



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Affirmation for  
Catholics Who  
Choose Abortion

CATHOLICS  
FOR  
CHOICE

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If you would like to refer to this publication, please cite as: Catholics for Choice.  
2025. *You Are Not Alone*. Washington, DC. © Copyright Catholics for Choice, 2025.  
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# You Are Not Alone.



Welcome to our **community of Catholics** who believe that all people deserve the right to decide whether, when, and how to have children.

Whether you're Catholic, used to be Catholic, or you have Catholic loved ones, **we're here for you.**

It's OK if your relationship to faith is complicated. It's OK if you're not sure how to feel about abortion. It's OK if the word "abortion" doesn't match your experience. You don't need to name it. You don't need to feel a certain way. **You just need to be.**

## **Catholics have abortions.**

The stigma around abortion can make it hard for Catholics to talk about. But abortion is incredibly common, and everyone knows Catholics who've had abortions.

**In the U.S., 1 in 4 abortion patients is Catholic (Guttmacher Institute 2020).**

People of faith have abortions all the time — in fact, most people who have abortions are religious. Anyone who goes to Mass is surrounded by Catholics who've had abortions.

**63%**

**OF CATHOLICS  
SUPPORT ABORTION  
IN ALL OR MOST CASES.**

**(PRRI 2023; APNORC 2022)**

**1 IN 4**

**ABORTION PATIENTS  
IDENTIFIES AS  
CATHOLIC.**

**(Guttmacher 2020)**

**ONLY  
1 IN 10**

**CATHOLICS THINK  
ABORTION SHOULD  
BE ILLEGAL.**

**(PRRI 2023; APNORC 2022)**

**87%**

**OF LATINX CATHOLICS  
SAY THEY WOULD  
SUPPORT A LOVED  
ONE WHO HAD AN  
ABORTION.**

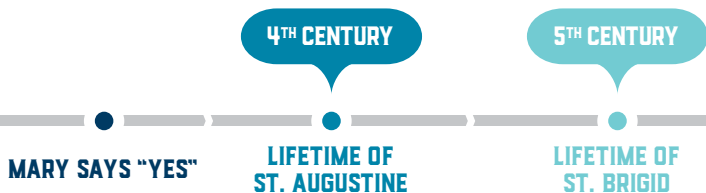
**(PerryUndem 2018)**

## Most Catholics support reproductive rights.

From the time Mary said “yes” when asked if she would bear the son of God, our faith tradition has affirmed the right to choose whether to become pregnant. As Catholics, we are called to honor human dignity, and that means **supporting people as they make decisions about their lives.**

We love the many teachings, writings, and traditions that make up our faith, and we also know that Catholicism is more than what the official doctrine says.

The church is the body of Christ. Time and time again, polls show that our church supports people who choose abortion.



## **For most of church history, abortion was not severely condemned.**

**Both St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, two of the most honored theologians of all time, taught that the fetus did not have a soul until later in pregnancy.**

This was the most common belief among church leaders until 1869, when Pope Pius IX announced a ban on abortion. That ban wasn't added to church law until 1917, barely over a century ago.

The lives of the saints also show that abortion has always been a part of life. St. Brigid, a 5th century nun, miraculously made a pregnancy disappear. St. Hildegard, a 13th century theologian, wrote about herbal abortion remedies in her medical textbooks.



13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

LIFETIME OF  
ST. HILDEGARD

13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

LIFETIME OF  
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

## **As Catholics for Choice, we support you.**

You know what's best for yourself and your loved ones. No matter how you feel about your decision, we are with you as faithful Catholics. We believe this because we've studied church history, consulted Scripture, and prayed for guidance.

In 2016, Pope Francis made a permanent rule that any priest could forgive those who have had abortions and welcome them into the church.



1869

**POPE PIUS IX  
BANS ABORTION**

1917

**ABORTION BAN  
BECOMES CHURCH LAW**



Even with that change, however, it is important to remember that the decision to have an abortion is between you and God, and that **God will still love you and accept you** whether or not you ever speak to a priest.

