



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

St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center NEWSLETTER

Website: <http://www.jdswomenscenter.org>

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

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A New Life And A New Friendship by Patsy Gonzales, JDS volunteer

With the relentless onslaught of the pro-abortion message through media, meltdown of the family and a rejection of spiritual values, many young women are buying the lie, opting to abort rather than taking the "road less traveled" of choosing life at a difficult time. The Juan Diego counselors know only too well that though the powerful arguments for life, spiritually, physically and psychologically which are confirmed by years of research and a culture of hurting women, it is grace that moves the troubled mother to choose life.

Juan Diego was not having a good week. There were three cases of abortion bound women being followed up by counselors that initially looked promising, but started to unravel as prospects of having their babies began to overwhelm the mothers once again. It is the center's mission to spark the hope in these mothers and to reassure them that making the choice to have their babies under the most difficult conditions bring them untold blessings they never believed possible. One young couple talked about the moments they would lean over their tiny daughter's crib as she slept, shedding tears of relief and joy. Whatever fears they harbored were long forgotten. Countless visits and cards sent to the center only affirm that there is never regret when a baby arrives after the center's intervention.

It sometimes is a temptation for a counselor to feel a sense of failure when a baby is lost—and yet, she realizes that just being able to transmit the truth in the spirit of love is all that is expected of her. A mother chooses freely the path she must take, sometimes with fear and trembling. Often, in the warm, caring atmosphere of the center, she leaves hopeful and encouraged. Yet, in spite of critical follow up calls and even visits with the mother, she may still find her way to the abortion mill. She is never "out of the woods" until those that pressure her are finally on board and her fears are calmed.

My almost 18 years of volunteer work at the center has not made me immune to the loss of a precious baby and I am completely aware that there are no "experts" in this ministry. (continued on page 2)



It is not the big picture we must be concerned about, but the souls that come into our care—one woman, one mother, one baby at a time.

PAS-Post Abortion Syndrome By Sheila Palazzo, JDS volunteer

Most women approach an abortion decision in a state of crisis. Discovering that one is pregnant is not like hearing a weather report (unless the prediction is for a tornado coming in ten minutes). It is an emotionally charged moment, normally the cause either for great rejoicing or for terrible alarm. If the pregnancy represents a major problem, a woman will experience a tremendous amount of fear and anxiety, which will drive her either to seek a fast solution or to avoid dealing with it for as long as possible.

Eventually, she must make some sort of decision – but it will be like few other decisions in life. It is likely to be affected by deep rooted moral convictions, by strong opinions from her family/boyfriend/husband, by mixed feelings about intimacy and sexuality, and by physical changes happening in her body. It may be discussed with a counselor or a close friend, but it won't be the subject of casual conversation. Thus, even though abortion is legal and to some degree socially sanctioned, and even though she may know someone who has had one, deciding to end a pregnancy still falls well outside the realm of most woman's normal experience. It will remain her very uncomfortable secret, not her badge of honor.

Once it is completed, the initial feeling after an abortion is nearly always relief. For better or worse, a decision was made and the episode appears to be over. (Indeed, it is this stage of a woman's experience that a number of studies have identified, without following the story further). But sooner or later, the issues which upset her previously will be raised again, accompanied by some degree of emotional discomfort. Since she cannot go back and "undo" the abortion, one of two processes will begin. She may re-experience inner pain intense enough to drive her to seek help relatively soon after the procedure. Hopefully, she will find someone who can help her work through the process of healing, and will thus be spared a prolonged period of disturbance in her life.

On the other hand, she may encounter a counselor who will not acknowledge the significance of the abortion experience, thus leaving it unresolved. Or, much more commonly, she may simply choose not to deal with it directly, employing a number of defense mechanisms (rationalization, repression, compensation, denial, etc.) to protect her from uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. These carefully developed defenses are what help the woman reply "just fine...no problems" whenever asked how she is doing with her past abortion experience.

These defense mechanisms are very effective in keeping the painful memories away, but they consume a lot of mental energy as a woman works to suppress powerful emotions. (continued on page 2)



Sheila Palazzo



Our Lady of the Rosary, Oct. 7th

A New Life And A New Friendship (continued from page 1)

Each woman is unique and unrepeatable, each situation different from the other, and there are cultural differences that separate us—yet the truth remains the same. It is not an expert technique or a template of information that breaches a mother's defenses, it is a genuine and sincere approach that delivers—and a large measure of grace. Our list of prayer supporters lay a powerful foundation for this.

The time I spent before the tabernacle after hearing of our clients who chose to abort was not peaceful, it was filled with a sense of loss and discouragement. The “big picture” of a society gone wrong began to cloud my vision and I left the church not feeling any better than I had when I went in.

