



Update

JOHN PAUL II CENTRE FOR LIFE

ISSUE #39 / APRIL 2025

Thanks for Your Help

Thanks to your donation to our Special Appeal in November 2024, the John Paul II Centre is poised to make a significant impact in the area of pornography addiction.

You may recall that we highlighted the negative impact of pornography on marriages, families and children in our last newsletter. We are now able to offer 20 free scholarships to priests who wish to take up special training around this issue to help them minister effectively, both in the confessional, and outside it, so that families impacted by pornography addiction can find healing. This online Three Pillars to Purity training is in place of the live workshops we had planned for every Diocese, to give our clergy deeper understanding and effective tools. (Regrettably, one of our key speakers is now unable to make that tour). You will find more information on this programme on Page 2 of this newsletter.



A Brave Step Forward

After Easter we are beginning Recovery Groups, to help those men who are ready to break free from their addiction, and to strive for wholeness, integrity and healing. The contact for this group is: recoverygroup@outlook.co.nz

Help for women whose spouses have sexually betrayed them, is available through **B.R.A.V.E Life Coaching** adele@bravelifecoaching.nz

Please do pray for our priests, and for the Recovery groups. Pray that men and women, husbands and wives, will have the courage they need to come forward and seek healing, and that our priests might minister effectively and with compassion.

If you missed the Special Appeal, but would still like to donate to the work of the John Paul II Centre for Life, please make a donation through the Donations page on our website. Further details are on the back page of this newsletter. We are so grateful to you, our loyal supporters, without whom this work could not go forward.

With every Blessing,

Maria Schmetzer
Acting Director

Christian Parenting in a Digital Age Workshop for Parents

Wednesday May 28 @ Bishop Joyce Centre, Sockburn

In this age of digital devices, how can a parent know what their child is viewing on cellphones, through social or streaming media? How can you protect him or her from harm? What help is there for children who already have a device addiction?

This workshop, for parents of children aged 8-13 years, will offer ideas for your decision making in the area of device use. Come and learn about creating boundaries and permissions, access to apps, setting healthy limits to screen time, and what to do when you catch your child breaking the rules.

Entry by donation.

Enquiries: debra@jp2.org.nz



Women's Health Forum

Saturday 19 July @ Lamb of God Centre, Thames Street

A young woman's health and wellbeing day on the beauty and call of being a Catholic Woman. We will reflect on at the Church's teaching of love and responsibility in our lives, challenges young women face in their reproductive health, personal development and relationships as they move toward their vocation in life. Come and be inspired by women of faith, and learn about your own health and wellbeing, how to protect it, how to get help with any problems that you may have - things that your mothers and grandmothers would love to have known!

For more info contact: info@jp2.org.nz



Chimkasinma - My God is the Greatest!

A testimony of belief in God's graciousness

Hi, my name is Amaka and my husband's name is Martins. We got married in 2021 and ever since then we have had challenges conceiving. We consulted so many gynecologists and I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS). We had several medications but all to no avail. My husband left Nigeria in 2023 and I joined him in New Zealand four months later in February 2024.

The following month I got the information about the Infertility Support Group run by the John Paul II Centre for Life at St Teresa's and we attended. Through the special grace of God we conceived by the month of May. Megan and Lara (JP2 staff) have been so helpful to me and my family, with their support. They ensured we got all the baby items and had us in their prayers throughout the pregnancy. We can't thank them enough for all their support and also Father Philip and Father Sean-Mary CSJ.

Since the birth of our baby, it has been so colorful and we have been enjoying every bit of parenthood. Our baby's name is Jayden Chimkasinma Ogugofor. Jayden means thankful to God, we chose that because God came through for us and gave us our perfect gift. During our scan, PCOS wasn't detected and I was very okay throughout the pregnancy and God also came through for us on the day of his birth. Chimkasinma means My God is the greatest. **Our advice to anyone seeking for the fruit of the womb is to hold on to God's words and it will come to pass. His promise never fails.**



Editor's note: The JP2 Arise Infertility Support Group offers couples a safe place to share and work through the pain and complex emotions that come with infertility, the loss of their dreams and hopes for their life. Being with others who understand, can help a couple to find meaning in their suffering, and discern those other ways in which God is calling them to fruitfulness in their daily lives. The outcome for this beautiful couple was restored fertility, for which we give thanks to the Lord.

