC-2009  
San Francisco, CA*

The rally concluded and our gentle, but boisterous, band of tens of thousands processed down the Embarcadero praying, chanting, and singing as we encountered a smattering of protesters along the way. These poor souls were in marked contrast to the Walkers. The majority of the protesters I saw were white women of college age and many in their late 40’s, 50’s and beyond. One could only assume that abortion had somehow touched them in a profoundly devastating way. They seemed angry and hurt. And it showed in their signs, chants and even on their faces. They desperately need our prayers and compassion.

As I walked, jubilant that we had been divinely protected from the rain that had been forecast the night before, I pushed our double stroller with two of my children shyly peeking out from their blankets. Several people approached us to offer their thanks for us bringing our children to the Walk. One woman said, “*I’m carrying a sign, but they are your **living** sign. The children are the future of the pro-life movement.*” All of the thousands of young faces in the crowd spoke to the truth of her statement.

The next Walk for Life West Coast is scheduled for January 23, 2010. We’re already making our plans to go back, with our “living signs” in tow. Nothing would give me more joy than for our kids to grow up knowing that every life is worth fighting for, especially the little ones. Even better would be their willingness to do small things with great love for the least among us. Or to at least *try*. It is the little ones that remind us of who we are in the eyes of God after all.

*Editor’s note: Elizabeth and her family are welcome transplants from Texas where she and her husband, Andrew were also pro-life activists. Elizabeth’s warm and motherly presence help create an atmosphere of home and serenity when troubled women come for assistance..*

## Lenten Reflection

In response to the laws that legalized abortion in the 70's, Msgr. John Sweeney inspired a small band of parishioners from Our Lady of Peace Parish to open a crisis pregnancy center in San Jose in 1986. Since abortion was legalized 36 years ago, close to 50 million babies have perished. To date our little center has saved, with God's grace, 634 babies---it may seem a pitifully small number against so many that are lost, but for the mothers and their babies alive today, they are great victories.

Located in East San Jose, the *St. Juan Diego Women's Center* is the **only** Catholic crisis-pregnancy center in the Bay Area. We are not afraid or ashamed to tell our clients what the Church teaches about chastity, contraception or the sacredness of life from conception.

For the past 23 years, the center has relied **solely** on Divine Providence and the generosity of private individuals like you. We do not receive subsidy from any private, federal, state or local agencies.

The *St. Juan Diego Women's Center* is not only on the forefront of the war on abortion, but it also stands on the frontline of this battle.

We were there for Alfredo, when his mother conceived after she was raped and was about to abort him.

We were there for Alicia, when her 14-year old mother had nowhere to turn.

We were there for Helen, who was two days away from being terminated because the doctors said that she might be deformed. (In April, 2007 Helen was born a perfectly normal and healthy baby.)

We were there for Sofia, when her life hung in a balance because her father could not find a job.

We will always be there to save a baby as long as Our Lady entrusts their mothers to us.

Defending these babies is an **obligation for all of us** who believe that life is sacred. But we cannot do it without your help.

In this war, no one can remain neutral, "**He who is not with Me is against Me.**"

Very soon you will be standing before Jesus and He will ask:

**"What did you do to save the least of your brethren?"**

Not what did your neighbor or your friends do; but **what did you do?**

When my time comes, I will have to reply sadly, "**Not enough, Lord, not enough.**"

As we reflect on the passion and death of Our Lord, let us also remember the 4,000 babies sacrificed **daily** on the altar of convenience.

If you are unable join us along the battle line; at least say a prayer and lend us your support.



*Feast of St. Joseph  
March 19th*



*Happy Easter*

## ***THE ST. JUAN DIEGO SOCIETY WOMEN'S CENTER IS SUPPORTED ONLY BY YOU!***

The center relies **solely** on the generosity of individuals. We do not receive any subsidy from private, federal, state or local agencies. The St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center can continue to help women in crisis pregnancies

***only with your support.***

***Please be generous. Together we shall save a baby.***

***No amount, accompanied with love and prayers, is too small.***

All donations are tax-deductible. Make checks payable to the Juan Diego Society.

