

FAITHFUL CATHOLICS HAVE ABORTIONS

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

About Catholics for Choice

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

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

A History of Catholics for Choice

Catholics for Choice (previously Catholics for a Free Choice) was founded in 1973, the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Roe v. Wade*. A group of ordinary Catholics decided to question Catholic teaching on abortion after witnessing the suffering of women who were denied abortion or forced to seek illegal procedures. In 1973 and today, our message is the same: We ask Catholic leaders to reckon with the truth that there are a plurality of beliefs about abortion within our church and that many good and faithful Catholic have chosen and will choose abortion.

The Synod on Synodality has the potential to reshape the life and future of the church in ways unseen since Vatican II.

Pope Francis's invitation to answer Catholic social teaching's call to participation is commendable, as is the instruction that special care should be taken to involve those most likely to be excluded.

The Synod promises real discussion on issues often ignored such as the ordination of women, the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people, and more. But the Synod's working document *Instrumentum Laboris* leaves one crucial issue off the table: abortion.

According to Guttmacher Institute, 1 in 4 abortion patients in the U.S. is Catholic. That means women who are giving out Communion, teaching in our Catholic schools, and sitting next to us in the pews are having abortions. But instead of sharing about their lived experiences, Catholics who have had abortions are shamed into silence and made to carry their decision alone for fear of retribution.

The church must stop stigmatizing and start listening. As a church we must create space for Catholics who have had abortions to tell their stories freely and honestly.

There is still great risk to telling that story inside the walls of the church. **That's why Catholics for Choice has gathered these abortion stories.**

"I was the 44-year-old happily married mother of an already 10-year-old child. Financially secure, educated and employed. Pregnancy was a miracle for me. As a recipient of a life-saving kidney transplant, becoming a mother was already a challenge and pregnancy came with risks. My daughter, born years earlier, was born premature but otherwise healthy. I, on the other hand, had a long recovery and some long-lasting health risks. Even still, three more pregnancies would find their way into my reproductive system only to lose them in early stages. But this last pregnancy was different. At age 44, I was already very high risk, and coupled with a kidney transplant and other health conditions this was going to be a tough one. But I surprised even myself, and as the weeks went by I fell blissfully excited at the new baby I would be finally adding to our family. Things changed around 14 weeks. Some tests results indicated possible markers for severe Trisomy 18. And at 18 weeks these markers were confirmed for full Trisomy 18 via amniocentesis. My world fell apart. Here I was desperately wanting this new life, but his condition was deemed incompatible with life. At the advice of my doctor and of my family, carrying a pregnancy with this condition could also impact my health and cause loss of my transplanted organ or worse. There was a risk that was too great, and with a child already at home to care for I could not risk losing my life. My son was already so loved but I also knew his short life should he have survived until delivery would be painful and his ability to breath would be almost impossible. I prayed and I prayed for the answer. I carried my rosary beads with me as I asked the Virgin Mary to help guide me in my decision. It was that night that I received a sign from my own mother who had died several years earlier. I asked God to forgive me, and I also

asked my unborn son, but I knew it was God who was giving me the strength in the first place. I decided to take on a lifetime of pain to spare my only son even a moment's worth. I carried him all the days of his life, what a blessing as a mother. My procedure was carried out in a hospital, but even still the abortion paperwork needed to be signed and a waiting period had to happen as I agonized and mourned this baby I so wanted and love, the cruelty of this to women is disgusting. For my procedure, his heart was stopped by an injection, followed by an induction and delivery. I labored for 47 hours just to hold him. He was baptized by hospital clergy and cremated. You see, ALL abortion stories are different, and all reasons should be respected. God gave us a conscience to decide. My upbringing as a Catholic challenged my decision but in the end science and love guided me. I am proud of my decision, and I ask that you find it in your heart and in your faith and in your conscience to trust women. After all we were Jesus's first disciple. *In loving memory of my son Carson Bruce 8/24/18.* — **Jennifer from Georgia**

