

Culture of Life

Several Sources, 1 Aim

BY JOSEPH PRONECHEN

March 5-11, 2006 Issue | Posted 3/5/06 at 10:00 AM

There are two images outside the Several Sources Foundation shelter in Ramsey, N.J. One presents the well-known picture of a young Mary holding Jesus as *La Madonna della Strada*. Near her, the other is an American flag flying at half-mast.

"When legalized abortion ends, the flag will go up," says Kathy DiFiore, who founded Several Sources Foundation to rescue unwed mothers and their unborn babies. "Otherwise, Mary is in tears each day over her babies dying."

But the Blessed Mother must also be smiling over the hundreds of young women Several Sources has helped both physically and spiritually, and the thousands of babies it has saved across the country from abortion, since 1981.

Just ask 22-year-old Rachel Gunson, who had her 3-month-old baby boy David baptized last November. A year ago she left everything in New York and arrived at the Several Sources house for help.

She got her own room to live in as do other expectant moms, had help from a housemother, attended weekly counseling, Bible study and chastity workshops, and

got to decorate her baby's nursery room. Now, with Several Sources' help, Rachel's planning to start nursing school so she can get back on her feet.

Several Sources "gives the feeling of home," she says, and she means it in more ways than one. "Before this I hadn't gone to church in a while," she says. "Coming here was good for me renewing my faith" as well as beginning motherhood. Rachel will also be confirmed this Easter.

"We teach them about Jesus, his life and sacrifice, and about Mary," explains DiFiore. "And we teach them about the importance of daily prayer, Scripture, faith. The girls know they have to leave not just holding the baby in their arms but having a seed of faith in their hearts so they have the ability to teach their child about God and his word, and be a good example."

So Many Souls

Founding Several Sources Foundation began for DiFiore when she focused on the Prayer of St. Francis. She was 33, teaching religion at her parish of St. Paul's in Ramsey and looking to do more for God.

"I was expecting some kind of revelation, where God would speak to me," she recalls. "Instead it was a soft awakening to looking to the Scriptures and see, 'When I was hungry you fed me, helpless, you took me in.' I realized that was the blueprint right in front of my face all the time."

The phone seemed to ring immediately after DiFiore put an ad in the local paper offering young unwed mothers with difficulties a place to stay in her home. Then it rang again. And again ...

Soon, other families helped house the girls. One man donated his second home on the Jersey shore for a down payment to buy Several Sources a house. Next, a family donated their grandparents' place.

Twelve years ago, Msgr. Thomas McCarthy, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Washington, N.J., gave Several Sources a convent and farmhouse and obtained necessary approvals from the Newark archdiocese. Several Sources now has five houses.

"They train the girls to live a good Christian life," says Msgr. McCarthy, "so when they and their child go out from the place they're

prepared both spiritually and materially so that can go forward in the right direction.”

A couple of the girls went through his parish’s RCIA program and a couple more asked to have their babies baptized.

Back at the flagship house, Susan Lloyd, a retired nurse volunteering in different capacities, became godmother to Rachel’s son David.

“The Holy Spirit kept telling me these are young women with no simple choice of an abortion or not,” she says. “They have so many issues that come with their pregnancy, or before their pregnancy. These young women need mothering.”

This mothering and counsel comes from volunteers and housemothers. And there are reminders of motherhood in the statues and images of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“We try to show mothers Mary is a role model for women,” says DiFiore, “and her purity and chastity is very important to us as women to contemplate and try to emulate.” That means the girls must attend a weekly chastity workshop.

At the flagship house, the Garden of Life with its six shrine stations

depicting scenes of the Blessed Mother’s appearances to St. Catherine Laboure, is the site of many a baby-saving moment.

“At the image of *O Mary conceived without sin*,” explains DiFiore, “we stop with the mother and say, ‘The baby in your womb has an immortal soul. Your baby is alive not just physically but spiritually. You’re mothering the soul of this child. God has a plan for this child.’”

“That concept is very important,” she adds, “because if you’re speaking to a woman with the slightest amount of faith, you’ve lit a spark.”

National Hotline

Several Sources Foundation reaches into every city and town through its national hotline (1-800-NOABORT) and its lifecall.org website. It overnights more than 1,000 Hotline kits to one of every six callers who will give their address. For everyone, there’s live counseling or DiFiore’s website answers, plus lists of all pregnancy crisis centers and shelters in the United States.

The hotline kit includes handwritten personal testimonies and pictures from mothers who decided to have their child, a baby sleeper outfit, a video of *The Silent Scream*, the story of Mary’s

Immaculate Conception and a Miraculous Medal, materials on the development of the child in the womb coupled with Bible quotes, a crucifix and a birth announcement.

“The whole concept is to bring this child out of the womb in the eyes of the mother,” explains DiFiore.

She finds it impossible to tell how many tens of thousand of babies Several Sources has saved through phone, web and kit because the ripple effect reaches so far. One girl came from the Philippines through the website. Another called from Australia.

DiFiore counts her invitation to the White House to meet President Ronald Reagan among her “cornerstone moments.”

“That was definitely a gift from God, to shake this man’s hand and have him tell me personally to ‘fight the good fight’ and to listen to him in the Oval Office espouse his personal belief in life from moment of our conception.”

Another was several meetings with Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who once wrote her, “Pray the work, Kathy.”

Says DiFiore: “I live that.”

Joseph Pronechen writes from

Trumbull, Connecticut.

Information

Several Sources Foundation resources are on the Internet at severalsourcesfd.org, lifecall.org, chastitycall.org and gotgame2.org.

Copyright © 2012 EWTN News, Inc. All rights reserved.