Truth for Youth: Human Dignity and the harm of pornography



The John Paul II Centre for Life is collaborating with Holy Family Parish to bring a series of four presentations throughout 2025, called "Life Matters @ Holy Family Parish". The first of these presentations was delivered by Brendan Malone to around 40 young adults. Brendan talked about the relationship between human dignity and pornography, offering keen insights, up to date information, hope and pathways for healing in regards to pornography. Questions from participants showed their keen interest in this topic, and their appreciation for the learning they gained.

If you would like any information or support around the issue of pornography please contact us: director@jp2.org.nz Ph 022 503 9249

Donations of new baby knitting

The John Paul II Centre is seeking donations of new baby knitting: cardigans, singlets of fine wool, cot, pram and bassinet blankets. (Please note: no booties, please, as these have been replaced by socks!) If you can help, please call or text Maria on 022 503 9249. Thank you



The Three Pillars to Purity Programme for Priests equips them to minister to persons caught up in pornography usage.

This is what our priests will learn:

- The science behind pornography addiction
- The adverse spiritual effects of pornography
- Why accountability and relationships are so important
- How to confidently talk about the problem
- How to help souls find mercy and healing
- How to protect marriages and children from the harms of pornography
- How to build a culture in their ministry that is equipped to stand in this battle



THREE PILLARS TO
PURITY
Online Priest Training

The JP2 Team: Comings and Goings



Brigid Conroy

New Director

Brigid will join us at the end of April. She has previously worked in the Marriage and Family Life office in Hamilton, and as a Communications Director for various firms.



Jessie Mischewski

Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Jessie will be publicising and attending JP2 events in order that more people will be aware of the help we can offer. You will find her efforts on our facebook and Instagram pages



Farewell Theresa Mischewski

Previous Director

Farewell to Theresa, our previous Director, who is devoting herself to fulltime motherhood. We are grateful to Theresa for her leadership and efforts over the last two years, and wish her well.



Reaching out to our Catholic Health Workers

The Diocese held a Mass on 6th April for those who work in healthcare in Canterbury.

Lara and Megan, our JP2 Centre pastoral workers, set up a booth to profile our work and make connections with other healthcare workers. They had beautifully prepared miscarriage boxes for mums, flyers covering babyloss grief, infertility support, adverse prenatal diagnosis and our other programmes. A wholly worthwhile event.

SmartLoving eNews

Let's face it – marriage can be a tough gig these days. Living in a culture that almost expects marriage to fail, couples wonder what they can do to immunise their relationship against the tragedy of divorce.

Understanding the True Purpose of Marriage

Marital resilience starts with a well-grounded understanding of what marriage is and what it isn't.

A lot of couples get themselves into trouble because they make a very simple mistake: they expect marriage to make them happy. In practice, this mindset translates into an expectation that their spouse must make them happy. So whenever they are not happy, they project their unhappiness onto their spouse, making their spouse responsible and adding stress to the relationship.

This mindset has been augmented in recent decades by an entitlement culture. We've been told that we have a right to be happy, that if we're not happy we should do whatever we need in order to pursue it. The truth is, though, if we expect our spouse to make us happy and meet all our needs, we'll not only be disappointed, we'll put an impossible burden on them and our marriage.

Here's the thing: marriage isn't meant to make us happy, it's meant to make us better, more mature, more 'holy' (ie whole). Marriage is a pathway to personal and spiritual growth. This means that at times it's going to stretch our tolerance and test our patience.

And this is a good thing! This is how we mature. Personal growth and spiritual maturity don't happen in a vacuum. They happen in lived experiences, especially in the stress points and disappointments of life. It's easy to be kind and pleasant when everything is going well in our life; anyone can do that. Real growth comes when we learn to be that way when we are hurt and challenged.