"I have always been passionate about lobbying for issues that are important to me — it is an opportunity to speak for myself and for others who can't be here knocking on our elected officials' doors. As a Catholic woman, I had the opportunity to make the choice that was best for me and my health at the time. Now that Florida has passed a six-week abortion ban, I am particularly worried about people who will need access to abortion for medical reasons like I did, and now they will find themselves in difficult situations without many options." — **Verónica in Florida**

"I converted to Catholicism because I love the beauty of the rituals, the rich history, and the robust social justice mission (particularly at the Jesuit institutions where I studied). Although I was always pro-choice due to my respect for women's choices, my support for reproductive care became foundational for me when I joined the community of women who have lost their baby through miscarriage, etc. I had to have an abortion procedure (D&C) to remove my baby that had died in the first trimester. I cannot imagine adding to the trauma of anyone who has to go through this experience, whether chosen or not. Restricting care, forbidding procedures, and punishing women and their caregivers for doing what they think is right would add to this trauma. Being pregnant completely changed my perspective of myself and this process. I now realize just how complicated and unique EVERY SINGLE pregnancy is. Laws cannot possibly be crafted to control these difficult decisions. My heart breaks for the women I have met who were compelled to do terminations for medical reasons for much wanted babies because they didn't want their baby to suffer, but who now feel attacked by anti-choice laws and politics. At the end of the day, it comes down to compassion for me. I choose to walk with, be with, and share love with women in their loss, in their complicated contexts, and in their tough decisions." — **Ashley in Pennsylvania**

"As a child abuse survivor, I was neither mentally, physically, nor emotionally able to care for a child or myself during pregnancy. After a mishap with birth control, my boyfriend and I decided to get an abortion. I can honestly say I would not still be alive if it were not for this life-saving procedure

that allowed me the time to mature, deal with my trauma, and help my siblings out of their abusive situations.” — **A Catholic for Choice in Illinois**

“I was a teenager and pregnant. I told my oldest sister, and she in turn told our mother. The three of us discussed my options. Being a survivor of sexual abuse, I was not willing or able to go through with the pregnancy. My family was also well aware that they wouldn’t be able to give me the financial and/or emotional support I would need to go through with the pregnancy. I’d had an abortion before that pregnancy, and thanks to Planned Parenthood it was done safely. I also had another unwanted pregnancy after my second. I’ve never regretted terminating these three pregnancies. I grew up to be a college graduate with a professional career. Being a Latina and an immigrant, I felt my decision in all three cases was the right one. I never had children, and I don’t regret that either.” — **Elena in Texas**

“In 2018, I was pregnant with a much wanted and loved baby after the healthy birth of our oldest and two early miscarriages. At our 20-week anatomy scan, it was discovered that our son had numerous anomalies that were deemed incompatible with life. My husband and I were devastated. We made the choice, out of love, to induce early and terminate for medical reasons. This choice was protected under abortion laws. I am a pro-choice Catholic because every pregnant person should have the ability to make the same choice we did, regardless of the situation. Every person should be able to deem what is best for themselves. Every person should have

personal freedom and ownership over their own body. This is essential to the equality of all.” — **Chelsey in Idaho**

“I have always struggled with the moral equivalencies tied to the labels of being ‘pro-choice’ or ‘pro-life.’ As a Catholic woman who had an abortion in my first year of college, I can unwaveringly state I am both. I support the right of any woman to determine her own medical decisions — and without question, I know this right stands in clear support of life. It certainly did in my case. I chose to determine the path my life would take, and while I did not make the choice lightly, I have no regrets. I remain grateful to have had the freedom to determine for myself what medical decisions to make with my own body, and my faith is greater for it.” — **Alanah in Washington**

“I’m a pro-choice Catholic because I had an abortion my junior year in college. I wasn’t ready to become a mother, and I knew I didn’t want to be tied to the guy I was dating. I’m so glad I had the option to terminate. I’m now married and have two incredible daughters who know my story. They too are pro-choice Catholics.” — **A Catholic for Choice in Illinois**