**Visit our new website: <http://jdsomenscenter.org>**

- For more information about the St. Juan Diego Women's Center.
- To read copies of the previous newsletters.
- For more information about the 2009 Rosary Novena Campaign and Rally.

**Send us an e-mail at: [juandiegowomenscenter@yahoo.com](mailto:juandiegowomenscenter@yahoo.com)**

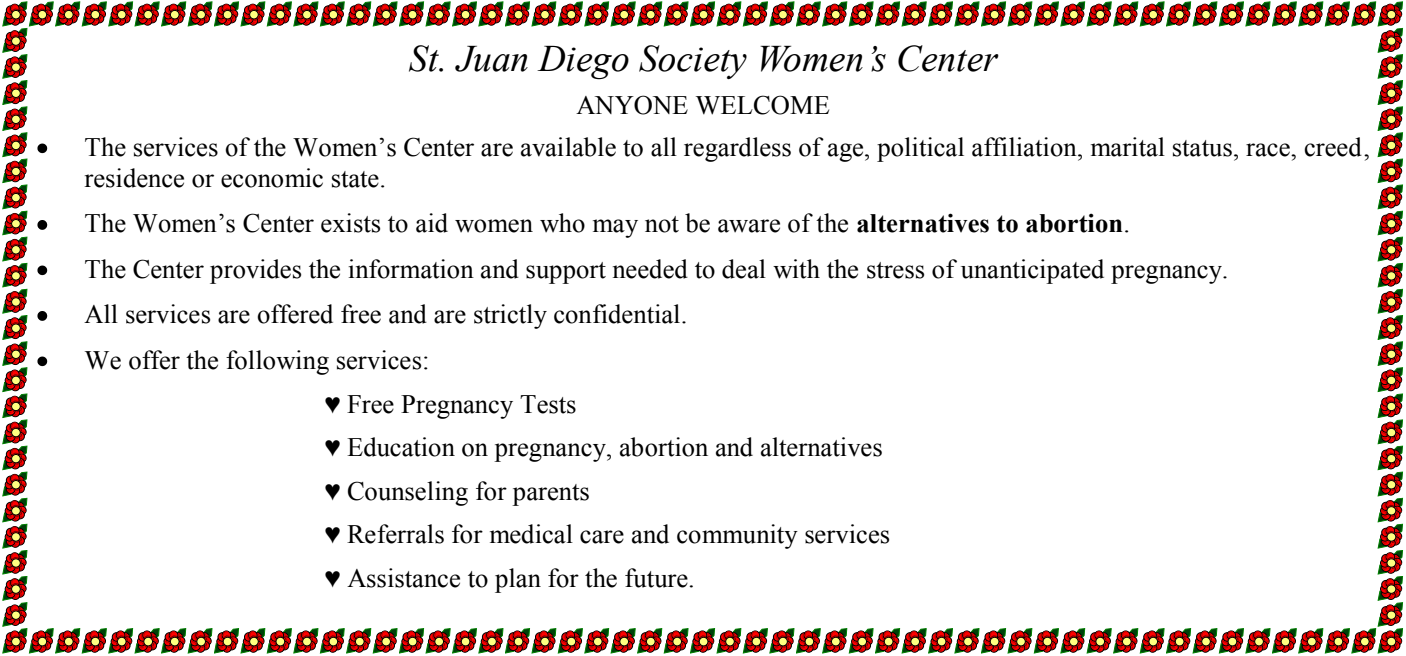
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*St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center*

ANYONE WELCOME

- The services of the Women's Center are available to all regardless of age, political affiliation, marital status, race, creed, residence or economic state.
- The Women's Center exists to aid women who may not be aware of the **alternatives to abortion**.
- The Center provides the information and support needed to deal with the stress of unanticipated pregnancy.
- All services are offered free and are strictly confidential.
- We offer the following services:
  - ♥ Free Pregnancy Tests
  - ♥ Education on pregnancy, abortion and alternatives
  - ♥ Counseling for parents
  - ♥ Referrals for medical care and community services
  - ♥ Assistance to plan for the future.