Catholicism is based on a **deep respect for conscience**, which the catechism says must be the final judge in any decision we make.

Anyone who follows their conscience to have an abortion hasn't sinned.

At the end of the day, **you belong to this church. Your baptism cannot be undone.** God understands your situation better than anyone, and no one can separate you from God's love (Romans 8:38-39).

***Abortion is a moral choice.  
God loves people who have abortions.***



2016

**POPE FRANCIS ALLOWS  
FORGIVENESS FOR ABORTION**

2022

**ROE V. WADE  
OVERTURNED**

# KATE'S STORY

*It's normal to pray  
during an abortion.*

“I’m an abortion doula, which means that I go into abortion clinics and support people during the procedure.

I also help people find abortion medication since reproductive healthcare has become so hard to access.

Every clinic shift, I serve someone who thinks that they’re the only person from their parish who would choose to have an abortion. Let me tell you this: **Abortion clinics across the country are filled with Catholics just like you.**

I've held the hands of so many Catholics during their abortions. I've stood in the clinic and prayed with people who knew that they'd made the right decision for themselves and their loved ones.

I am called to do this work because I know that abortion is healthcare. To me, there is no act more loving than to give your unconditional, wholehearted support to people at every stage of their reproductive journeys.

**Being an abortion doula  
and loving my neighbor  
are one and the same."**

***Faithful Catholics  
have abortions.***



# GABRIELLE'S STORY

*It's normal to struggle  
with the decision.*

*Sadly, it's not typical to have a priest as accepting  
as this storyteller's, but you might be surprised  
by how supportive your community can be.*

“In my early 20s I was employed in a low-wage job with no health benefits. Throughout this time, I relied on Planned Parenthood as the only healthcare provider I could afford for any kind of care.

I found myself in an abusive relationship and an unstable living situation. As I worked toward finding the courage to leave, I discovered I was pregnant. **I wasn't ready to be a parent. I could hardly take care of myself.**

I also knew a child would be a way to trap me, keeping me poor and dependent. **And I knew that it was no kind of life for a child.** I turned to my local Planned Parenthood office, where I found kindness, support, and a necessary abortion.

While I have ultimately kept this decision to myself, when I think about what might have been, **I never regret the choice I made.**

Even so, it was with trepidation that, 17 years after my abortion, I entered a confessional. The welcome that I received from my parish priest was unwavering — and surprising.

When we talked about why it had been so long since my last confession, I did not feel the anger or judgment I feared from him. I felt only the grace and compassion that my faith taught me.



**My Catholic faith is an integral part of who I am, but it is not without an internal struggle.** The church I was raised in judged women harshly, and current church hierarchy still does.

However, a few years ago at Mass, flanked by my children, I wept silently as my parish priest acknowledged how much pressure and poor treatment the church has put on women over the centuries.

Even as I see lawmakers in my state and federal government use the church hierarchy to push pro-birth agendas, I still believe there is hope for us to **move forward with grace and compassion.**

And I know for certain that I never want my own daughter to carry doubt or shame about doing what she knows to be right — so we will have uncomfortable conversations and open discussions when the church gets it wrong.”

***Catholic mothers have abortions.***



**FAITHFUL  
CATHOLICS**

*have abortions*

**CATHOLIC  
PARENTS**

*can choose  
abortion*

**CATHOLIC  
DOCTORS**

*support abortion  
access*

# DR. JEN'S STORY

*It's normal to change your mind about abortion.*

“I am an OB-GYN and complex family planner, which means that I provide birth control, give pap smears, do cancer screenings, deliver babies, and I also provide abortion care. I was raised Catholic, and Catholicism is a huge part of what formed my identity. It's one of the main reasons that I do this work.

**I didn't always support abortion access.**

As a first generation Cuban American, I grew up in a conservative household and was once an anti-abortion activist. When I was 19, my fiancé and I were planning on abstaining from sex until marriage because of the teachings of the church.