Willie passed on a message the following morning to ask me to return a call to an abortion bound mother who received the referral from 411. Chances are usually not very good when clients call us by “mistake”. To my surprise, Jenny agreed to meet over breakfast. She was a graduating senior at the university with a bright future ahead of her. Young professional women or those on the brink of a new life after a hard-earned education are at great risk for abortions. Because of this, the Nurturing Network, a pro-life support organization, particularly takes on this segment of mothers.

Jenny had already had an abortion not too long ago; it had been a botched chemical abortion that needed to be followed up by a surgical abortion. She was traumatized by the experience, but like many women in her situation, she had felt she could not let her family down. Without going into all the details, she heard all she needed to hear and left for school with a totally different perspective on her pregnancy. A little later on, a text from her confirmed her decision. It read, “Thank you again. Your inspiration helped me so much that I told my dad”. This was the beginning of a new life and of a wonderful new friendship.

My message to her had been loud and clear. With an open heart, she took the step that would take her towards a brighter future and a step towards healing from a terrible choice in the past. The message to me was also loud and clear; we must never let discouragement deter us from transmitting the message of hope. It is not the big picture we must be concerned about, but the souls that come into our care—one woman, one mother, one baby at a time. It is only in our fidelity that we must count our successes.

PAS-Post Abortion Syndrome (continued from page 1)

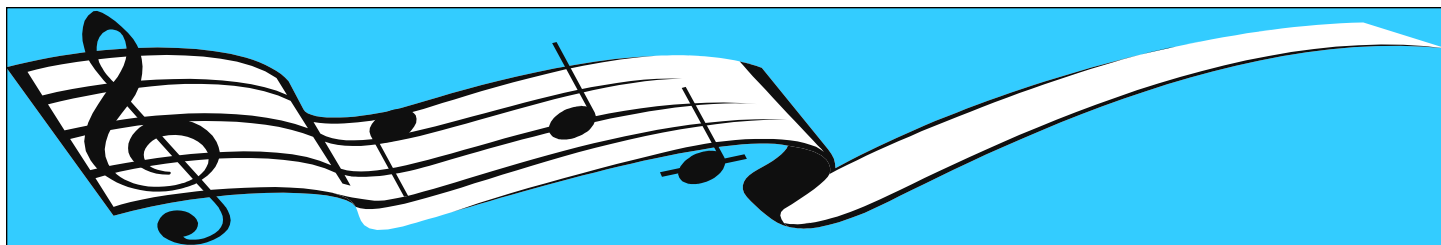
Eventually, if enough stress enters her life, she may find that she lacks the stamina both to cope with current stresses and continue repressing “forgotten” memories. A variety of experiences (such as pictures of prenatal development, a subsequent pregnancy, or even the whine of a dentist's drill which resembles the sound of the abortionist's equipment) may then trigger symptoms associated with post abortion syndrome, including guilt, anxiety, psychological “numbing”, preoccupation with fertility issues, severe depression, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, thoughts of suicide, other self-punishing behaviors, nightmares or sleeping disorders, inability to maintain loving or trusting relationships, etc.

Researchers are using the term post abortion syndrome (PAS) to describe a woman's inability to: (1) process the fear, anger, sadness and guilt surrounding the abortion, (2) grieve the loss of her baby, and (3) come to peace with God, herself, and others involved in the abortion decision.

The Tasks of Healing

In the experience of many therapists who are now working with post abortion women, it has yet to be found that time alone will bring real, lasting healing. The old adage “time heals all” becomes “time represses all.” While a post abortion woman many have acquired enough coping skills in her life to be a well-functioning member of society, the potential for deterioration because of the repressed pain always remains. When a woman comes to a point in her life where she recognizes the need to deal with a past abortion, a skilled professional, or a lay counselor can be of great help in leading her through the tasks of healing. 1. Working through the denial (re-experiencing the abortion). The first task is for the woman to access the negative feelings surrounding the abortion experience. 2. Dealing with issues of guilt and forgiveness from God. The Christian woman is very likely to begin, at some point after her abortion, feeling like a second-class citizen in God's kingdom. She usually will either turn away from the Church completely, or enter into an intense compensation mode, with the rationale that if she is good enough, she can prove herself, and God will surely forgive her someday. The most essential task for the Christian post abortion woman is to accept on an emotional level what she probably already knows on an intellectual level: that God's forgiveness is already complete and that she must reach out and accept that forgiveness. It is important as Catholic Christians to encourage women to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. 3. Anger and forgiveness toward herself and others involved in the abortion decision. Most women experiencing PAS have repressed a tremendous amount of anger since the time of the abortion. Helping her to clarify and work through the anger clears a path to true forgiveness. 4. Grieving the loss of the aborted child. Many women experiencing PAS have never recognized the need to grieve the loss of their aborted baby. 5. Acceptance. In the stage of acceptance, women acknowledge that abortion ended their unborn child's life. They learn new ways of responding to the guilt and sorrow following their abortion. They accept abortion as part of the past. They no longer dwell on painful memories nor try to hide them. They have expressed their emotions in grieving and no longer are consumed by them. They have hope that they will be reunited with their child in heaven and they look forward to that day with joyful expectancy.