“I was 20 and in college when I had an abortion. I was on the pill, and took it responsibly but still somehow became pregnant. I wasn’t raised Catholic; I found religion in college, and in fact after five years of attending was just baptized through RCIA this past Easter. I do not regret my abortion. That choice allowed me to find religion, allowed me to graduate, allowed me to begin a career — none of which would have been possible if I had become pregnant. Abortion

is ownership over my body, an ownership we are all blessed with. To me, the Catholic church is much like America: Because I love my country, I have a responsibility to engage with and change the law. I feel the same way about Catholicism. And just as no one can take my unalienable right to freedom from me. In spite of what some in the church believe, no one can take God from me either.” — **A Catholic for Choice in North Carolina**

“In my early twenties, I was in an emotionally abusive relationship with a very immature young man, who manipulated me sexually. I was naïve and didn't know anything about sex, having been raised in a very strict Catholic household. Living in a small town where my family was in the medical community, I was often also hesitant to seek help from doctors and counselors. When I became pregnant, I knew that my family would force me to have the baby, maybe even force me to consider marrying this young man, whom I did not respect or really love. Abortion was the only way to give myself permission to become an authentic adult. It was the only way to extricate myself from this man and, for a while, from my family and their controlling beliefs. I've never regretted it. Later when I became a mother, intentionally, after I had become a whole person, I knew I had my abortion to thank for my child.” — **Britt in Washington**

“On my 23rd birthday, I had an abortion. I have always been pro-choice, but that didn't make it any easier. It's a hard decision to make, but I know it was the right one for me. The father and I were both Catholic, and he had a history of being pro-life, but after seeing how sick pregnancy made me and

how much my body was hurting, he became pro-choice. I didn't know I was pregnant until I was three months in. Pregnancy isn't easy. It's so hard on your body. I was losing weight because I couldn't eat any food without getting sick, I was having kidney issues, and I slept for about 18 hours a day. I think people fail to realize the extreme strain pregnancy puts on a body and are so quick to judge. Someday, I hope to have a child, but when my body is ready, and I am ready. I look forward to that moment.” — **Leslie in Washington, D.C.**

“Back in 1970, abortion was still banned, and as a Catholic I hadn't given the issue much thought. But when my personal life fell apart, I made an incredibly stupid mistake and got pregnant. After a desperate, humiliating search for a physician willing to risk it all to help me, I finally located a wonderfully compassionate human being. All the while I had begged/cajoled/bargained with God for help, because had there not been that physician to end the pregnancy, I would have committed suicide. But miraculously, that angel in the white coat did turn up, for which I'm eternally grateful!” — **Carol in Washington**

“I have had two devastating pregnancies that almost cost me my own life and my health, both physically and emotionally. My first pregnancy was a year after my husband and I got married. We learned the fetus had a condition incompatible with life, so we chose mercy for the fetus and mercy for me, as we realized if I were to carry the pregnancy to term, the doctors said I would die with my genetic condition, Ehlers Danlos. The second pregnancy, we risked everything for hope under the watch of maternal fetal specialist, but it went

exactly the same way. I am glad I am here for my husband and for me and that abortion exists for cases like my own.” —

Rachel in West Virginia

“I had a wanted pregnancy. I loved my baby, but at 20 weeks we found out that the brain had not developed as it should, parts of the brain were missing, and had microcephaly... It was likely that the baby already had muscle paralysis. This was a genetic abnormality that no one anticipated. We were absolutely devastated but didn't want our baby to suffer, who — if born alive — would have short and painful life. I didn't want my child to suffer. I had an abortion. It was the worst week of my life, but I don't regret my choice. I am thankful I had loving providers and many people who supported me. I didn't feel that I had support of the church, in fact I stopped going to Mass. I remember the priest saying they were going to protest outside a Planned Parenthood. This was so upsetting and incredibly disappointing. I was using my Catholic teachings of compassion and humanity, but I felt no support from my faith. I haven't gone back to Mass since.” — **Amanda in Washington, D.C.**