But after a lot of thought, we decided that we wanted to have sex. I actually asked my dad for permission first. But unfortunately, after the first time, I needed the morning-after pill. I went to a family planning clinic that also provided abortions. I had to walk through protesters screaming horrible things at me, and I remembered thinking, ‘I’m one of you guys! I’m pro-life too!’

But when I entered the clinic, I realized that nobody could tell the difference between me and the other people in the waiting room. I didn’t know who was there for a pap smear, for contraception, or for an abortion. I had judged people for so long. **I thought that I had the right idea as a faithful Catholic.**

Many years later, when I was becoming a doctor, I cared for a patient who was having an induction abortion — we had to induce labor to end a complicated pregnancy that had no possibility of viability.



The person who was supervising me refused to do the abortion. I was on the night shift, and my supervisor left me by myself, abandoning the patient and abandoning me. It was the first abortion I was participating in.

After the procedure, the woman wanted to hold her baby. The baby was quite anomalous, and I was nervous about what she might think. But I wrapped it up as best as I could and gave it to her. This woman gazed down at her baby and said, ‘Look at how beautiful my daughter is.’

And in that moment, I realized that I could never understand **the complexity of reproduction, love, and life** the way that this woman did. She loved her daughter so deeply that she ended the pregnancy.

In that moment, my life changed. I decided to provide abortions because of the Catholic values instilled in me — justice, fairness,

and compassion for my fellow human beings. My time on this earth is better spent  
**receiving people with love rather than  
pushing them away in judgment.**

And even though this story involved a case of fetal anomaly, I realized that any reason to have an abortion is a good reason. The people who come to me for abortion care know what they need.

When I was a young anti-abortion activist, I believed that I was pro-life, but now I understand that providing reproductive care is the most pro-life thing I possibly can do.

When a patient comes to me, I help them. I don't judge them. **They are the experts of their own lives."**

***Catholic doctors support  
abortion access.***



# Affirmations



*You can say these affirmations looking into a mirror, to a lit candle, after praying by yourself, with a rosary, or with a loved one.*

I know myself and my life best.

I am loved.

I am clothed with strength.

“Strength and dignity are her clothing,  
and she laughs at the time to come”  
(Proverbs 31:25).

Today I feel \_\_\_\_\_.  
It is OK to feel \_\_\_\_\_.

God is with me.

I deserve dignity.

My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

I did what I needed to do. I made the decision I needed to make.

I am good.



Add your own affirmations here:

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**"FOR I AM CONVINCED  
THAT NEITHER DEATH,  
NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS,  
NOR RULERS, NOR THINGS  
PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO  
COME, NOR POWERS, NOR  
HEIGHT, NOR DEPTH, NOR  
ANYTHING ELSE IN ALL  
CREATION, WILL BE ABLE  
TO SEPARATE US FROM THE  
LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST  
JESUS OUR LORD."**

**- Romans 8:38-39**

# A PRAYER OF ACCOMPANIMENT



God of care,  
be with me  
as I enter this clinic  
knowing what I need.

God of love,  
steady my hands  
smile through  
the abortion providers  
whom you have called  
to walk with me today.

Spirit of God,  
be with me now  
on this day  
and in those to come.

Amen.

# VIRGEN DE GUADALUPE, PRAY FOR US



Virgen de Guadalupe,  Madre libre de Dios,  guarda este momento  de libertad guiada por mi conciencia y por tu espíritu de  equidad y bondad.  Tiende tu protección sobre mí  para que mi cuerpo sane y  bendice a quienes me han acompañado  en el camino de ejercer el derecho dado por Dios a decidir.  Amén.	Virgen de Guadalupe,  Liberated mother of God,  savor this moment  of freedom guided by my conscience and by your spirit  of fairness and kindness.  Protect me  and let my body heal  and bless those who have accompanied me  in embracing my God-given right to decide.  Amen.
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# ST. BRIGID, PRAY FOR US



*St. Brigid, patron saint of fertility and children, performed a miracle — she caused a pregnancy to vanish. She shows us that abortion is a part of life.*

You were a  
woman of peace.