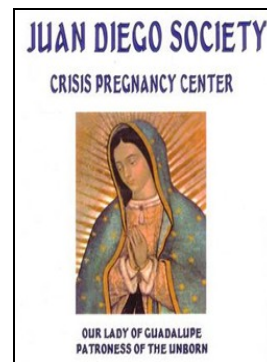
If you are someone who is experiencing any of the symptoms of PAS, or you know someone who has been struggling with any of these symptoms, please seek help. In the Bay Area, call Project Rachel (Santa Clara) at (408) 426-7343 / e-mail: mpetersorsn@yahoo.com or Project Rachel (San Francisco) at (415) 717-6428 / e-mail: masf@mindspring.com. You can also contact the National Office of Post Abortion Reconciliation and Healing at 1-800-5-WE-CARE (1-800-593-2273) Rachel's Vineyard **Weekend Retreat**. Please see their web site at www.rachelsvineyard.org for more information. Or call their toll free hotline at 877-HOPE-4-ME.. An excellent resource to learn more about post abortion healing is www.afterabortion.org There are many books written on this subject. Forbidden Grief by Dr. Theresa Burke, foundress of Rachel's Vineyard. To learn more about this book, see: www.forbiddengrief.com other resources include Ramah International at www.ramahinternational.org There is hope and healing after abortion. You are not alone. May God be with you on your journey to wholeness and peace.



St. Juan Diego Society Women's Center presents a *Multi Musical Concert*

Date: October 30, 2010 at 6:30 PM

*Venue: The Portuguese Athletic Club
1401 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95116*



Enjoy beautiful music and fellowship with families, friends, church associates and other dedicated supporters of the wonderful Pro-Life ministry.

Featured Artists:

- Elizabeth Campisi - Singer / Songwriter
Immaculate Heart Radio 1260 AM
- Friends of Jesus (FOJ) A
Christian Catholic Rock Group that performed for the Pope at the World Youth Day 2008
- The Abalos Sisters - Piano and Flute
- San Jose Classical String Ensemble
performs at Saratoga Winery
- Rhed Shi - Piano Chopin Soloist Finalist,
US Competition, Florida (Spring of 2010)
- Fr. Thomas Koller, OCD and the
St. Victor's 12:15

Suggested Donations to help the unborn child:

\$20 - Adults

\$15 - Ages 12 to 18

\$10 - Ages 6 to 11

Free Refreshment - Home Baked
Home Made Goodies

To reserve a seat please send your donations to:

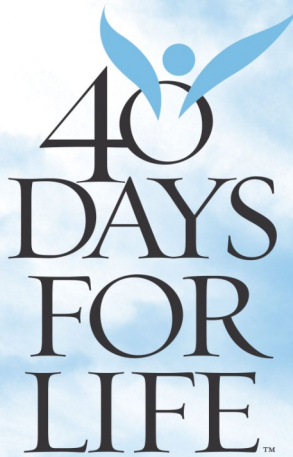
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40
DAYS
FOR
LIFE™

SEPTEMBER 22
to OCTOBER 31

This Fall, from September 22—October 31, Our community is uniting with hundreds of other cities around the world for the largest and longest coordinated pro-life mobilization in history: the *40 Days for Life* campaign. Recognizing that “with God all things are possible,” people of faith are praying that this effort will bring an end to the tragedy of abortion.

40 Days for Life is a focused pro-life campaign that has already mobilized over 350,000 people worldwide, saved more than 2,800 lives from abortion, led to the conversion of 38 abortion workers. And seen five abortion facilities close. *40 Days for Life* is made up of three components:

- **Prayer and Fasting:** believers throughout our city are invited to join together for 40 days of fervent prayer and fasting to end abortion.
- **Peaceful Vigil:** stand for life during a 40-day peaceful public witness outside Planned Parenthood, 1691 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126.
- **Community Outreach:** help take a positive, upbeat pro-life message to every corner of our city through media efforts, advocacy and public visibility.

Learn how you can speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves here in *San Jose* by contacting Pat at 408-497-7270 or by visiting:

www.40daysforlife.com/sanjose

