

# Grief to Grace



## *Healing the Wounds of Abuse Reclaiming the Gift of Human Dignity*

*United with the broken Body of Christ, we die like the grain of wheat.  
By the power of Christ's Passion, we share in His Resurrection and  
are transformed into bread for the world.*

Grief to Grace Ministries  
743 Roy Rd  
King of Prussia, PA 19406  
610.203.2002  
Info@GriefftoGrace.org



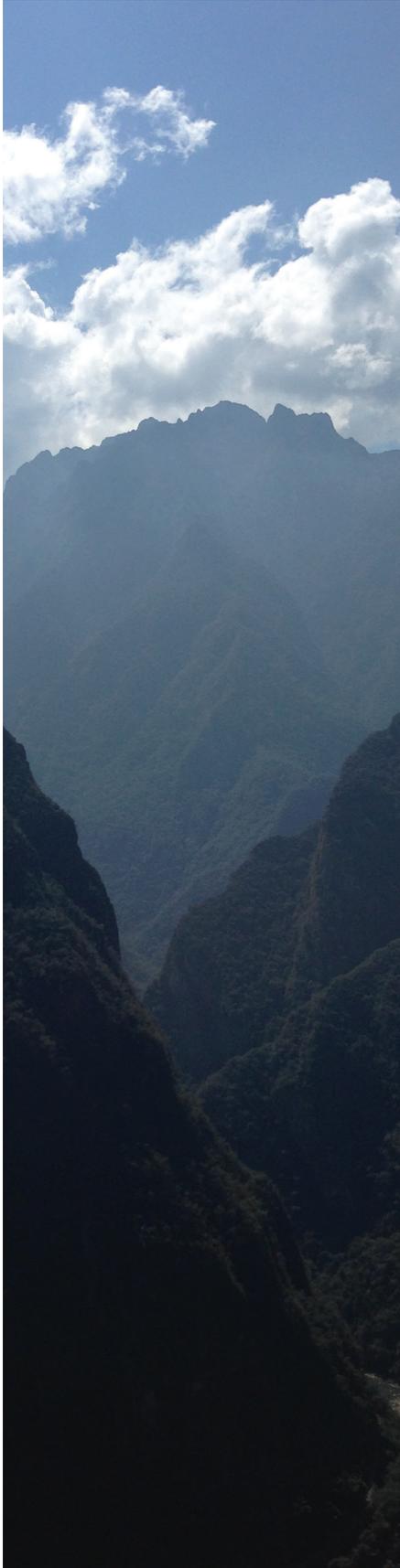
## DESCRIPTION

*Grief to Grace* was created by Dr. Theresa Burke after witnessing how many women in her *Rachel's Vineyard* retreats had experienced sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse. A recognized leader in the field of trauma and treatment, Dr. Burke developed this unique and empirically validated retreat program to end the isolation and secrets of abuse. *Grief to Grace* integrates the latest trauma-sensitive psychology and neuroscience with *Living Scriptures*—meditations that immerse the participants in Gospel scenes where they meet Jesus personally.

Our group model creates a sacred space for people with shared histories of abuse and trauma and has built-in accountability and safety for the participants. In this environment, retreatants are gently walked through their past traumas and grief in God's presence and with reverence, empathy, and confidentiality. *Living Scriptures*, combined with journaling, group activities, therapeutic facilitation, somatic therapy, cognitive restructuring, discussions, and grief work, facilitates authentic healing and freedom that's grounded in Jesus Christ, the Sacraments (for Catholics), and the word of God.

Because of the unique training and methods we use, our retreats have proven to be remarkably effective in facilitating emotional, psychological, and spiritual recovery. Each retreat is led by a compassionate team consisting of a counselor, lay women and men, and pastor/clergy who have been trained in up-to-date trauma practices under the direction of Dr. Burke. Many of them also experienced trauma in their lives and found healing through our retreats.

*Grief to Grace* is open to people of all faiths and walks of life. Each retreat provides a five- to seven-day psychological and spiritual journey that helps participants reclaim their lost dignity as daughters and sons of the Living God. It is appropriate for anyone who has suffered physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual abuse, including human trafficking, rape, incest, neglect, abuse from clergy, or other forms of traumatic violation or degradation—and for people who have spent years in talk therapy but still struggle to move beyond their traumatic experience.



