



# The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham Coventry Group

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**The Second Sunday after Trinity**



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## **Collect**

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love: keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence; and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

## **First reading** *Exodus 19:2-6*

In those days: When the people of Israel set out from Reph'idim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain. And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

## **Second reading** *Romans 5:6-11*

Brethren: While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man—though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation.

## **Gospel** *Matthew 9:36-10:8*

At that time: When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zeb'edee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without pay, give without pay."

## Notices and news

### Recently departed

June Dunn  
Canon Tom Mander

### Anniversaries of death

21<sup>st</sup> Frances Mary O'Hara  
Sarah Atkinson  
24<sup>th</sup> Jessie Burgess  
May Alice Wall

O GOD, the Father of mercies: grant unto the souls of thy servants a place of refreshment, the blessedness of rest, and the brightness of light; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

### Former Anglican Bishop of Monmouth to join the Ordinariate



***“The Ordinariate, through the vision of Pope Benedict, provides a generous pathway to walk a pilgrim way.”***

The Right Revd Richard Pain, a former Bishop of Monmouth, will be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church within the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, on Sunday 2 July at St Basil & St Gwladys, Rogerstone Newport. He will be received by The Rt Revd Keith Newton, Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Our Ordinary said: *‘We are delighted that after much prayer Richard has asked to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. He will be the first bishop from the Anglican Church in Wales to be received into the Ordinariate since its creation in 2011. Richard has a long and distinguished ministry in the Church in Wales. He has many gifts which he will continue to use to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Wales’*

Commenting on his forthcoming reception, Richard expressed joy at this next step of his Christian journey.

*‘Having retired from episcopal ministry three years ago, I have had time to reflect on the retiree’s perennial question - what next? The process of discernment continues throughout life and is constantly shaped by context but more importantly by the whisper of God’s voice. The Benedictine understanding of obedience - hearing the Lord- has been significant to my personal formation. The call to conversion which follows has led me to becoming a convert to the Catholic Church through the Ordinariate.*

*I have much to be grateful for the experience gained over a lifetime as an Anglican. Yet the call to Catholicism seems natural and spiritual at the same time. To start afresh will be a welcome challenge and I come - as we all do - as a learner and a disciple. The Ordinariate, through the vision of Pope Benedict, provides a generous pathway to walk a pilgrim way and I ask for your prayers.’*

### The Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Please hold Mother Winsome and the Sisters in your prayers as, with the Ordinary, they continue to seek to secure a new home. The Sisters constantly pray for us; now it’s our turn to pray for them.

Remember us in heaven, Saint John Henry Newman.

Obtain for us the gifts you sought for your friends here below: the grace to follow the kindly light of faith; belief that is firm and true; a heart to speak to the heart of God; and a voice to give praise to the Holiest.

Obtain for us the courage to follow your teaching and example: in loyalty to Christ and the Church; in love for the Immaculate Mother of God and in compassion for the perplexed.

*I pray especially for the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin, that they may find a new home in which to love, serve and worship you.*

Obtain for us support all the day long of this troubled life till the shades lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over and our work is done; so that the Lord in His mercy may grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last; and that we may pass, with you, from shadows and images into the fullness of truth and love.

## June clergy plenary

The clergy of the Ordinariate were treated to two excellent talks at the most recent of their regular gatherings in London. The first, by **Madeleine Page of March for Life**, was both informative and inspirational, with sobering facts about abortion in the UK, helpful advice about communicating the pro-life argument coherently and clearly, and encouragement to the faithful of the Ordinariate to join the March for Life in London on Saturday 2nd September. The second was given by our very own **Fr Michael Ward** on the importance of JRR Tolkien's Catholic faith in his life and hugely successful and influential literary work. 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of Tolkien's death.

## Day for Life 2023

Today the Church in the UK keeps as Day for Life, a day to raise awareness of the Church's teaching about the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.



