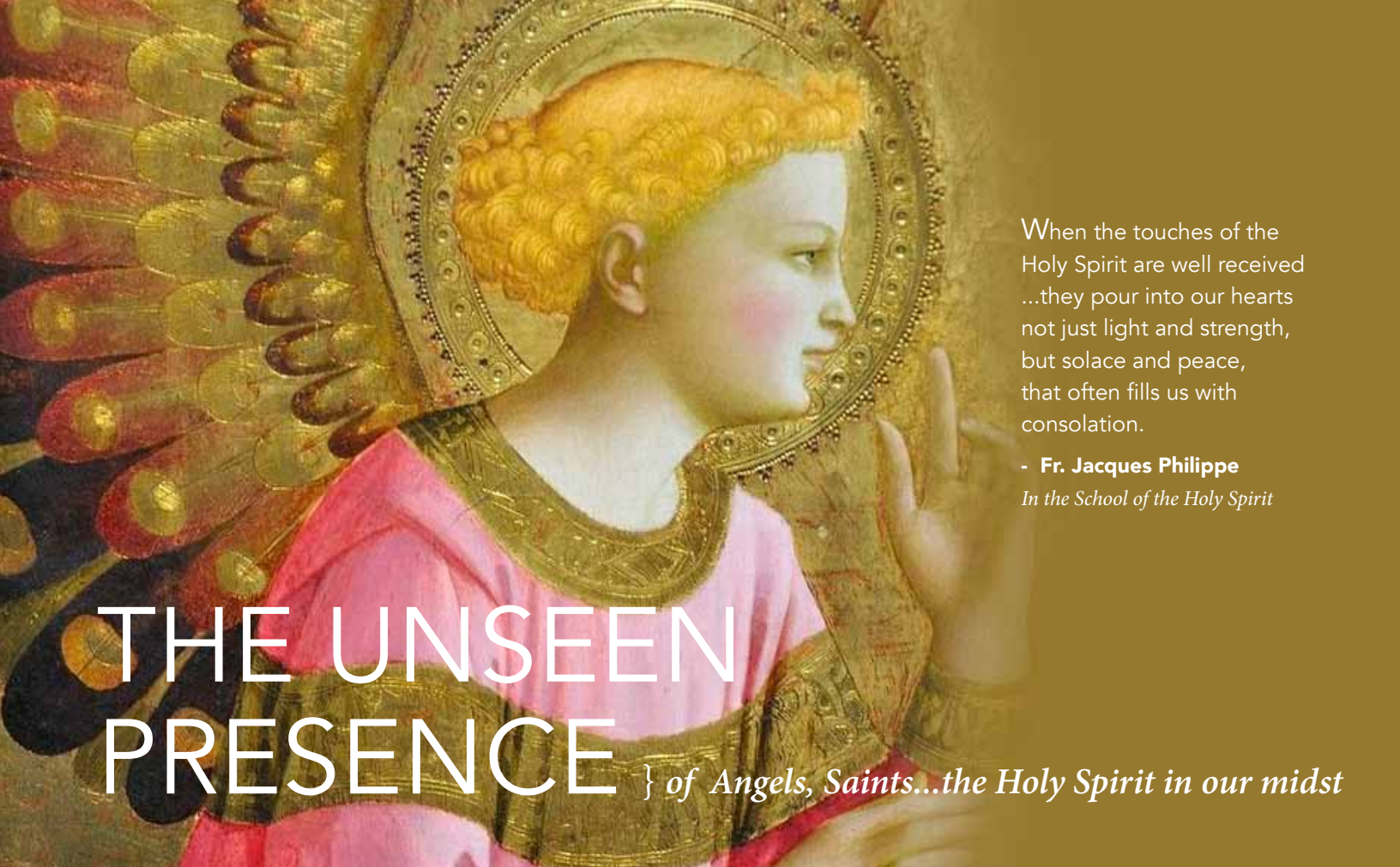


A PUBLICATION OF THE SISTERS OF LIFE / FALL ISSUE

# IMPRINT

a world so real

unlocking the door to the spiritual world.



When the touches of the Holy Spirit are well received ...they pour into our hearts not just light and strength, but solace and peace, that often fills us with consolation.