# HISTORY

*Grief to Grace—Healing the Wounds of Abuse* was first piloted in July 2005 in the Diocese of Fargo, North Dakota. Soon after, another Grief to Grace Pilot Program was hosted by The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. As Dr. Burke continued offering pilot programs, the retreats and training seminars drew Victim Assistance Coordinators and participants from throughout the United States, Ireland, England, Russia, France, Australia, and Canada. The Diocese of Nelson, British Columbia, then led by Bishop John Corriveau, OFM Cap., became the first founding partner for the work of *Grief to Grace*. He states:

*We wish to contribute to the healing of those who have suffered the trauma of sexual abuse in our society. The Diocese of Nelson sponsors the program, Grief to Grace. Grief to Grace brings the healing power of the Cross of Christ coupled with approved counseling methods to those who have suffered sexual abuse either by a priest or anyone else. The priests of our diocese wish to be worthy of your respect and trust. For this reason, they wholeheartedly accept and support these measures. I ask your prayers for all victims of sexual abuse...and for each other as we strive to move once again from the Cross to new life.*

In addition to our home site in Philadelphia, PA, retreats can be found in the following locations:

## UNITED STATES

Arizona  
California  
Louisiana  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
New Jersey  
Oklahoma  
Texas

## INTERNATIONAL

Argentina      Mexico  
Australia\*      Nicaragua  
Austria\*      Northern Ireland\*  
Canada      Panama\*  
Ecuador\*      Poland  
El Salvador      Romania\*  
England      Puerto Rico\*  
France      Scotland\*  
Germany\*      Slovenia  
Guatemala\*      Spain  
Jamaica

*Grief to Grace* is available in Catholic, Interdenominational, and Spanish format.

\* Denotes sites that are in development

# What you *didn't* know...

Abuse is not confined to any particular race, social, or economic demographic. The numbers below represent only the epicenter of a painful reality. The repercussions of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse can be lifelong, affecting the perception of self and others in such a way as to color a person's understanding of his or her own dignity and all subsequent relationships.

1 in 4  and  
1 in 6   
will be sexually abused before the age of 18.

Every   
seconds  
an American is sexually assaulted.

- More than 50% of college sexual assaults occur in either August, September, October, or November.
- 39% of 14-year-olds report having seen porn, with about one-third of young people saying they had seen it for the first time at age 12 or younger.
- Minors who view pornography and other sexualized media are more accepting of sexual violence, and more likely to believe "rape myths" (such as the myth that "women enjoy being raped").
- There are more than 42 million pornographic websites.
- More people view internet pornography every month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter **combined**.
- One out of every six American women have been a victim of attempted or completed rape.
- 54% of sexual assaults occur in victims ages 18-34.
- Adolescents who become sexually active at young ages are more likely to have experienced forced sex. Nearly 75% of women who had sexual intercourse before they turned 14, and 60% who did so before age 15, reported having a coercive sexual experience.
- An estimated 600,000 children (unique incidents) in the US were victims of abuse and neglect in 2021. Three-fourths (76%) of victims are neglected, 16% are physically abused and 10% are sexually abused.

## The porn industry



generates more income than the **combined** revenues of the NFL, NBA, and MLB. In the USA alone, the porn industry generates between \$15 and \$97 billion **a year**. Every **second**, \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography.

## Among undergraduate students,



experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation.

- The ILO (International Labor Organization) estimates there were 24.9 million victims of human trafficking around the world in 2016 (this includes both sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor exploitation, both in the private sector and state-imposed).<sup>1</sup>
- The ILO also estimates there were 4.8 million sex trafficking victims experiencing commercial sexual exploitation around the world in 2016.<sup>1</sup>
- Globally, an estimated 736 million women—almost one in three—have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30% of women aged 15 and older). This figure does not include sexual harassment. The rates of depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV are higher in women who have experienced violence compared to women who have not, as well as many other health problems that can last after the violence has ended.

<sup>1</sup> Based on internal strife and outbreak of war in various countries, the pandemic, and changing global laws, ILO's most recent statistics are dated 2016 and are estimates.

"Totally awesome! So Christ centered and spiritual!!!! It has been an incredible gift to go on this healing journey. The love and acceptance radiated to each hurting man and woman."