**Apostolic blessing** Pope Francis has sent a message with his Apostolic Blessing to Catholics in England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland who celebrate Day for Life today. Communicating the Holy Father's message, the new Papal Nuncio to the UK, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía expressed Pope Francis's prayers, particularly for expectant mothers and their families, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of God. The Pope, writes Archbishop Maury Buendía quoting from a General Audience on 25 March 2020, reminds us that, *"to defend life is not an ideology for the Church. It is a reality; a human reality that involves all Christians, precisely because they are Christian and because they are human."*

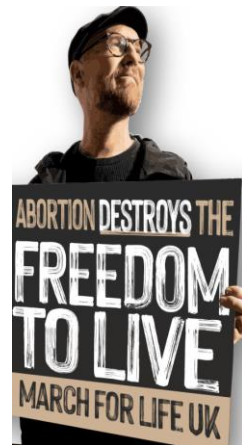
**Life is to be nurtured** The Church teaches that life is to be nurtured from conception to natural death. In England and Wales, *Day for Life* is celebrated on the third Sunday of June each year. For the first time, it will be celebrated in Scotland and Ireland on the same day, to give a stronger witness to the sanctity of the life of the unborn. The theme this year is 'Listen to Her' and focuses on post-abortion trauma and the impact of abortion primarily on women, but also men. The 2023 message is unique in that the bishops have given it over to a Catholic woman who has had an abortion to share her experiences. Often the voices of women who have had an abortion are silent in the Church and in society. The hope is that this will help

break this silence and offer further opportunities for healing and reconciliation.

**Prayers and Message** Copies of the message and prayers for Day for Life, including a novena, are at the back of church **and below**.

**Rachel's Vineyard** is a healing ministry for those who are suffering from the trauma of abortion, or those who have been connected to someone who is. To find out more, visit <https://www.rachelsvineyard.org.uk>

## March for Life 2023



## 2023 THEME

Many are concerned about restrictions on freedoms but it's often not until these restrictions affect us personally that we speak up. Sadly, those who have their most fundamental freedom taken from them, by abortion, cannot speak for themselves - this is why we march. For our nation to be truly free, no one can be denied the number one freedom, the freedom to live!

## EVENT PAGE

This year's March for Life in Westminster is on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**. Monsignor Newton is very keen that those who are physically able turn out in support of this growing and peaceful act of witness to the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Many people are concerned about restrictions on freedom, but it's often not until these restrictions affect us personally that we speak up. Abortion destroys the most fundamental freedom, the freedom to live, and leaves so many women and men deeply hurting. Join thousands of others at this peaceful, prayerful and family-friendly event in London to speak up for those who can not speak for themselves.

**A deanery coach will depart from All Souls at 9.45am, after Mass at 9am.** Cost per person £15 on the day. The march ends in Parliament Square at around 4.30pm, so arrival back in Coventry will be late evening. To book a place contact Fr Paul on 02476674161 or at [fr.paul.burch@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:fr.paul.burch@rcaob.org.uk) Full details of the event can be found at [marchforlife.co.uk](http://marchforlife.co.uk) Speak up for those who can't speak for themselves. Speak up for the rights of all those who are poor. (Proverbs 31:8)

Lots more information at [www.marchforlife.co.uk](http://www.marchforlife.co.uk)



## June group meeting

Next month's meeting is this Wednesday. We'll begin at the slightly earlier time of **7pm**, so that it's not such a late finish.

## Priestly ordination of Reverend Matthew Topham

Please pray for Deacon Matthew Topham who will be ordained to the Sacred Priesthood at Our Lady of the Assumption Warwick Street by the Rt Revd Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth.

## Parish pilgrimage to Walsingham 2023



We have made a provisional booking for a parish pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham, **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023**. Accommodation at Elmham House will be half board (Bed & Breakfast and Evening Meal). Lunches can be obtained in the village or at the shrine. Half board costs per room per day are as follows:

### SINGLE ROOM

Ensuite £85

Budget (standard) £68

Bunk bedroom £57

### TWIN/DOUBLE ROOM

Ensuite £170

Budget (standard) £136

Bunk bedroom £114

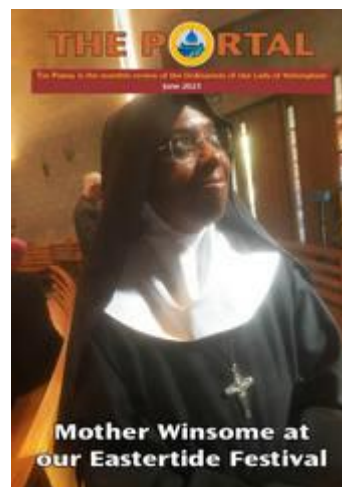
In order for the booking to be confirmed and the pilgrimage to go ahead, we need to know **by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June** how many people would like to join. Parishioners from other parishes are very welcome too. Please contact the parish office – 02476674161 or [allsouls.covty@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:allsouls.covty@rcaob.org.uk) - if you are a **definite**. If you need more information please contact Fr Paul at [allsoulscoy@gmail.com](mailto:allsoulscoy@gmail.com) General information about the Shrine and accommodation can be found at [www.walsingham.org.uk/guest-information-elmham-house/](http://www.walsingham.org.uk/guest-information-elmham-house/)