- Fr. Jacques Philippe

*In the School of the Holy Spirit*

# THE UNSEEN PRESENCE } of Angels, Saints...the Holy Spirit in our midst

*Chris at the center of the party scene on campus experiences a firm resolve simply to leave. He walks out, not just of a party, but onto a new path. He feels a great desire not to waste another moment of his life and to discover who he really is.*

*Kim who has left behind a life of anger, hurt and broken relationships sits in a darkened adoration chapel in the presence of her Creator, and there, in an unexpected encounter with the living God, receives her innocence, beauty, and feminine identity restored.*

*Brian sits across the table from his prodigal son – and a nameless love pours out of his heart. A love different from an emotion, and something so much greater than he is capable of producing. A love without condition or limits. And his son's searching, uncertain gaze rests in this love. They both know that something new has been born in their relationship.*

How do we explain such happenings? We begin by admitting that there is so much more to the world than meets the eye: a deeper meaning, a hidden Presence. In our own day many have 'repressed' the sense of God and of the transcendent; and experience a new neurosis resulting from the absence of the spiritual. The spiritually repressed person resembles those half-finished statues of Michelangelo that yearn to emerge from the marble and be set free. Such is man without God: he is incomprehensible in his profound abundance. For "Christ... fully reveals man to man himself..." (*Gaudium et Spes*, #22).

Within the world forces of both good and evil are at work seeking to influence and lead us — some toward wholeness and holiness, and others to destruction. For the Christian, there is far more at work interiorly -- God dwells within -- and the Holy Spirit, if yielded to, can be the influence and help in every moment of daily life. Within each

one of us, and the world, this great drama is played out every day. The stories in this edition of *IMPRINT* illustrate how we can become more aware of these influences for good and for evil which move within our minds and hearts. Becoming aware of these movements within us allows us to choose the way that leads to life.

Each day we Sisters have the privilege of seeing God break into our lives -- upon our altars at Mass, into the lives of pregnant women transfigured by hope, and into the hearts of women and men, who in hearing the truth of God's infinite mercy, come to realize that the only "unforgivable sin" is the one not surrendered to His love. Truly we are surrounded by an invisible, spiritual world and are touched by the presence of Our Lord, His angels and Saints.

We were made for so much more: to live not just physical and social lives, but to mature in the Holy Spirit. Let us foster within ourselves, by the grace of God, this capacity to live with a contemplative gaze upon every person and in every situation we encounter.

In Christ our Life,

Mother Agnes Mary, SV  
Superior General of the Sisters of Life





Our own world of

# NARNIA

*the interior world of our soul*

## **The prophesied Kings and Queens:**

Love. Death. Betrayal. Sacrifice. It's all there in C.S. Lewis' classic tale, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, where four children – Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter step through the back of a wardrobe into the world of Narnia, a place gripped by a wintry battle between the White Witch and the followers of Aslan the Lion (the Christ figure). They discover that they are the prophesied Kings and Queens of Narnia and that their lives hang in the balance, the ultimate victory hinging upon one choice to say “yes” or “no” to a sacrifice of love.

**The reality:** But unlike this imaginary place, we don't need to step inside a wardrobe to experience the forces of light and darkness all around us: the place where evil seeks to dominate, and the Good continually breaks through, calling forth in us all that is beautiful and true. We live in it. It's all around us.

**The battle:** We, as human persons, are both fleshy and spiritual, nitty gritty and infinite, body and soul – a meeting of the material and spiritual worlds. But in a culture of flash, glamor, and constant stimulation, we can get into a habit of living on the surface level, without pausing to consider the battle for our souls that is happening at every moment and with every choice we make.

**The movements:** With every moral choice we make, we either move towards God or towards the devil; we either become more free or more bound. But do we see it? We need to open the doors of our hearts with eyes of faith, to notice the movements of our spirit, to stop and attentively listen to hear God's gentle voice speak to us. Our spiritual taste buds need awakening.



*"At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump inside...Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous...Susan felt some delicious smell...And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays..."*

*-The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

## The voice that whispers, "You're not good enough."

The old cartoons are not far off the mark. We all know the tugging of conscience, the experience of being caught between the two little "voices" – "do this" and "don't do that." The dark spirit is always standing in the shadows, ready to drag us down, crafting smoke screens and illusions to lead us to choices that we later regret. Edmund, one of the children, wooed by the Witch's flattery, gifts, and promise of power, betrays his siblings and becomes a prisoner. We know what it's like. And we know what it's like to be bombarded with thoughts that make us feel heavy, discouraged, empty, and alone. Thoughts like "I'm not good enough; I'll never improve; It will always be like this; I'm worthless; There's no way out; I'm all alone;" thoughts that bite and nag at us, rob us of peace, and lead us into habits of selfishness, judgement, apathy, bitterness, and maybe even despair.

We might blame these thoughts on poor digestion or hormones or lack of sleep, but how often do we consider that such thoughts may be suggestions from another source, from a spiritual enemy who wants it to be "always winter and never Christmas," as it was in Narnia?