"I can't believe how much better I feel. It seems like the Lord changes you even more when you **don't** want to be taught. I appreciated all the sharing; it was great to hear others' responses. This experience was wonderful. Thank you."

"Inspiring! It gave each of us a chance for new life. I loved the Living Scriptures!"

"Each and every one of the Living Scriptures was so anointed. I loved each of the activities/exercises that followed. A "hands-on" experience that penetrated to the soul - the water, the rocks, the pictures of our wounded selves we affixed to the cross—all so powerful. The journey through the Sorrowful Mysteries and joining in the suffering of Jesus was very healing for me."



## TESTIMONIES

"Because of this retreat, I don't hate God anymore."

"This retreat was specific to my personal needs in woundedness—which nothing has ever touched so completely -- even though I have worked for 18 years on inner healing issues through therapy, Al-Anon, Life in the Spirit Seminars, contemplative prayer and journaling."

"Incredible! Each session went deeper and pulled my emotions up and out of the darkness. I have never been on a retreat like this. Your insight and knowledge is amazing. You seemed to cover most areas in the lives of abused women and men. Only the Spirit working in you could have created something such as this. Thank you!"

"To be completely honest, I did not want to come to this retreat. I was hardened as I walked in. But this retreat really opened me up. The Holy Spirit spoke to me so clearly and beautifully. It really started the healing process and a new confidence in me. This has truly changed my life."

"It was more than I could imagine. The exercises made it so real."

"This retreat was very loving. Very hard work, but in a good way. The way it was done made it easy to get in touch with your pain."

"Excellent—this process stimulated so many feelings! I appreciated the non-coercive environment and the unconditional acceptance."

"This was one of the most powerful, life giving, excruciating, invigorating retreats I have ever experienced."

"Uplifting!!!! A true learning experience. A place I could be completely open and be accepted by others."

"I still, and will forever, reap the blessings of what I received on the Grief to Grace weekend."



"Flawlessly given!" "Awesome!"

"Everything was so deep and meaningful. God was truly present!"

"My heart is a muscle. Grief to Grace was like a deep tissue massage on my heart. It felt sore and worked over. As this soreness subsided, then my heart felt freer. Free to love and be loved. Free to be loved by God and others. Free to love those that God has entrusted into my care and free to love those that cross my path. Thank you for this massage! Thanks be to God!"

"I wouldn't change one dot or one title of this tool. This is a song of healing in the various symbolic and somatic forms you have heard directly from your heart and God's—truly!"

"This retreat was excellent. It was very spiritual and helped me to get closer to God. I found the Living Scriptures very meaningful—bringing us into the actual stories."



# Dr. Theresa Burke

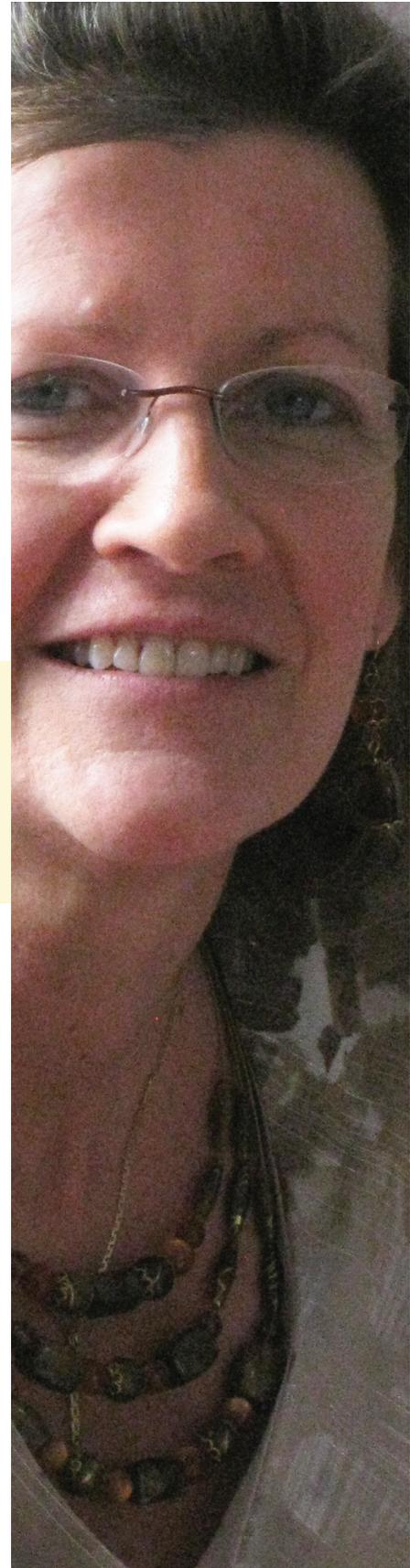
Dr. Burke is the founder of the Living Scripture Institute™ which serves as the International training arm for the programs she has created: *Rachel's Vineyard: Healing the Pain of Abortion™*; *Grief to Grace: Healing the Wounds of Abuse™*; and *Duty to Heal: Finding Peace for a Soldier's Heart™*. Professionally crafted and doctrinally sound, these ministries provide a unique sensory based treatment that integrates psychological and spiritual dimensions in a retreat setting. Dr. Burke provides clinical training for mental health professionals and clergy/religious. Her ministries are currently offered in more than 33 languages throughout the world.