**It would be wonderful to have a good number of members of the Ordinariate community on the pilgrimage.**

**Ordinariate monthly e-newsletter**

If you're subscribed, you should have received the latest newsletter in your inbox this last week To subscribe go to <https://www.ordinariate.org.uk/news/newsletter.php>

## The Portal for June and podcast



Visit <https://www.ordinariate.org.uk/news/portal.php> to read the monthly online review and to listen to the weekly podcast.

## QR code for donations to Coventry Ordinariate Mission

This method of donating is powered by CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) and is being promoted by the Ordinariate Finance Officer as something all groups might use to boost their income. CAF helps charities get the most from their fundraising by providing online donation processing services. It is a registered charity (Charity Commission of England and Wales number 268369). For more information about CAF visit <https://www.cafonline.org/> Donations can be made either by scanning the QR code above or going directly to the CAF Coventry Ordinariate Mission webpage at <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/21076> Both the QR code and URL will be displayed on the Ordinariate weekly newsletter, Facebook page, noticeboard etc. There are the options to make just one donation or to give regularly (see below). If you give to the group already by standing order, you could make a single occasional donation via CAF anytime too. There is also an option for you to **gift aid** your donation.



## Praying the Daily Office this week

If you intend to pray daily **Morning Prayer** and **Evening Prayer**, the table below gives you the page numbers for each of the parts of the Office for each day this week. Placing the markers in the correct pages, as indicated in the table below, takes a few minutes each time, but once done, actually praying the Office is quite straight-forward.

The Order of Morning Prayer (MP) (Matins) begins on page 375

The Order of Evening Prayer (EP) (Evensong) begins on page 421

All numbers below refer to *page numbers* in Divine Worship: Daily Office (DWDO), unless otherwise indicated.

Note: the Office hymn is always optional, but encouraged.

Day	Morning Prayer (Matins)				Evening Prayer (Evensong)				Notes
	Psalmody	Readings	Hymn	Collect	Psalmody	Readings	Hymn	Collect	
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> <b>SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	558	1311	201	99	561	1315	201	99	
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> Feria	563	1317	202	99	565	1318	202	99	At MP replace the <i>Venite</i> with the <i>Jubilate Deo</i> (p.567)
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> <b>St. Alban, Martyr</b>	568	1320	272	135	571	1322	272	135	
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> <b>St. Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious</b>	573	1325	203	135	575	1327	204	135	
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> <b>SS. JOHN FISHER, BISHOP &amp; THOMAS MORE, MARTYRS</b>	578	1328	312	136	581	1330	313	136	
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feria	584	1332	205	99	Ps 71	1929	273	136	EPI of The Nativity of St. John the Baptist
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> <b>THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST</b>	Pss 50 149	1929	273/4	136	Pss 80 82	1930	273	136	MP & EP of The Nativity of St. John the Baptist The Athanasian Creed is said at MP (p.339)
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> <b>THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY</b>	592	1338	201	99	595	1341	201	99	

For those who are looking initially for something a little simpler, the **Office of Prime** (page 397) is a shorter form of prayer for the morning, and the **Office of Compline** (page 427) is a shorter form of prayer for the evening. These will take about 10 minutes each to pray.

# Novena for Life



This novena, nine days of intercessory prayer, is offered to encourage a flourishing of a culture of life, with a particular focus on ending abortion and healing the trauma of abortion.

**Day for Life** is the day in the Church's calendar set aside for raising awareness of the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition – from conception to natural death.