Building Resilience Through Growth and Challenges

Marriages don't break down because love dies. They break down because one or both spouses are blocked to growth and change. **They break down because one or both refuse to recognise that they are responsible for their own happiness and undertake the internal growth needed to do that.**

There is nothing in the marriage vows that said we were obligated to make each other happy. This is because happiness is an outcome, not the purpose, of a life well spent. In marriage we are called to love each other generously, and when we do that, happiness usually follows.

Of course, marriage isn't meant to make us unhappy and miserable. Misery happens when we handle these growth opportunities badly, inflicting unnecessary pain on each other.

Marriages seldom stand still. They are either going forward or backwards. **A resilient marriage is one where spouses are intentional about their relationship; seeing challenges for what they are: choices to grow deeper in love rather retreat from each other.** These couples know that when they work through a tough challenge their marriage is stronger, not weaker... not because of the challenge but because of how they chose to respond to it. This is the kind of resilience on which long-lasting marriage relies.

The JP 2 Centre for Life holds contact details for Catholic Marriage Counsellors who would be pleased to help you and your spouse grow yourselves and your marriage. Please contact us. Our volunteer Marriage Mentors are also open to listening and supporting you. Check out our website for details.

Pregnancy Support Services in Christchurch

An Update on Pregnancy Choice and Flourish Op Shop

It has come to our attention that many in our Catholic Parishes mistakenly think that the John Paul II Centre is still operating a pregnancy centre. In 2021 we established an independent entity, the Pregnancy Choice service in Sydenham, to offer women information, pregnancy tests and

support, and we set up the Flourish Op Shop to raise funds to support that service. Both enterprises are run by Nurture Trust, which is a separate legal entity to the John Paul II Centre. Of course, we have given substantial support over the intervening years, to make sure that this

vital assistance to women and mothers is able to continue, but Pregnancy Choice was ultimately intended to raise its own operating funds. Below is an update, and a request for your continued support, from the General Manager of Nurture Trust.

A Way Forward: Pregnancy Choice in Action

by Rhonda Haultain, General Manager, Nurture Trust

Every day at Pregnancy Choice, we encounter women in desperate situations - women who feel lost, alone, and uncertain about their futures. This is the story of one such woman, whose life was changed by the care and support we provide, and whose story needs to be heard.

A young mother in her late 20s called our Pregnancy Choice freephone number in a state of panic. At 30 weeks pregnant, she was contemplating an abortion. She was overwhelmed, scared, and believed that ending her pregnancy was the only way to protect her baby from a dangerous situation. The father of her child was emotionally abusive and often drove while under the influence of drugs, yelling and belittling her. She feared that if she didn't act now, her baby's life could be at risk.

In her mind, aborting the baby seemed like an act of kindness—a way to protect her from a future where her child might be killed by a drunk father. This heart-breaking fear was consuming her. When she came into our Christchurch branch, she was fragile, exhausted, and emotionally drained. But our Support Work team were ready, as always, to help her find a way forward. We sat with her, listened to her fears, and helped her recognise that she wasn't alone. We provided a safe space for her to talk freely about her situation without any pressure or judgment.

As we talked, she shared how much she wanted to escape this toxic relationship but felt trapped—isolated and unsure what to do next. Her biggest fear wasn't just for her own safety, but for her child's. She wanted to protect her baby but felt uncertain about how to do so. Overwhelmed by it all, she broke down in tears.

At Pregnancy Choice, we understand that sometimes all a woman needs is someone to listen, but at other times, more support is required. In this case, we connected her with legal support to explore her options for protecting herself and her baby. We introduced her to a mentor—someone who could walk alongside her through the difficult days ahead. And we made sure she had practical support, including baby essentials from our Koha Room in Flourish Op Shop, so she could focus on the health and well-being of her newborn.

Fast forward to Christmas Eve, and this young mother gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. With continued support from her mentor and our network of resources, she began to find her strength. She joined a new mums' group where she connected with other mothers, shared experiences, and learned she wasn't alone. And with legal guidance, she now knows how to protect herself and her children if needed.