Dr. Burke has lectured and trained professionals internationally on trauma and healing. She presented as an expert for the 2011 Pontifical Academy of Life's General Assembly, has appeared on EWTN, Focus on the Family, PBS, the Religion and Ethics News Weekly, and has been interviewed for numerous radio, television, magazine, and news stories.

Her counseling work has focused on trauma, marriage and family issues, bereavement, pregnancy loss, sexual abuse, eating disorders, and anxiety management. And her books include *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion* with David C. Reardon (Acorn Books), *The Contraception of Grief: The Genesis of Anguish Conceived by Abortifacients and Sterilization*, *Sharing the Heart of Christ* with Kevin Burke, and the manuals for each of her ministries.

She is a Nationally Certified Psychologist, a Certified Diplomat of the American Psychotherapy Association, a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Board-Certified Clinical Psychotherapist, a Certified Complex Trauma Professional, Certified Family Trauma Professional, Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, and a Diplomat of the American Board of Forensic Counselors. Dr. Burke holds membership in the Society for Catholic Social Scientists and the American Association of Christian Counselors. She has recently been selected as a lecturer for the 2024 Conference of the Catholic Psychotherapy Association.

Dr. Burke is the proud mother of five children and six grandchildren.





## Fr. Dominic Allain

Fr. Dominic of the Archdiocese of Southwark, England, is the International Pastoral Director of Grief to Grace. He holds a diploma in counselling from the Westminster Pastoral Foundation and is an Associate of King's College, London. He has completed courses in spiritual direction at the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Nebraska, and on the ministry of Deliverance at Rome's Pontifical University Regina Apostolorum. He is in demand as a retreat master, and his book, "Diary of a City Priest," shares reflections on his experiences as a pastor. He can be reached at [info@griegtograceuk.org](mailto:info@griegtograceuk.org) or at 020 8154 2719



## Fr. Matias Jurado

Fr. Matias is the Grief to Grace Pastoral Director for Latin America. At a young age he received his calling to become a priest. In order to better understand the people he would accompany, prior to his ordination he studied communications and worked as a journalist. Ordained by (then) Msgr. Jorge Mario Bergoglio, he worked as a priest in the Sanctuary of Life (San Ramón Nonato Church). He runs Rachel's Vineyard and Grief to Grace in Argentina, is the chaplain of three secondary schools, and is a parochial vicar in San Isidro Labrador Church. He can be reached at [Padrematias@gmail.com](mailto:Padrematias@gmail.com)





If you or someone you love has suffered from abuse, you can reclaim your dignity and experience hope and healing. Call our hotline, (610) 203-2002, or email us at [info@griefftoGrace.org](mailto:info@griefftoGrace.org).

Or, if you would like information about bringing *Grief to Grace* to your area, please visit our website ([GriefToGrace.org](http://GriefToGrace.org)) or email [newsites@griefftoGrace.org](mailto:newsites@griefftoGrace.org).



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**Statistics Sources:**

David Cantor, Bonnie Fisher, Susan Chibnall, Reanna Townsend, et. al. Association of American Universities (AAU), Report on the AAU Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (January 17, 2020).  
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