



Healing Wounded Hearts - Fr Derrick Cameron

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It has been a privilege to be on retreat with women who have had an abortion. I have not cried so many tears in one weekend in a long time. It was an emotional roller coaster: tears of sorrow and tears of joy, and sometimes both at the same time - almost like eating a sugarcoated sour candy.

Arriving as a “quasi” participant, I feared the women would not open up to be healed because they saw me as a priest who would be both judgmental and condemning. My first experience came the first night at dinner, when one of the women at the table could not make eye-contact with me during the meal.

As time went on, however, the women who were apprehensive, nervous and wounded began to open up like blossoms. One by one, they told their stories - opening up on their own accord and in their own time. These guilt-filled, fear-laden women were being released from their chains; they were overtaken by freedom and joy.

Some of them had multiple abortions, some had an abortion 30 years ago, some could not even say the word “abortion” and some could hardly even step inside a church for fear of hearing words of condemnation. Some were so paralyzed by fear that they did not allow the children to whom they gave birth to grow spiritually.

As they opened up, they allowed a certain fragrance of healing to begin (bringing tears to our eyes). All this changed in one weekend: the Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat. These women became the most precious and beautiful flowers in the vineyard as compared to a flower garden.

During the retreat, a beautiful analogy was given: sin (in this case: abortion) is like compost. Sometimes a person may bury their abortion under many layers of stuff in their lives. Like compost, the stuff at the bottom of the pile is stinky, steamy and rotting. God can use the ugliness of the compost for rich fertilizer for the vineyard. As Satan uses sin to destroy our relationship with God, God uses the same instrument to bring about a greater good. These women can use this ugliness, through the grace of God and transformative life, as a way to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God, thus developing a deeper and more trusting relationship with God. Now these women will be powerful witnesses of God’s love and mercy to the world.

This richness, like compost, yields more fruit in the vineyard when it is spread around.

I encourage those who have been involved in an abortion (men and women), and those who know of someone who is suffering from an abortion, to learn more about this healing opportunity.

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