I became pregnant at 19. At the time, I was a full-time student and my boyfriend worked full time and took night classes at the same university. We were elated with the pregnancy. Unfortunately, the initial tests were followed by many others. Finally, the doctor called us to give us the sad news: I produced too little hydrocortisone to carry our baby to term. I was six weeks pregnant, and he suggested I have an abortion and never become pregnant again. Twelve years later, new tests and the advent of the scanner showed the culprit: a

craniopharyngioma that had gone undetected for so long, it had destroyed my pituitary gland so I produce no hormones. Now, I am the very happy mom of our adopted son who is about to turn 34.” — **Veronique in California**

“I am a 69-year-old woman who was educated in Catholic schools through age 13. I stopped attending church in high school, and during my college years and into my 20s, I struggled with alcohol and drug abuse. When I found I was pregnant at 22, I immediately decided to have an abortion without discussing with anyone. I was ashamed and deeply confused, but knew I was in no condition to provide a child with loving stability. Later in life, through grace, I got married, had three children, and found sobriety. I think about my lost child often and feel great sadness that she (I think of her as she) was not able to live a full life. However, I believe I made the only decision at the time that was available to me, and that giving birth at that time in my life, when I was not ready to care for a child, would have been harmful to both of us. As the parent of three children, I know how much work and spiritual presence is required to show up for one's child. Not everyone has that strength at different times, for different reasons. This is why I support choice. The decision to have an abortion is a deeply personal one, that deserves to be made by a woman and her higher power — whoever that may be. I attend church again, and feel deeply connected to Catholic fellowship, and committed to work for social justice, including abortion access.” — **Jane in Massachusetts**

“I am Catholic who has always supported choice because I believe it truly is my body and my choice. I never thought

when I was young that I would have to ever make that choice. I was smart. I was not going to get pregnant without meaning to. Well, life has surprises for you. When I was 36 with an 18-month-old child, I found I was pregnant unexpectedly. We were overjoyed to add another child to our family. Then we found out the terrible news that no parent wants to receive that our son had genetic anomalies. I was utterly heartbroken. My husband and I made the heart-breaking choice to spare our son future pain and protect our daughter from losing a sibling. I had an abortion to protect my children out of love. Even 10 years later there is not a month I do not think of my son and miss the child he could have been, but I know I made the right choice to spare him the pain that his condition would have brought him. It is my burden and my choice.” — **Georgia in the United States**

“When I was 4 months pregnant, I found out that the fetus was no longer viable. It had turned into a tumor. I had an abortion to remove this tumor that potentially had cancerous cells. I had monthly blood tests and sonograms for the next few months. The tests were not good, and I had to have a hysterectomy. I can’t even imagine what would have happened if I could not have had that abortion. Would that cancerous mass have remained inside me? Would I have developed cancer and left my 4-year-old daughter motherless? It was a traumatic experience that could have been so much worse.” — **Laurie in Florida.**

“I didn’t grow up Catholic, and I’ve always been pro-choice. I am however a convert and still pro-choice, especially this year when I was faced with the choice of an infection or an

abortion procedure after my water broke at 13 weeks pregnant. We had every option available to us even at this stage of pregnancy, and I think everyone deserves to have every option available to them. My decision might not be the same as yours, but we all have the right to make it given the facts about our mental and physical health, our situation, and our lives in general. No one should be backed into a corner for one of the toughest decisions of their lives.” — **Caitlin in Delaware**

“In my 40s, I had a birth control failure. When my husband and I realized I was pregnant, we actually got excited, thinking we might like another child. Long story short, we went to the doctor and found out it was not forming correctly, and I would most likely miscarry. We were bummed. My husband was out of town for work a lot at that time, and I had two teenage boys. We scheduled a D&E instead of having me miscarry at home so my sons would not have to possibly deal with it. We considered the D&E merciful because my body eventually would have rejected it anyway. Why allow something to continue to grow incorrectly inside my body only for my body to eventually ‘end’ it? My husband, who is not Catholic, told friends about it hoping to get emotional support, even though I had warned him adamantly not to. I was judged in the end. I faced interrogating questions from the more indoctrinated pro-life crowd in our parish. I was told that I was wrong to schedule the D&E, that I should have let myself abort naturally. The doctor’s knowledge and advice were questioned. Some told me that a D&E is not really an abortion. I was told that the reason I had the procedure also disqualified it from being an abortion. I had a D&E, which is a type of

abortion. I am a nurse practitioner, so I understand this. The more I explained this to them, the more they argued. I was accused of being 'proud' that I had had an abortion. The mental gymnastics people engage in in the name of being pro-life always astound me." — **Susan in Ohio**