## The voice that speaks truth

But you know - the light just can't be beat. One moment we feel in the pits, and the next, a thought or a word comes to us that breathes fresh air into our souls. Those moments of light and warmth -- thoughts that speak truth into our situation, that lift us up, give us hope, encourage us, make us want to love and be generous, and fill us with joy -- are the voice of the Lord speaking to us and intimately sharing Himself with us. His voice dissolves the lies that the darkness had planted, and we see them for what they are: empty promises and dead ends. The evil spirit always has a bitter aftertaste, because Satan never delivers.

Our own world of Narnia } the place where the voice of Jesus lifts us up

## Tools to see beyond:

- 1. Take a Miracle Moment:** Take a minute periodically throughout your day to stop and remember: God is here with me now.
- 2. Gratitude:** Gratitude gives you wings to see beyond life's disappointments, unexpected turns, and the daily humdrum. It realigns your heart to see and receive the good that God is giving you now. When you're having a bad day, make a point to thank God for something or someone in your life. Watch how your heart lifts.
- 3. The Examen Prayer:** Take 10 minutes every day to go over your days with Jesus: the ups and downs, the victories and failures. Ask: "Jesus, show me where you were in my day."

## Who I really am

The Holy Spirit always draws us back to the reality of God's redeeming love, in the here and now. As Aslan sacrificed himself for Edmund, and then rose and rallied the troops to battle the Witch, Christ died and rose and says to us: *"I order you, O sleeper, to awake! I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead."* (cf. Ancient homily from Holy Saturday).

Jesus wants to awaken us to the ultimate reality of who we are: beloved sons and daughters of the Father, unique and unrepeatable, in need of redemption and destined for glory. "Each one of us is loved, willed, and necessary. Each one of us is the result of thought of God." (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) Living in this reality of love is what will shine light into our own world of Narnia – the world of our hearts. It will help us make good and beautiful choices; it is what will set us free and make us happy.





## Keeping our eyes on Jesus

*"You have a traitor there, Aslan," said the Witch. Of course everyone present knew that she meant Edmund. But Edmund had got past thinking about himself after all he'd been through...He just went on looking at Aslan. It didn't seem to matter what the Witch said."*

*-The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis*

everything that happens in your life—both the good and bad. I decided to try it. I began praising God for my new job, but also for the distant relationship I had with my father growing up, for past unhealthy relationships, for a soccer injury to my leg, for all the trouble I had gotten into over the years, and even for my brother's tragic death. Then, literally, only a few days after I began the prayer, I felt like my world was falling apart. I got in a big fight with my dad and broke up with a long term girlfriend. I was totally upset. Because of these two events, that night I fell back into old destructive ways. I woke up the next day feeling awful about myself, and I thought, "Who do you think you are? Look at your life; it's in pieces." I was in bed for two days, mad at God, and in a really bad place within myself.

My mom left a book by my bedside that day. She said, "Niall, read these meditations." I said, "God can't help me now; I'm so lost. I'm too far gone." But after a bit, I opened the book, and the first line read, **"Do not want to be out of your present state, because it is now that I am doing my best work in you."** I read it again. The words

## Niall

I grew up in a Catholic family in Ireland. I did everything the world said would make me happy, and yet I was pretty lost. Then, in my early 20's after a sequence of events, I began the journey of slowly piecing my life back together. Because of my own suffering, I had a growing desire to help other young people, so I applied and qualified for a position as a school counselor.

My mom, who has always been an encouragement to me, gave me a book about giving praise to God for ev-

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What most draws down graces from our dear Lord is gratitude.

*- St. Therese of Lisieux*

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were jumping off the page at me, and I started crying. I just cried and cried. I knew God was speaking directly to me.

Right then I told God I was sorry for all the things I had done and the way my life had gone — I said to Him, "I surrender everything to You now. I can't do this anymore without You." And all I can say, is that the greatest amount of love I have ever felt in my life came over me right then and there. I knew the Holy Spirit had come down. I was on my knees saying, "I give you everything Lord. I can't do it anymore." And all the anxieties and worries began to fall away. I was so overwhelmed. I knew God was there with me. He was deeply loving me in that moment. I thought — "If heaven is anything like this then there is a lot to look forward to!" I thought, "Here I am at the bottom of the barrel, and Jesus reached down, pulled me up, and touched me with such deep love."

The next day, knowing that my father and I were both to blame for the fight, I put my pride aside, and walked into his room, and said, "Dad, I'm sorry for the other day. I'm really sorry." And I reached out my hand to shake his. It was one of those few precious times in my life when I felt a real intimacy with my father. I saw his face change and soften. And I knew that the Lord had touched him too. There was tremendous healing that day.

