



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Affirmation for
Catholics Who
Choose Abortion

CATHOLICS
FOR
CHOICE

www.catholicsforchoice.org
info@catholicsforchoice.org
(202) 986-6093

Facebook: Catholics for Choice
Twitter: @Catholic4Choice
TikTok: @Catholics4Choice
Instagram: @Catholic4Choice



2000 14th St NW Suite 104 | PO Box 73008
Washington, DC 20056

If you would like to refer to this publication, please cite as: Catholics for Choice.
2022. You Are Not Alone. Washington, DC. © Copyright Catholics for Choice, 2022.
All rights reserved. ISBN 978-0-9984816-0-9

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 2016).

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.

75%
OF CATHOLICS
SUPPORT LEGAL
ABORTION IN AT LEAST
SOME SITUATIONS.
(Gallup 2018)

ONLY 10%
OF CATHOLICS THINK
ABORTION SHOULD
BE ILLEGAL.
(Pew 2022)

1 IN 4
ABORTION PATIENTS
IDENTIFIES AS
CATHOLIC.
(Guttmacher 2016)

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.

4TH CENTURY

MARY SAYS “YES”

LIFETIME OF ST. AUGUSTINE

5TH CENTURY

LIFETIME OF ST. BRIGID

13TH CENTURY

LIFETIME OF
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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

Until recently, Catholic leaders taught that the morality of abortion depended on the stage of pregnancy. **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,** so abortion early in pregnancy was not considered ending a life as Catholic leaders say today.

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 church has never formally excommunicated someone for having an abortion.

You may have heard that having an abortion will get you excommunicated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that the type of excommunication that an abortion can cause is “*latae sententiae*,” literally meaning “a sentence already carried out,” which means that no human person officially excommunicates you.

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

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.***

1869

POPE PIUS IX
BANS ABORTION

1917

ABORTION BAN
BECOMES CHURCH LAW

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:


A PRAYER OF ACCOMPANIMENT



**“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

God of care,
be with me
as I enter this clinic
knowing what I need.
God of love,
steady my hands
smile down through those
and 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.



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.”

— Kara Mailman, Georgia



A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY TOWARD REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE



Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Kaeton, a member of the Religious Coalition 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.

Abortion is part of the life of the church, and we are tired of the clergy stigmatizing women and people who have had abortions, rather than listening to them.

As Catholics for Choice, we support abortion rights because of our faith, not in spite of it. We are working for a world where all people everywhere can freely determine their sexual and reproductive destinies with dignity, respect, and affirmation.

Yours in solidarity,



***Jamie L. Manson
President, 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/share-your-story
info@catholicsforchoice.org

