

PROJECT RACHEL MINISTRY OVERVIEW

Project Rachel is the U.S Catholic Church's abortion healing ministry. It is a diocesan-based network of specially trained priests, religious, therapists, and laypersons who provide a team response of care for those suffering in the aftermath of abortion. In addition to referring for Sacramental Reconciliation, the ministry provides an integrated network of services, including pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, support groups, retreats, and referrals to licensed mental health professionals.



Basic components of a diocesan Project Rachel Ministry:

- It is a **Diocesan** ministry with approval & oversight of the bishop & involvement of diocesan priests.
- A confidential, designated helpline is answered by screened & trained staff/volunteers.
- An integrated approach to healing provides both one-on-one and group healing opportunities like:
 - Sacramental Reconciliation
 - Retreats (one-day and/or weekend)
 - Referrals to mental health professionals
 - Support groups
 - Pastoral counseling
 - Spiritual direction
 - Prayer and liturgy
- Jesus Christ's merciful love is the foundation.

USCCB Resources

Project Rachel Ministry: A Post-Abortion Resource Manual for Priests and Project Rachel Leaders

Committee on Clergy, Vocations and Consecrated Life and the Committee on Pro-Life Activities

- Contains description of abortion aftermath for mothers and fathers of aborted children, as well as others impacted by abortion.
- Provides an overview of issues to be considered in pastoral counseling.
- Addresses concerns that come up in Sacramental Reconciliation.
- Offers suggestions for creating a welcoming parish environment to foster more frequent recourse to Reconciliation and to direct those in need to contact their diocesan Project Rachel Ministry for confidential help.
- Suggestions on building and strengthening the diocesan ministry.
- Canon Law on abortion.
- Additional Resources, for example, on abortion following a poor prenatal diagnosis.

To receive a copy of the Resource Manual, please contact Mary McClusky at mmclusky@usccb.org.

USCCB Websites: www.HopeAfterAbortion.org and www.esperanzaposaborto.org

These sites (English and Spanish) provide contact information for diocesan Project Rachel Ministries which offer a confidential, dedicated phone help line staffed by screened and trained staff/volunteers. The sites explain the normal reactions to involvement in abortion and feature helpful Scripture passages and prayers and healing stories of those who have been assisted by diocesan ministry (unique visitors average 85,000 each month on the English site).

Project Rachel Ministry Print Brochures and Prayer Cards

For parishes, health care offices, etc. These resources offer a sensitive approach to the impact of abortion on different people and provide assurance that Divine Mercy is available to every repentant heart.

USCCB Orientations and Training Videos

With the assistance of experienced Project Rachel Ministry directors in several dioceses, the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities offers a bi-annual national orientation in Washington, D.C. for diocesan leaders. The 3-day training for staff, priests, and lay professional therapists helps ensure that the diocesan Project Rachel Ministry has a solid foundation, is better able to respond to the differing needs of individuals who come for help, and incorporates best practices. Over 30 videos of previous gatherings are available on a private, log-in accessible web site for diocesan use to educate ministry teams and develop local trainings. The next national orientation is February 18-21, 2020 in the Brookland/Catholic University of America neighborhood.

Starting or strengthening a diocesan Project Rachel Ministry:

Establish Ongoing Prayer Support:

Enlist religious communities, parishes, Respect Life committees, etc.

Review the Resource Manual:

Step-by-step instructions can be found in Section Five on “The Diocese.”

Establish a leadership team for the ministry (priests, staff, volunteers, related agency leaders).

Distribute the Resource Manual to all priests and diocesan leaders to be involved in the ministry.

Offer Orientations:

Invite priests, deacons, screened & licensed mental health professionals, screened staff/volunteers.

Ensure Confidentiality:

Staff a dedicated phone line used only for Project Rachel callers.

Establish safeguards for confidentiality of files and of conversations, including guidelines for parish personnel where parish priests take referrals.

For Assistance with Project Rachel Ministry:

For more information on developing a diocesan abortion healing ministry, please contact Mary McClusky at mmclusky@usccb.org.