You brought  
harmony where  
there was conflict.

You brought light  
to the darkness.

You brought hope  
to the downcast.

May the mantle of  
your peace cover those  
who are troubled and  
anxious, and may  
peace be firmly  
rooted in our hearts  
and in our world.

Inspire us to act justly  
and to reverence all  
God has made.

Brigid, you were a  
voice for the wounded  
and the weary.

Strengthen what  
is weak within us.  
Calm us into a  
quietness that  
heals and listens.

May we grow each  
day into greater  
wholeness in mind,  
body, and spirit.

Amen.

**"ST. BRIGID, WHO IS MY  
PATRON SAINT, WAS ALSO  
KNOWN TO PERFORM  
ABORTIONS. SHE KNEW I WAS  
IN TROUBLE AND HELPED ME  
FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DO  
WHAT I NEEDED TO DO."**

**— Kieran Mailman, Georgia**



# A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY TOWARD REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE



*Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Kaeton, a member of the Religious Community for Reproductive Choice, offers this prayer for the holistic reproductive health of all.*

Holy, gracious and  
loving God

You are wise beyond  
our knowing

You have gifted us with  
intelligence, memory,  
reason, and skill.

You fill our lives with  
experiences in which  
we may freely use  
these gifts.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

Before we were born,  
you knew us.

You know our  
deepest thoughts,  
our fiercest passions,  
our desperate longings,  
our ancient hurts,  
our wildest dreams and  
our strongest fears.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

When we were being  
shaped and formed  
in the secrets of our  
mothers' womb

You also knit together  
in us strong threads  
of liberation and  
justice, will and grace,  
and set us free to live  
our lives as human  
beings fully alive.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

We are complex beings,  
living complicated lives.

Give us the courage  
to discern what is  
right and what is  
good, knowing that  
the two may not  
always be the same.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

Help us — and help  
us help others —  
to respect all of life,  
especially the lives of  
women who have been  
denied justice, their  
intelligence questioned,  
their choices limited,  
their freedom denied.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.

Inspire our minds,  
fire our spirits, and  
strengthen our wills  
that justice and  
compassion may always  
be our companions on  
this journey and we may  
know your peace.

We are fearfully and  
wonderfully made.



# BENEDICTION



*Julia, a hospital chaplain, offers this Benediction  
to Catholics in the labor and delivery unit  
experiencing the end of a pregnancy.*

May you rest.

May you know your goodness.

May you remember that you  
are the beloved of God.

May you be gentle with your body.

May you feel God's unceasing  
love in the days to come

And may the breath of the Holy Spirit  
and the wind of the day

Remind you again, again that  
you are never alone.

Amen.

***In the United States, 1 in 4 abortion patients identifies as Catholic.***

***We know people who have had abortions are in the pews, reading from the lectern, and teaching Sunday school.***

***If you've had an abortion or abortions, you are not alone. If you're deciding what to do, you are not alone.***

***As Catholics for Choice, we support abortion rights because of our faith, not in spite of it. Our Catholic faith calls us to be with you, no matter what.***

***Yours in solidarity,  
Catholics for Choice***

Catholics for Choice — which serves the pro-choice Catholic majority — **encounters, educates, and emboldens** people of faith who support reproductive freedom.

Catholics for Choice believes **healthcare is a human right** — and that **includes access to abortion**.

Our faith calls us to **affirm reproductive and religious freedom** as essential to Catholic social justice.



**Looking for a place to share your story?**

Speak out as a pro-choice Catholic and tell us why you support abortion access.



[www.catholicsforchoice.org/stories](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/stories)  
[info@catholicsforchoice.org](mailto:info@catholicsforchoice.org)

