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Project Rachel focuses on post-abortion counseling

Church program to console Catholic women

EDITOR'S NOTE — The Roman Catholic Church, fighting on the one hand to encourage legislation against abortion, is beginning to offer a consoling hand to those Catholic women who have had an abortion. Project Rachel is that beginning.

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The 24-year-old woman with a substance abuse problem came to Stephen Lynott for help.

She was pregnant, alone and angry after being abandoned by her boyfriend and thrown out of her parents' home, recalls Lynott, director of Catholic Social Services for the Marquette Diocese.

While counseling the woman, Lynott found out she had ended two earlier pregnancies. Part of her substance abuse problem came from her effort to erase the painful memory of the abortions.

Because of her abortions, Lynott says, the woman expected condemnation from the Catholic Church. Instead, she was surprised to find compassion.

It might have been condemnation before 1985, when the diocese began a program to train counselors and priests in how to help women who have had abortions.

Named for a biblical story about a woman who grieved inconsolably for her children, Project Rachel treats women more like mourners than sinners.

Before that, an average of one or two Catholic

women a month who defied church opposition to abortion came to Lynott's agency for help. Counselors aware of the women's abortions, sometimes were able to spot what was troubling them.

"We didn't know how to begin," Lynott says. "It's an utterly foreign concept."

Vickie Thorn, the founder of the first Project Rachel which began in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in 1982, says feelings of remorse aren't confined to Catholic women.

"I don't think it's Catholic guilt," she says. "I think just generic human guilt."

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed the concept of post-abortion reconciliation services such as Project Rachel in 1985, according to Rev. John Gouldrick, director of the bishops' Project Office.

At least 60 Catholic dioceses in the United States have started Project Rachel programs because of estimates that as many as 30 percent of Catholic women have had abortions, Thorn says. It's about the same proportion as the general population, she added.

Howard Hoeftlein, a spokesman for the Archdiocese of Detroit, says the numbers aren't surprising, despite the church's position that abortion except to save the life of the mother is a serious sin.

Famous gate crasher recalls good old days of parties, big events

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Pinky Ginsberg doesn't get around much anymore. The days of dining with royalty, infiltrating big events and thumbing his nose at officials are gone.

"I don't know who remembers me anymore," he says. "There was a time when they all knew me, though. There was a time when my name was magic."

The man who once walked into Adolf Hitler's office and asked for an autograph, attended the coronation of King George VI, crashed the 37 World Series, 12 presidential inaugurations, eight Olympics and many other events is a little short of magic these days.

Hyman Ginsberg, 84, who bills himself as the world's greatest gate crasher, now spends his days in a tiny apartment on the edge of the French Quarter.

An old man's gait has slowed his travels. So has an old man's bankroll. "Social Security. It's enough to keep you from starving, but not by much," he says. "I get \$400 a month

and that doesn't go far. In my time I made and lost \$15 million. I spent \$100,000 on a little redhead so quick you wouldn't believe it."

"In those days it came easy and it went easy. I was a bookie. I owned several nightclubs in the French Quarter. Chez Paris on Bourbon Street, that was mine. I owned a place called Punch and Judy's, another one next to Arnaud's Restaurant."

His thin fingers thumb through his scrapbook, fondling the clippings that yellow there. Clippings in French, Spanish, German, English, along with letters and photographs fill the book and testify to his many adventures.

The legend on the front of the book reads: "Album of Fantasy, Alright — Let's Have It, Fantastic — Fabulous, Step & Peep into the Wonderful World and the Pleasant Life of Pinky the Bum. Smiling Pinky Ginsberg, King of the Gate Crashers, International Personality, Professional Gourmet, and Wine Sipper."

Kennebunkport offers variety of Bush souvenirs

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine (AP) — Suppose you have a thing for some Bush Sauce or your quail dinner. Or maybe you want to snuggle your feet in a pair of American flag slippers adorned with George and Barbara dolls. Perhaps you'd just like to pick up a "Read my lips" button.

Kennebunkport is your shopping destination.

The proliferation of Bush paraphernalia in this resort town of nearly 3,000 people is giving tourists a variety of souvenirs to prove — once they've returned home to Quebec or Connecticut or Kansas — that they've been to the summer vacation home of the 41st president.

What kitchen, for example, couldn't use a little refrigerator magnet with a plastic Maine lobster and the words "Kennebunkport, Maine. Home of George W. Bush" on it?

Those sell for \$2.50 each at What's In Store, a curio shop that also features mugs emblazoned with the eagle symbol of the United States and a picture of Bush's home on Walker's Point.



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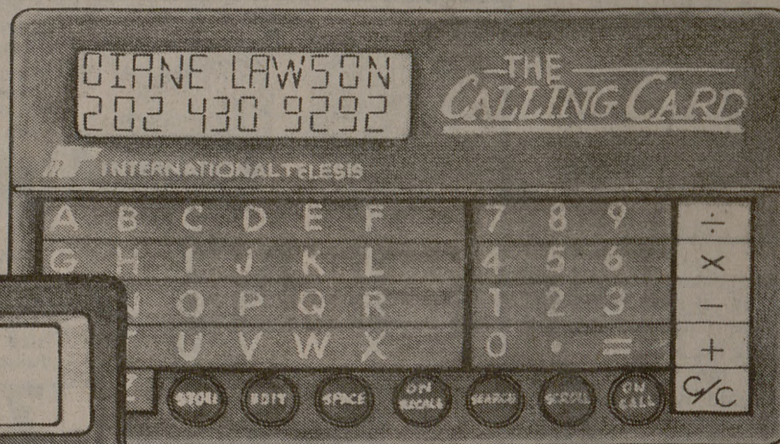
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