"My daughter became pregnant when she was 17 and felt she could not survive this situation. We had many long talks, and finally, she agreed to do what was best for her. She had the abortion, and we spent a lot of time discussing all the aspects of the situation. She came away with a positive outlook on life. She has been married for a very long time and has two grown children." — **Lenore in Florida**

"We are a family of three kids under the age of 7. I just recently became pregnant with our fourth child and am wringing my hands with anxiety. My husband works a very demanding job that involves full family support and sacrifice so he can help others. It's tough to manage three kids and a household independently and I am overwhelmed. We are an older couple on the edge of perimenopause, and it seems risky to have another child. That combined with the current stress of our daily lives, the planet's fate, limited resources, and a potential third world war, it's hard to believe this is a smart choice. I am blessed with three beautiful and healthy children, and they are all yearning for more attention. How does a fourth baby fit into this future? Will my children suffer with the addition of another? What happens if something happens to me during childbirth? Who will care for them then? Is it better for me to trust in God by saying no to allow for more yeses for all of us? For all of humanity? Torn and

overwhelmed, I look to God. Either choice will be the right one, will be for the good of others." — **Faith in Pennsylvania**

"In 1978 when I was 18 years old, I had an unexpected, unplanned pregnancy and was extremely distraught and confused about how to handle it. At the time I was an active, using alcoholic, and this pregnancy was a direct result of my actions while under the influence of alcohol and drugs. I knew then, as I know now, that at that time I was not fit to raise a child. Being Catholic, however, I was very concerned about having an abortion. I thought and prayed seriously, turning to my personal relationship with God as opposed to listening only to the authority of the church. For me, I knew I could not give up a child for adoption after carrying and giving birth. I am not interested in convincing you or anyone how and why I decided to abort that pregnancy. The point is I took my situation seriously and after reflecting and praying about it I made the personal decision that was right for me, and for that unborn child. I feel strongly that neither the church nor the government have authority over these personal, moral and health-related concerns. Please understand it is the woman who needs to search her soul to decide if, how, and when she is ready to be a mother. It is certainly not up to the institution of the church. For me, I was gifted with two planned, wanted pregnancies later in life that allowed me to mother two wonderful children. I have remained Catholic and raised my children in a faith-filled home. I have devoted my life to helping others, and I am convinced my experience having an abortion has made me a more compassionate and non-judgmental person. My hope is for the authorities in the church to practice non-judgmental compassion and respect

for the women who find themselves with the age-old problem of unexpected pregnancy. May you who read this open to the Holy Spirit.” — **Kathleen in Ohio**

“I suffered a partial placental abruption at 35 weeks. The bleeding wouldn’t stop and there was concern the placenta would fully detach, so the decision was made to terminate the pregnancy and deliver. Luckily, our daughter survived the whole ordeal and is now almost 13. But if doctors would have had to wait until I was ‘sick enough’ or until they were concerned about my death, it very likely would’ve been too late and we both wouldn’t be here today. I’m a story about me and my daughter surviving early termination, and I was even able to go on and have another healthy baby girl, but my heart aches for those who have lived through devastating loss. I’m so grateful that my doctors were able to make decisions at that time without the pressure and threat of these bans and restrictions on abortion and pregnancy termination. Being pro-life also means protecting the life of the mother. Many abortion stories are not about unwanted pregnancy, but about unimaginable scenarios to protect the mother. Many women who have had abortions, for whatever reason, are able to have children in the future because they were able to have an abortion when they needed it. It is a fact that abortion is healthcare.” — **Kristen in Ohio**