What I quickly came to realize was that it was precisely in this prayer of thanksgiving for every good and bad thing that I was being healed. The Lord took that prayer and pruned me from all those things that were holding me back —unhealthy relationships, unresolved anger and resentment, and a way of living that would never lead me

to happiness. The moment I finally turned to Him and made an act of surrender, He took all of my sinfulness, my brokenness, all of the bad I had done in my life, and used it all — for new life. And I can honestly say, that the last four years have far, far surpassed any happiness and peace I could ever have imagined. Now I live each day with the certitude that God deeply loves us in our brokenness. And I keep my eyes focused on Him.

*Niall spent the next four summers doing missionary work as a guidance counselor in Brazil, the Phillipines, and London. He then moved to New York, and among other projects, began volunteering with the Sisters of Life, helping to conduct an RCIA program for women who are served through our Visitation Mission. During a Holy Hour with the Sisters, he experienced the Lord calling him to the priesthood. Niall is currently a seminarian at St. Joseph's Seminary for the Archdiocese of New York.*



## Kathryn

“Get out of the boat, Kathryn Cooper!” I was leaving The Source (The Sisters of Life’s monthly Holy Hour) at St. Frances de Chantal in the Bronx one evening and as I was non-challantly walking towards my car, these are the words that one of the Sisters had yelled across the street. I laughed at the time, knowing it was exactly what I was supposed to do.

When I was growing up I was often very sick. and the doctors could never really figure out what was wrong. After 18 years and two major accidents, they finally were able to diagnose a rare disease. At the time, I was angry. Sister’s comment challenged me to see and live reality as it is. She encouraged me to see beyond the here and now and to look through the eyes of God’s Providence. Sometimes God gives us a cross because He wants to bring us deeper – closer to Him. He loves us passionately and sometimes we are challenged to see this love beyond external circumstances. It’s easy to get stuck looking through our limited lenses and to question what exactly is God doing. But He wants to give us more than we can even imagine. In Eucharistic Adoration, He shows us glimpsers into reality which beckons, “I am so much more than what you can even dream to see.” He shows us abundant love as His heart is like a landscape that He wants us to explore and where we are called to ultimately rest.

*Kathryn is a longtime friend of the Sisters of Life and a Co-Worker of Life.*

## Not an disinterested God, but a passionate God who calls us to greater things.

*“Aslan is a lion — THE Lion, the Great Lion.” “Ooh” said Susan. “I’d thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion”....“Safe?” said Mr Beaver “...Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”*

*-The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis*

# SAINT IGNATIUS

## When’s the movie coming out?

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) was a hot-headed Spanish mercenary soldier. After being wounded by a cannonball in battle, he was left bedridden for months. Boredom forced him to read the only two books available to him: *The Life of Christ* and *The Lives of the Saints*, and he would flip flop between thinking about what he read, and fantasizing about chivalorous deeds (i.e. rescuing noble ladies from danger). He began to notice that, while both types of thoughts were pleasurable in the moment, he always felt dry and dissatisfied after his chivalrous fantasies, while he continued to feel uplifted and encouraged after reading about the lives of the saints. He began to ask himself: “What if I should do what St. Francis did, or what St. Dominic did?”

## The Goldmine: Discernment of Spirits

He realized that thoughts which lifted him up, inspired him, gave him peace, joy, strength, or encouragement, were of God, while thoughts which made him feel heavy, alone, empty, discouraged, or anxious, were not. Realizing he had hit upon a spiritual goldmine, St. Ignatius wrote his observations down.

## A nugget: who’s speaking?

### A. When we are heading toward God:

The evil one will harass us, place obstacles backed by false reasoning, and make us feel sad, anxious, heavy, or discouraged, whereas God will gently draw us to Himself, with consolations (every increase of faith, hope, or love), lightness, strength, and peace.

### B. If we are heading away from God:

The evil one will tempt us with promises of pleasure and gratification, while God will agitate our spirits and tug at our consciences to help us return to Him.

Needless to say, St. Ignatius put down his sword, lived in a monastery for a bit, and ended up founding the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), whose speciality it is to help people understand the movements of their own hearts and the action of God. Learning how to navigate the ups and downs of our hearts is essential for being able to recognize and reject the suggestions of the enemy, and let ourselves be led by the desires of God.

*If you want to learn more about how to figure out when it’s God speaking and when it’s the evil one, check out Fr. Timothy Gallagher’s dynamite books: The Discernment of Spirits, Discerning the Will of God, The Examen Prayer and many more at: [www.frtimothygallagher.org](http://www.frtimothygallagher.org) or listen at: [www.discerninghearts.com](http://www.discerninghearts.com)*





# When it's about more than the color of the couch



Smart, thoughtful.

Your brother spends months researching and test-driving cars to find the coolest on the market. You help your girlfriend scour every furniture store in the area to locate the perfect couch to match her living room furniture. Your parents purchase a new home which brings endless hours of looking at color swatches for just the right shade for the walls. Your cousin is getting married, and she's agonizing over her dress, flowers, and other details surrounding her wedding day.