**Theme and Message: 'Listen to Her'.** Focusing on post-abortion trauma, this year's *Day for Life* message was written by Jane, who attended Catholic schools as a child, and had an abortion as a teenager. You can read her full message: [cbcew.org.uk/df123-message](https://cbcew.org.uk/df123-message)

## Rachel's Vineyard

Rachel's Vineyard is a healing ministry for those who are suffering from the trauma of abortion, or those who have been connected to someone who is. To find out more, visit [www.rachelsvineyard.org.uk](https://www.rachelsvineyard.org.uk)



Start the novena with the following prayer each day, taken from St John Paul II's concluding comments in his encyclical letter 'The Gospel of Life', followed by the daily quote or reflection as set out below and finish with the Glory Be

### **Daily prayer**

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world,  
Mother of the living,  
to you do we entrust the cause of life.  
Look down, O Mother,  
upon the vast numbers of babies not allowed to be born,  
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,  
of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,  
of the elderly and the sick  
killed by indifference or our misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son  
may proclaim the Gospel of life with honesty and love  
to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,  
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives  
and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely,  
in order to build,  
together with all people of good will,  
the civilization of truth and love,  
to the praise and glory of God,  
the Creator and Lord of life. Amen.

### **Day 1: All life has inestimable value**

The first of nine days of prayer and readings to encourage a flourishing of a culture of life and end abortion.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'All life has inestimable value even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect.'

*Pope Francis, Message to Catholics participating in Day for Life in Britain and Ireland, 28 July 2013.*

**Glory be** to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen

### **Day 2: Culture of life**

Our second day of our Novena for Life focuses on the promotion of a culture of life being the highest priority in our societies.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'The promotion of a culture of life should be the highest priority in our societies...if the right to life is not defended decisively as a condition for all other rights of the person, all other references to human rights remain deceitful and illusory.'

*Pope St John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae*

#### **Glory be**

### **Day 3: Judged by our treatment of others**

Day Three of our Novena for Life sees us reflect on how we will be judged on our treatment of societies weakest members.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members; and among the most vulnerable are surely the unborn and the dying.'

*Pope Saint John Paul II, Address to the New Ambassador of New Zealand to the Holy See, 25 May 2000*

#### **Glory be**



#### **Day 4: Violence through abortion**

Day Four of our Novena for Life sees us reflect on how the Womb becomes a place of unutterable violence through abortion.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space – the womb – has become a place of unutterable violence through abortion?'

*Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day Sydney, 17 July 2009*

#### **Glory be**

#### **Day 5: Protection of nature**

Our fifth day of our Novena for Life explores the protection of nature and its incompatibility with the justification of abortion.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion...how can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?'

*Pope Francis, Laudato Si*

#### **Glory be**

#### **Day 6: Defend the innocent unborn**

Day Six of our Novena for Life sees us reflect on how we defend the innocence of the unborn and the dignity of Human Life.

#### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stakes is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person regardless of his or her state of development.'

#### **Glory be**

## **Day 7: Stand up for life**

Day Seven of our Novena for Life calls on us to Stand up for Life, to work and pray against abortion.

### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'You are called to stand up for life! To respect and defend the mystery of life always and everywhere, including the lives of unborn babies, giving real help and encouragement to mothers in difficult situations. You are called to work and pray against abortion.'

Pope St John Paul II, New York, 1995

### **Glory be**

## **Day 8: God's infinite mercy**

Day eight of our Novena for Life sees us reflect on how abortion is a grave sin, but there is no sin that God's mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father.

### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'I wish to restate as firmly as I can that abortion is a grave sin, since it puts an end to an innocent life. In the same way, however, I can and must state that there is no sin that God's mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father...I henceforth grant to all priests, in virtue of their ministry, the faculty to absolve those who have committed the sin of procured abortion.'

*Pope Francis, 21 November 2016*

### **Glory be**

## **Day 9: Never tire in the defence of life**

The final day of our Novena for Life calls on us to never tire of firmly speaking out in defence of life.

### **Daily prayer**

#### **Reflection/Quotation**

'Never tire of firmly speaking out in defence of life from its conception and do not be deterred from the commitment to defend the dignity of every person with courageous determination. Christ is with you: do not be afraid!'

*Pope St John Paul II*

### **Glory be**

## Other prayers

### **Prayer to St Joseph, Patron of the Unborn**

O St. Joseph, after your most holy spouse, our Blessed Mother, you were the first to take into your arms and heart the baby Jesus. From the first time you gazed upon him and held him, your heart and soul were forever bonded to him. You caressed the Holy Child with fatherly love and affection, and you committed yourself always to love, protect, and care for this Son.

Look now with similar love and affection upon this child of mine, who has gone from this world. I place my child, as well as my grief and guilt, into the eternal embrace of your arms. Hold and caress my child for me with the love of my arms and sweetly kiss my child with all the tender affection of my heart.