“I was in my 30s and had a toddler. I had two subsequent pregnancies that ended in miscarriage. As was the standard treatment at the time, I had immediate D&Cs in a hospital, which are, of course, the same procedure as an elective abortion. I got pregnant on purpose and wanted those

pregnancies. Today if I were to have miscarriages, and IF I could find a doctor to treat me, they would have to send me home to get sicker, but not so sick I would die — only sick enough to be treated and maybe recover with the ability to conceive again intact. In the meantime, I had a small child who needed his mother! My state, Tennessee, says no abortions for any reason, period. This is pro-life?” — **Marcia in Tennessee**

“I was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. No one in my family ever even whispered about sex, sexuality, menses, none of it. I left home at age 18 with no understanding of contraception. Within a very few months I got pregnant by a 19-year-old boy who I was certain loved me. Sadly, no one in my family ever whispered about love, relationships, or self-esteem either. I was not prepared to embark on motherhood, pregnancy, or sex. This is what happens when sex education is prohibited: Ignorant people make uninformed choices.

I lived nine miles from the nearest West Virginia town, population 606. Every few months I drove to Washington, D.C., the nearest large metro area. I'm a musician, and in the springtime of 1971, I made my way to the club where I was booked to work. It was there I found a clinic where I could have a pregnancy test done. Those were the days when we had to collect a urine sample and take it somewhere to have the HCG levels checked; there was no such things as an at-home test. I took a clean glass jar to the club with me. At the end of the show I collected my sample, which needed to be refrigerated until I could submit it at the clinic for evaluation, so I stashed the jar in the ice chest behind the bar, right next

to the beers. The band slept on the floor of the club that night, and the next morning I took the sample uptown for testing, which positively indicated pregnancy.

The next day I visited my very dear gay friend and asked him about abortion, and he immediately gave me the name and phone number of PreTerm at 1726 I Street, NW. I called right away and made an appointment for a termination that took place that June.

Some women seem not to be conflicted about their abortions, or their support of choice. As a sponge for Catholic dogma, I had fleeting reservations. I took some time to consider my options, but I knew that living as I was, isolated from civilization on 24 acres with no running water or heat, no real income, and no other prospects, birth and the raising of a child would be damaging not just to me but the child as well. There was no way I could return to my family's home, which was dysfunctional with alcoholism, incest, religious zealotry, and barely contained rage.

If I had given birth, that child would now be almost 52 years old. There's a sadness in having terminated the pregnancy, but it's far outweighed by the relief that I know I made the right — the only — decision I could have made. And now I have a daughter who works in abortion care, and in reproductive/social/criminal justice spheres, unencumbered by the ignorance, guilt, and shame that led me to opt for my own abortion. If God bestowed upon me the gift of free will, and I chose abortion, that's between God and me, not between God and me and my legislators, Congress, and the entire citizenry of my country. I support choice, I stand by all girls and women who choose to give birth and keep their

child, or give birth and relinquish their child, or give birth and place the child under guardianship of a family member or friend, or terminate their pregnancy. To punish decisions made of free will is self-contradictory, as it puts a price on freely acting at our own discretion. I believe God is kinder, more loving, and more progressive than that.” — **Chris in California**

Stories from Abortion Providers:

“I am a cradle Catholic. I am grateful for my faith and the ways that it has enriched my life, as well as the ways it has shaped how I see value and take joy in other people simply for being. I am also a genetic counselor. I work intimately with people who are trying and struggling to create families. It can be heartbreaking work. It is also deeply satisfying. I feel privileged to bear witness to people's struggles, to support them through pain, and to advocate for their choices. Part of my job includes prenatal screening for genetic conditions and being on hand for high-risk ultrasound counseling. These are the cases where people with loved and wanted pregnancies are told that their babies are not going to survive. I will never forget the first abortion that I helped to facilitate. My patient was Catholic, and she was a mom of three. Her fetus was diagnosed with trisomy 13. This condition results in severe physical birth defects as well as profound intellectual disability. Most babies born with this condition die within hours or days of their birth because their bodies just are not made for this world. I had numerous conversations with my patient about the range of possibilities we could see with trisomy 13. I offered support for whatever choices she made in her pregnancy. Ultimately, she decided to end the pregnancy, and I have carried her words with me ever since. She said 'I am a mother, and I must protect my children. This includes the child in my belly.' She terminated her pregnancy not because she did not love it, not because she did not see value in it. She terminated because she wanted to save all her children from the pain of dying, or watching a sibling die from trisomy 13 and holoprosencephaly. I helped her carry out her wishes, and I do not think that I