Isn't it true, in a million ways, we strive to be smart, thoughtful, and patient in our daily decisions — I mean, after all, why rush into buying a couch — a decision you'll be living with for a long time, right?

So what about the friend who finds out that she's pregnant?



# a decision in 48 hours

## For thousands of women each day

who find themselves faced with an unplanned pregnancy, too often a decision is made with little reflection. The flood of fears and pressures that come with the discovery throw her into survival mode, affording a mere glance at the options. Within hours she schedules an abortion, thinking it offers her the only “way out,” or the simple inconsequential choice to simply become “un-pregnant.”

As we have listened to the hearts of vulnerable pregnant women throughout the years, we have come to understand that far from being inconsequential, a decision about human life, and the bonds connected to that life are eternal. In all these cases, we know how invaluable it is to support the process of making a good decision. For whatever a woman chooses, she does so as a mother, and bears the weight of that decision forever.

Amy's Story } A better way:

## Waiting on His voice

*“Spiritual hearing” is a kind of ability to recognize, among all the discordant voices that we can hear inside us, the unique, unmistakable voice of Jesus. The Holy Spirit uses for each of us, a “tone of voice” that is his alone—It has particular gentleness and power, purity and clarity. - Fr. Jacques Philippe*

**Amy never expected** that what began as a simple fever would end in a hospital bed with a choice lying before her that would shape the rest of her life.

### How did you find out that you were pregnant?

I was working that day. But I didn't feel well, so I went to the doctor, and he gave me some antibiotics. But the next day the fever was worse. I can remember being in the ER and the doctor coming in to tell me I had a kidney stone and needed an operation. But there was a problem: they couldn't operate because I was six weeks pregnant.

### How did you react to the news?

I was scared and confused. I wasn't expecting it at all. Looking back, there was always a part of me that wanted my son, even if it meant that I had to fight for him. But they told me that something could go wrong with the baby because of the surgery and that I had to have an abortion. I felt so many mixed emotions. It was like I was stuck between “should I or shouldn't I?”

### How did you make your decision?

I kept flip-flopping back and forth. The man I was with came to the hospital, but he left the decision up to me. There was so much pressure from the doctors, and I was afraid. I felt so depressed; I really didn't care about myself, but I didn't want anything to be wrong with the baby. It felt like I had no choice. I hesitated so long that the doctor called me from his home to ask: “Are you sure you are going to do it? I don't want to come in if you are going to change your mind again.”



### What happened next?

I remember lying in the hospital bed. I was in so much pain that I couldn't breathe. I kept hearing someone call my name in hallway: "Amy, Amy." I will never forget that voice. Somehow I got up and walked to the nurses' station. I was surprised to see a priest standing there, and I asked him: "Did you call me?" He said "No, I didn't call you." I told him my name. He said: "You're the next patient on my list. I was just on my way to visit you." Then he looked at me and said: "Is something troubling you? You seem so anxious."

I said, "They are telling me that I have to have an abortion, and I don't know what to do." The priest asked if he could pray with me. He laid his hand on my forehead. Then he said, "What do you feel in your heart?" He asked me if I would like to talk to a Sister who would help me sort through my feelings. So I agreed, and he called her up right there in the hospital room.

### How did your conversation with the Sister help you make up your mind?

I thought I was doing something wrong by wanting to keep the baby. I'll never forget my conversation with Sr. Lucy. I felt like there was someone who understood me, who wasn't saying: "How dare you have this baby!" I finally had the freedom to act on what I already knew in my heart.

### Where do you think the voice came from that you heard calling your name?

I couldn't have named it then, but now I would say that that it was the Holy Spirit's voice, guiding me. I never saw that priest again; I didn't know his name. But I will never forget the sound of that voice calling my name.

### Where did you hear the voice of the Enemy in the midst of your decision?

I know the devil was trying to make me afraid. I heard him speaking through the doctors. I kept remembering stories I had heard about birth defects and children with disabilities. But I'll never forget the doctor's face when I refused to sign the papers authorizing the abortion. While I was still on the phone with Sister, he walked into the room pushing a wheelchair. He said: "Are we ready to go?" When I told him that I wasn't going to do it, he was so mad. He turned beet red, like a tomato, and he yelled at me: "Do you understand what you are putting your body through? Your child is going to be retarded! We won't be held responsible." I said. "You know what? Goodbye!" and he left fuming. I could hear the Sisters cheering on the phone. After I gave birth and my son was healthy, I went to see that doctor again. I brought my son on purpose. He just stayed quiet.