As God the Father entrusted the care of His most precious Son into your most loving and confident hands, so too do I entrust into your fatherly care this child of mine. Please present him to the merciful hands of Our Lord, so that one day, when I too leave this world, my child may greet me into eternal life. *Amen.*

### **Prayer to St Joseph, Defender of Life**

Dearest Saint Joseph,  
at the word of an angel,  
you lovingly took Mary into your home.  
As God's humble servant, you guided  
the Holy Family on the road to Bethlehem,  
welcomed Jesus as your own son  
in the shelter of a manger,  
and fled far from your homeland  
for the safety of both Mother and Child.

We praise God that as their faithful protector,  
you never hesitated to sacrifice  
for those entrusted to you.

May your example inspire us also  
to welcome, cherish, and safeguard  
God's most precious gift of life.

Help us to faithfully commit ourselves  
to the service and defence of human life,  
especially where it is vulnerable or threatened.

Obtain for us the grace to do the will of God in all things. *Amen.*

# Day for Life Message 2023

*This year's 'Day for Life' message is written by a woman in the hope that it can offer opportunities for healing and reconciliation.*



## **Bishops' Introduction**

*Voices of women who have had an abortion are often silent in Church and in society. This year's message for Day for Life is written by a woman and hopes to break this silence and offer opportunities for hope, healing and reconciliation.*

## **Jane's Story**

I went to Catholic schools, I knew about God and morality on some level, but for me, the culture spoke louder when it came to making decisions around sexuality.

When I was 15, I discovered I was pregnant and the fear clouded everything. I had one aim, and that was to solve the problem I had found myself in. A quick search for confidential help landed me at a clinic connected to an abortion provider. They seemed to genuinely believe that abortion was the solution to my problem and I don't remember discussing any other options. I was relieved when they determined that I was capable enough to make this decision alone, without the involvement of an adult, which is still legal to this day.

“By hearing other people share their stories and being gently encouraged by the team, I was able to speak the truth of what had happened to me on that day. My feelings were acknowledged, including my sense of loss.”



That Saturday I travelled alone to the clinic. My parents were unaware, due to other difficulties in the family home that I didn't want to contribute to. I went through the degrading experience of a surgical abortion, and I thought that if I could just get through that day, I would never have to think about it again. I remember feeling conflicted as a tear rolled down my cheek, that I quickly wiped away. I believed I couldn't be sad because this was something I had chosen to do. So after the initial feeling of relief, I pushed down the experience and avoided anything to do with the topic of abortion. It was difficult to be around pregnant women and I found the anniversary difficult each year.

Over the next few years, I became more curious about faith through the invitation of a friend. I was looking for direction and truth, but my spiritual life was always tainted by the thought that I could never be forgiven for what I had done – somehow, God's mercy didn't apply to me. In the fleeting moments of honesty with myself and God, I knew that my choice didn't make me lose something, but someone. At times, this realisation was unbearable. This led to periods of deep depression and suicidal thoughts, as well as more promiscuous behaviour and numbing the pain with alcohol, food, or isolation.

This all changed when I was encouraged to go to confession. Even when I tried to justify my choice, the priest met me with the love and mercy of Jesus. The tears he shed melted my heart of stone. I began to give up my old ways of life and follow His way.

On this journey I was introduced to Rachel's Vineyard: a healing ministry that provides support for those who are suffering after abortion. I remember the kindness of the woman that I spoke to, and I knew I wouldn't be judged there.

It took so much courage to go on a retreat, but I can genuinely say it changed my life. By hearing other people share their stories and being gently encouraged by the team, I was able to speak the truth of what had happened to me on that day. My feelings were acknowledged, including my sense of loss. I was finally given permission to grieve for the baby that had died through my choice. I acknowledged my motherhood and named my son Joseph. This was the start of God turning the guilt, shame and unforgiveness into a deep love for my son, as any good mother would have.

The healing has continued alongside my faith journey. I've taken responsibility for the role I played in my abortion, but with perspective and time, I can see that my 'choice' wasn't really a choice at all. There were other people's failures, and an inability to truly give informed consent as a teenager that also contributed. The option that was presented as a quick fix solution has eternal consequences, and I truly believe that if I'd have known the impact abortion would have had on my life, even as a teenager, I would have made a different choice.