sinned. I do not think that she sinned. No decision born of love can be a sin. True to the directions of the beatitudes, I mourned with her. I helped her do what she felt was right. Her decision was pure and yet she could be excommunicated because of it. This is persecution. This is not mercy, and this is not right. I don't feel welcome at mass anymore, but I yearn for my Catholic community. I love God, and Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. I am proud of my faith. But I don't think that the church is aligned with the messages of Jesus's teachings. It breaks my heart.” — **Meghan in California**

“I identify as a Contemplative Catholic. I have personally never had an abortion, but I do work as an abortion care provider. Since I've been able to conceive, I have known many loved ones who have had abortions and entirely support their ability to make choices for themselves about their own bodies. As a woman, I have felt as if my experience has not been heard, seen, or appreciated in the Catholic church and recognize the church's disintegration, especially as they are actively not recognizing the needs of the younger generations. I hope in my lifetime that the Catholic church begins to see women as valid members of the church and grant them positions of power just as every other institution has done in Western culture, such as education and medicine. It is only then that the experiences and needs of women will be able to be known and understood as valid and our human rights will be acknowledged.” — **Elizabeth in New York**

“As a 75-year-old woman born and raised in the Catholic faith, I serve as a clinic escort, guiding patients into their choice of reproductive care as groups of protesters gather on the

sidewalk to bully, intimidate, and shame them with graphic signs, shouted cruel words, and aggressive behaviors. I put my body on the line because the staff inside the clinic provides abortion care with gentle and affirming professionalism even as the crowd rages outside on the sidewalk. They are heroes to patients in their time of stress.” — **Eileen in New Hampshire**

“I am a Catholic for choice because I am a women's health provider, and I know better outcomes are achieved when moms are ready for pregnancy, birth, and childrearing.” — **Terrie in Florida**

“When I became an abortion doula (a non-medical emotional and informational support person) I did so because and not in spite of my faith. I love my church for its emphasis on justice, community, on ritual, and on using our imaginations to experience grace. Bearing witness and supporting people in moments of transition and transformation were some of the spiritually profound things I’ve ever done. The discernment of abortion, the deeply personal choice of whether or not to be pregnant, are I believe holy gifts of a Creator who knows the incarnate life. I don’t believe God wants us to be in fellowship by policing each other’s bodies. I hope that one day the institutions of the church can recognize the spiritual integrity of reproductive freedom, including abortion, and meet their many members (most of their members) who support abortion in prayer and gratitude. I am in prayer and gratitude for Catholics for Choice for providing a place for Catholics to come together.” — **A Catholic for Choice in Louisiana**

“I worked in an outpatient abortion clinic for four years after the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. I witnessed firsthand how legal abortion changed women's lives for the better. All the staff and doctors who worked in the clinic saw it as our mission to provide these services. I became a strong feminist because of working in the clinic. If we don't control our own bodies, we control nothing in our lives.” — **Barbara in New Jersey**

WE ARE PRO-CHOICE CATHOLICS BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH, NOT IN SPITE OF IT.

Our faith calls us to recognize:

Conscience

as the final arbiter in any moral decision we make.

Social Justice

as the commitment to center the needs
of the most marginalized in our communities.

Religious Freedom

as the ability to respect each person's freedom to choose their religion,
and not impose the religious beliefs of some onto others.

These principles have sustained our work for nearly 50 years and will continue to
shape the way pro-choice Catholics advocate for reproductive dignity for all.

PRO-CHOICE CATHOLICS: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Visit: CatholicsforChoice.org