### After you made your decision, were you ever tempted to change your mind?

After the surgery was successful, I felt a lot of peace, especially when I first felt the baby move and kick. But



when I was two months pregnant, the baby's father left. I felt totally betrayed and alone. That's when all the doubts starting coming back. I found myself having to make the decision over and over again. I was attacked with all these fears: "Your kid's not going to have a father. You're going to be all alone."

### How did you get through it?

I had my fears, but I also had faith. I think it was God giving me strength, giving me hope. I always felt like Anthony was mine; he was my child, and we were going to be all right. I had support from my friends and from the Sisters. Some of my co-workers threw me a baby shower, and my neighbors helped me out a lot.

### How do you think you came to have such a strong faith?

I don't really know. At that time I didn't really know the Lord. But I think that phone call at the hospital was really the beginning. It awakened a curiosity in me about God. After that when I was walking through the city I used to stop in to visit Churches and just look around. It was years later that I really had an encounter with God, and I knew that He was with me.

### Looking back on your decision, what difference do you think it has made in your life?

I feel like it was the best decision I ever made. Anthony is a character, a real jokester. He's in fifth grade now. Having Anthony taught me how to fight to be a mother. If I hadn't listened to that voice in my hospital bed, I don't know where I would be now. I've been through much worse since then, but I have learned that there is a major difference between going through things with God and without Him. There are times when my spirit is down, but I just go back and see the hand of God in my life, and I am grateful for those moments. Sometimes I ask God, "Are you still around? Do you still love me?" He takes me back and says: "Remember this? Remember that?" God is love, and He doesn't go back on His love. We do; we forget, but He doesn't.

*Amy is now married with a family. She is a beautiful witness of the Christian faith to other women who have come to her in similar circumstances. She has blessed our lives in a million ways.*

*Sr. Mary Teresa, Amy and Anthony >*



# An unexpected Sign

Raisa was overwhelmed. She was a single mom who found herself pregnant. In a moment of despair, she scheduled an abortion, but feeling conflicted, asked God for a sign. Outside the clinic, she encountered a Co-worker of Life who told her: "You are not alone. We are here to support you." That morning, Raisa recognized that this woman praying at the clinic was a messenger of hope sent by God. In her heart, Raisa wanted her baby. All she needed was someone who believed in her. Over the next several months she received lots of support – help grocery shopping, deliveries of baby clothes and diapers, and a listening ear when she was feeling down. Many of her friends and family continued to pressure her to have an abortion, but Raisa stood up to them. She had come to recognize that even in a difficult situation like her own, new life is always a gift. God had faith in her capacity as a mother, and, as she grew in her relationship with God, Raisa finally learned to believe in herself.

## YOU.

A co-worker, friend, or relative, may find herself in an unplanned pregnancy. God may be calling you to be an ambassador of hope in the midst of the crisis raging in her heart. A woman in a crisis pregnancy needs to feel understood and supported, not judged. She is considering abortion because the voices of fear and insecurity are crowding out the real desires of her heart. Rather than make a decision born of despair, you can help her to live from a place of truth and authentic freedom. Here is how you can be the voice of encouragement to counteract the voices of despair:

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### VOICE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

VS.

### VOICE OF DESPAIR

I am here  
for you.

I want to  
support you  
and this baby.

You are a  
beautiful  
strong  
woman.

**HOPE :**  
confidence  
beauty  
light  
strength  
freedom  
courage  
capacity to  
see possibilities  
what is true

#### HER SITUATION

*The people she trusted most may have abandoned or disappointed her. She needs to know that even if you can't solve all of her difficulties, you will accompany her along the way.*

*Fear is a natural response to pregnancy, even in the most ideal circumstances. As she contemplates the challenges and responsibilities of caring for a child, she needs you to help her recognize her strength and dignity as a woman and as a mother.*

*Many people believe "I will support whatever you decide" is the most caring thing to say. But what a woman most wants to hear is that she is not alone in her desire for this child and that you will be there for her.*

I'll support  
you whatever  
you decide.

You are alone.

You can't  
do this.

**DESPAIR :**  
weak  
dark  
death  
enslaved  
inability  
to see  
what is true  
and real





# Put yourself in her shoes. Share what matters.

How can I be helpful to her?

**Download the LIFE App**

Developed by FOCUS, The Fellowship of Catholic University Students, and the Sisters of Life, the app includes videos with suggestions on how to empathize with a woman in a crisis pregnancy, responses to common fears, and has the ability to locate local pregnancy resources. Download The Life App by searching **“The LIFE AppCatholic”** in your app store (available for iPhone, Android and Windows) and share it with family and friends.

