

Message from the President

Over the past 25 years, FLS has, from time to time, been a part of life's journey of many people – students, teenagers, youths, young couples, parents, the elderly and families. All these people have one thing in common – they were confronted with challenges thrown up by the times and circumstances.

FLS is glad to have played a part in these life journeys as our mission has been to rekindle hope, faith and love in those who may have been lost, confused, hurt or overwhelmed by their troubles.

We are glad to have been blessed by the grace of God to be able to do our small part for those in need. We hope and pray that those in need will continue to turn to us for help to overcome their personal and family difficulties.

As we move ahead, we welcome those who share our views on life and the family to come forward to help make a difference to the lives of people and of families who are in need.

Here's wishing everyone a blessed and great faith year in 2010!

Bernard Yu

Our Services

For Young Adults

The Celebration of Life Programme (COL CHOICE)
 Life Sparks

For Newly Weds and Couples-to-be ...

Catholic Engaged Encounter (CEE)
 Marriage Preparation Course (MPC)
 Natural Family Planning (NFP)
 Couples for Christ (CFC)
 Joyful Parenting (JP)

When you have been married for some time ...

Couple Empowerment Programme (CEP)
 Marriage Encounter (ME)
 School Family Education (SFE)

If faced with crisis or difficulties ...

Individual, Family & Marital Counselling
 Pregnancy Crisis Service (PCS)
 Retrouvaille
 Beginning Experience (BE)

FamilyLifeSociety

Family Life Society
 Catholic Archdiocesan Education Centre
 Tel: 6488 0278 • www.familylife.sg

If you have a personal story to share on family matters or values, email to susie@familylife.sg



Hope and Healing After Abortion: A True Story

It happened when I went to university away from home and you would never have expected it. I was always a very well-behaved girl, a good student, responsible, nice and sweet. I had wonderful loving parents and was a very good student, even winning a scholarship because of my good grades.

My boyfriend told me "It's up to you, we can get married but you know my parents will kill me...". On my part I felt the same. In that state of confusion, I felt that if I had gone through with the pregnancy, I would have disappointed my parents. I was their perfect daughter! Plus, I had a great future to live for!

So, I did not tell them. I simply went to the doctor. In a matter of fact manner, he told me not to worry and scheduled an appointment for the following week.

I proceeded with the abortion.

I was relieved. During the one week, all I could think about was getting rid of the "problem" that was in my stomach. After the abortion, I thought I could continue with my life where everything was fantastic, I kept on being the good girl I always was, only that I now had a secret that NO BODY knew. Nobody knew except for my boyfriend, the doctor... and God.

As things continued to be great in my life, I became suddenly very depressed with no particular reason about 15 years after the abortion. I would cry without really knowing why I was crying, I was constantly overwhelmed with waves of sadness and helplessness.

Psychologists whom I visited did not make the link between the abortion and my depression. They traced my psychological history. No family history of depression. They asked about my environment. No real difficulty with my job. They and I were mystified.

In his providence, the Lord sent yet another psychologist. For some reason, I mentioned to him that I had terminated my pregnancy many years ago. It suddenly "clicked" for him that the abortion was the source of the depression. Knowing that I was a Catholic, he advised me to see a priest, one whom I could talk to honestly about this. He seemed to recognise the need for the spiritual in my circumstances.

I approached Fr. Leslie Raj, SJ, and had a long conversation with him. He was kind and sympathetic and he recommended Rose Boon, coordinator of Pregnancy Crisis Service. She, too, was very kind and listened sympathetically. She lent me Dr. Theresa Burke's book "Forbidden Grief", a book that describes the mental and emotional distress faced by women after an abortion.

That was the turning point of my life.

As I read the book, practically everything mentioned in there spoke deeply to my heart. The symptoms, the repressed grief I experienced and the depression that I had sunk into were all vividly described in the book. I found myself saying "that's me".

The author, Dr. Theresa Burke, was a founder of "Rachel's Vineyard", a retreat for women who had undergone an abortion and who needed a safe,

non-judgmental environment to work through the spiritual, emotional and mental distress and to begin the journey towards forgiveness and healing. The retreat helps women to confront the issue of their abortion in a forthright manner. The grace of God is always stronger than whatever sin or horrible deeds which we might have committed.

I cried so much during the retreat. But this time they were not tears of hopelessness. This time I knew. I was grieving for my dead child. They were also tears of joy. Knowing that I can be forgiven by God and that His grace is more powerful than any crisis.

The final stage of my healing process was when I plucked up the courage to tell my parents. I expected them to scream at me but they did not. Instead they reassured me of their love. "It is part of the past, you are and will always be our beloved daughter, and we love you so much."

God must have planned this to happen for my father sadly passed away shortly after I told him. I know that this was God's timing. I cannot imagine not having been totally honest with my dad.

I am sharing this story in the hope that people will realise that yes, having a baby is a life changing experience BUT please know that having an abortion is also an experience that changes your life (and not for the better). Having a baby is not the end of the world. Yes it changes your life but most certainly you will be able to cope with it.

We learn things to share with others. Hopefully, my sharing would be a learning experience for everybody.

The above story is from "Pauline" (not her real name) who attended a Rachel's Vineyard retreat. She shares this story in the hope that women who have experienced the pain of an abortion will find hope and healing as she did.

Event Announcement

Rachel's Vineyard – Post-Abortion Healing Retreat

Many women and their partners who suffer from an abortion decision and remain locked in their own internal prison, afraid of others knowing of their deep secret.

A Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreat is a beautiful opportunity for anyone who has struggled with emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion to experience the mercy and compassion of God. It is also an opportunity to release repressed feelings of anger, shame, guilt, and grief in a private and comforting environment.

The weekend will help your spirit find a voice; transform the pain of the past into love and hope. Rachel's Vineyard can help you begin the healing process. Our next weekend retreat is from Friday 26 to Sunday 28 March 2010.

Interested participants/enquiries, call Rose at 9818 5102 or email rachelvineyard@familylife.sg.



To woman who had an abortion – by Pope John Paul II

I would now like to say a special word to women who have had an abortion. The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound

in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of

mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To the same Father and his mercy you can with sure hope entrust your child. With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent

defenders of everyone's right to life. Through your commitment to life, whether by accepting the birth of other children or by welcoming and caring for those most in need of someone to be close to them, you will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life – from "The Gospel of Life".