## What no one is telling us.

### THE MORNING-AFTER PILL

As many as six million women in the USA have used the “morning-after pill,” now available without prescription on pharmacy shelves throughout the country. What most women do not know is that *it can actually cause an abortion*. The morning-after pill, misleadingly called “emergency contraception,” works in one of two ways: if taken prior to the release of a woman’s egg, it can prevent conception from occurring. However, *if a woman has already conceived, the hormones can prevent implantation, causing the newly conceived human embryo to be aborted*. Medical labels can be very deceptive on this point because they now choose to define pregnancy as beginning after implantation, and so by that definition the pill can’t end a “pregnancy.” What is more, the high dose of hormones plays havoc with a woman’s menstrual cycle and the long-term side effects, especially for the growing number of women using the morning-after pill multiple times a year, are not well known. Many women turn to “emergency contraception” in situations of fear and desperation, but don’t they deserve to know the potential consequences of the choice they are making?

**Do you know someone that might be pregnant and vulnerable?**

### **Our new website**

for our Visitation Mission is designed specifically to reach out to pregnant college-aged women, with resources, direction, and video testimonies. Check it out and share it! **[visitationcenterus.org](http://visitationcenterus.org)**



**THE NEW NOVICES OF  
THE SISTERS OF LIFE**

*(left to right)*

**Back row:**

*Sr. Caroline Caritas*

*Sr. Mercy Marie*

*Sr. Maria Frassati*

*Sr. Jeanne Marie*

**Middle row:**

*Sr. Celeste Mariae Therese*

*Sr. Theresa Francesca*

*Sr. Anastasia Chiara Luce*

**Front row:**

*Sr. Avelina Joseph*

*Sr. Gemma Grace Marie*

*Sr. Lucia Christi*







## THE BROCHURE

*Ann's Testimony*

I hadn't been practicing the faith for years but decided to stop into a church one afternoon to light a candle. On my way out, I paused to look at the brochure rack. There was no one around and on an impulse, I pulled one called "Hope and Healing After Abortion" off the rack. Hope, healing; two words that I never considered when I thought about my own experience of abortion so many years ago.

I shoved the brochure in my purse and went home. That night I took it out, read it, and learned that the Sisters of Life host retreats for women who are suffering after the experience of abortion. I had no idea that this was available and that healing was even possible. The experience of my abortion was like a room in my heart that I tried to avoid at all costs and had not visited in almost 40 years. This brochure slowly opened that door until I was ready to receive the mercy God wanted to give to me.

Yet, many years had passed and I didn't feel ready to look at the experience, so I put the brochure away in my closet. Every several months, I would take the brochure out and look at it. Each time I read it, I was more and more open to the possibility of healing. After three years, I made a major move, I took the brochure out of my closet and placed it on my

coffee table so I would see it more frequently. For months I would pick it up, read it and think, "maybe today I will call." After several months of working up the courage, I made a phone call to inquire about a Day of Prayer and Healing. The voice of the Sister on the line was much kinder, warmer, and gentler than I had ever imagined. She welcomed me and encouraged me to attend the day.

Finally when the day came, I arrived early and parked my car outside and watched as other women entered. I still was not 100% sure that I wanted to be a part of it. Finally, I took a deep breath and walked to the door. The Day of Prayer and Healing was the opening of a new world for me. It was as though the room that had been locked up for decades was slowly opened, and a new, pure, healing light swept through it. I met other women who understood my experience, who shared my sorrow, but who had great hope and trust in God. I went to confession and received communion; it was a moment of overwhelming peace.

When I left to go home at the end of the day, the Sisters asked me, "Did you have a good day?" I responded, "The best...it was one of the best days of my life." I have found peace, healing, and a love I never knew possible.



# evening of lights

**H** EALING WOUNDS IN FAMILIES } **Bringing Christ to College Campuses**

Although they were plugged into phones and ipods, they couldn't resist the smiling eyes, friendly waves, and religious habits. "Hey there- do you have plans this evening?" Instant surprise and not infrequently a look of delight, they would remove their earphones and say, "Are you talking to me?" Introductions, chatting, extending the invite... "You should come tonight—it's an Evening of Lights, we're having this candle-lit holy hour with Jesus, where you can bring Him anything or anyone in your family in need of healing." "Sounds awesome!" or "I need that!" or "I have work...can I still come if I'm late?"

Sr. Bethany and Sr. Maeve joined two Dominican priests and four college Missionaries with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) on the campus of Texas A&M to invite the students to encounter Jesus. They planned a time of Eucharistic Adoration with an emphasis on healing—healing wounds within and placing any brokenness in one's family at the foot of the Cross. With over 50,000 students on the campus of that state university, the harvest was ripe!

Fr. Brent and Fr. Benedict sat on park benches, in the dining hall, outside of the Student Union and heard the confessions of over 150 students! The healing ministry of Jesus through his priests had begun, and the Sisters and FOCUS Missionaries felt like those first disciples sent in advance, two by two, to prepare the way of the Lord.

As the sun set over the interfaith chapel, the candles were lit, and the monstrance was placed on the altar. Young men and women were streaming in, and before long, every seat was taken, and the students began to file along the back and the sides, even sitting down in the aisles.

Father placed Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament into the golden monstrance, and allowed each student to approach for a blessing. Like the woman of the Gospel who believed she would be healed if only she touched Jesus' garments, each was given the opportunity to reach out. And Jesus met each one.







*We're planting our feet in*

# DENVER



*Sr. Mary Louise Concepta, SV*



*Sr. Maris Stella, SV*



*Sr. Marie Anne Michela, SV*



*Sr. Fiat Marie, SV*

## A NEW FOUNDATION IN DENVER!

This September we opened a new foundation in Denver, Colorado with a primary mission of evangelization, specifically to students attending area universities. College-age women are among the most likely to consider abortion in the case of an unexpected pregnancy. We hope the presence of the Sisters of Life on campus will provide women with real life-giving alternatives. We would like to thank the people of the Archdiocese of Denver for such a warm welcome!

THE SISTERS OF LIFE  
38 Montebello Road  
Suffern, NY 10901

Printed through the generosity of the Knights of Columbus.  
Written and designed by the Sisters of Life.

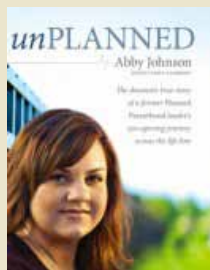
## Sisters of Life *Men's Working Retreat*

As they got off the bus, the men were unusually quiet. Many had never done anything like it before. They wondered if there would be angry words exchanged, if they would feel self-righteous or awkward, if they would be unsure of what to say. But then they got down on their knees on the sidewalk and began to pray the rosary. A few men who were experienced at counseling pregnant women approached those entering the clinic. One woman who stopped to speak with the counselors looked at the crowd in disbelief: "All these men are here for me?"

Throughout the 40 Days for Life, constant vigil is held outside abortion facilities all over the world. Men, women, and children of all faiths witness in peaceful prayer and fasting for all those who suffer from the great evil that takes place within those walls. During the 40 Days for Life Campaign last October, some fifty men attending our Working Men's Retreat found themselves unexpectedly participating in an impromptu prayerful witness outside an abortion facility in Stamford, Connecticut.

When the rosary finished, the men returned to the bus and drove on to the work site for the day. But the impact of the experience was not so easily put behind them. Seeing the reality of the clinic stimulated a deep emotional response in the men on the retreat. Some of them said afterwards that it was the most powerful moment of the retreat.

We may never know the power of that prayer and witness on the women and employees at the clinic that day. Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director turned pro-life activist, recounts in her book *Unplanned* that she heard it stated that the no-show rate at their clinics goes as high as 75% when there is someone praying outside.



*The next 40 Days for Life Campaign is scheduled for Sept. 23-Nov 1, 2015.  
Find a campaign near you: [40daysforlife.com](http://40daysforlife.com)*

# 40 days for Life

### **Annunciation**

(Motherhouse: Generalate and Novitiate)  
38 Montebello Road  
Suffern, NY 10901  
845/357-3547 Fax: 845/357-5040

### **St. Frances de Chantal Convent**

(Postulant House, Vocations)  
198 Hollywood Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10465  
718/863-2264 Fax: 718/409-2033

### **Villa Maria Guadalupe**

(Retreat House)  
159 Sky Meadow Drive  
Stamford, CT 06903  
203/329-1492 Fax: 203/329-1495

### **Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent**

(Holy Respite)  
450 West 51st Street  
New York, NY 10019  
212/397-1396 Fax: 212/397-1397

### **New York Visitation Mission**

257 East 71st Street  
New York, NY 10021  
Pregnancy help call: 212/737-0221  
toll free: 877/777-1277  
Co-workers of Life call: 347/843-8900

### **Toronto Visitation Mission**

1099 Danforth Avenue  
Toronto, ON M4J 1M5 Canada  
Pregnancy help call: 416/463-2722  
Fax: 416/463-1687

### **St. Joseph's Convent**

172 Leslie Street Toronto, ON M4M 3C7

### **Saint Catherine Laboure Convent**

11809 Claridge Road  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
301/946-1249

### **St. Mary Magdalene Convent**

2771 Zenobia Street  
Denver, CO 80212  
Denver@sistersoflife.org

### **Hope and Healing After Abortion**

toll free: 866/575-0075  
hopeandhealing@sistersoflife.org

**Website: [www.sistersoflife.org](http://www.sistersoflife.org)**