But this story isn't just about one woman—it's about the many women we support every week. Women who feel alone, uncertain, and overwhelmed by their circumstances. Whether facing an unexpected pregnancy or dealing with baby loss or needing post abortion support, we are here to ensure that no woman ever has to make a life-altering decision without knowing she has the support, resources, and a way out.

This is why Pregnancy Choice exists. To be a lifeline for women facing an unplanned or unexpected pregnancy. To be a safe place where they can talk openly, without fear of judgment, and where they can access the support, they need. But we can't do this alone.

We need your help.

We need volunteers—people who are willing to step in and offer their time to assist in our Op Shop or to train as Support Workers.

We need financial support to continue providing the critical services that make a difference in the lives of vulnerable women and families.

We ask you to think: What can you do to help us make these life-changing stories possible? What can you give—whether it's your time, your skills, or your financial support—that will change a woman's life and the life of her baby forever?

We need your help, to continue being a beacon of hope for those who feel lost in the dark. If you're ready to make a difference, please reach out to us today. Your support is the key to transforming lives. Email Rhonda: rhonda@nurturetrust.org.nz

Pregnancy Choice/Flourish Op Shop:

445 Colombo Stt (Corner Battersea & Colombo), Sydenham

For further information:

www.instagram.com/pregnancychoicechch
www.instagram.com/flourishopshop
www.pregnancychoice.org.nz/pccch

Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion

Abortion in NZ is freely available and legal until birth. Because of this, a vast number of people believe that it is no big deal, that the living, developing baby is “just a clump of cells,” the abortion is just a normal “reproductive health procedure” and there are no consequences for women after terminating.

Yet, abortion is a form of baby loss, and it does have an aftermath. Emotions after abortion vary from woman to woman, and from one moment or day, to the next. People can feel a confusing mix of feelings like relief and regret together. Some don't feel regret, yet struggle with flashbacks, memories, or other hard emotions. For many, unwanted effects (including alcohol and drug dependency, depression, anxiety and struggling with parenting) can dominate their life, until they acknowledge what lies beneath their struggle.

Micha's whisper for help came to us through our cellphone. “I can only text this. I cannot speak this out loud”. Confiding to another person about one's past abortion decision is, for many women, the first step to healing. Starting this journey demands huge courage.

Abby shared this story with us. When she and her husband found out that they were pregnant with their third child they were shocked. They were done with having babies, their family was large enough and the thought of going back to broken sleeps and nappy changes, along with the financial strain was too much. So they decided to go ahead with an abortion. It couldn't be that bad, right? People did it all the time and they seemed fine. Deep down both of them knew that it was wrong - they were brought up Catholic - but they felt they had no choice in the end.

Many years later, Abby was not okay. Her conscience could not get past what they had done. She was haunted by the abortion and had developed severe anxiety and addiction issues. This was when she decided to seek help. She looked online but could not find the help she needed in Christchurch. Some of the courses she found in NZ felt too long and too hard due to her busy work and family life. Abby started looking overseas for other options, and found them there. She would have preferred something in Christchurch but in the end she attended a Rachel's Vineyard retreat in Wellington after this was suggested from overseas. She has since become very supportive of any after-abortion program that has easy access and provides confidential help, especially a chat function “so that you can talk to someone discreetly when you need to”.

“ Many years later, Abby was not okay. Her conscience could not get past what they had done. She was haunted by the abortion and had developed severe anxiety and addiction issues. ”

Tragically, abortion numbers are rising in NZ. Nearly 1 in 3 women have had a termination and if they have not healed from this decision, they are more likely to make the same decision next time they are pregnant, compounding their trauma.

Helping Women Find A Way Forward

The John Paul II Centre has been privileged to accompany women for 20 years, helping them to find hope, to work through all that led to their decision, to move through the shame and guilt to forgiveness, perhaps healing, and certainly a freeing sense of becoming more 'whole'. We are guided by the example of Jesus, when the woman “caught in adultery” was thrust before him, and before an angry crowd who were ready to stone her. Jesus did not condemn her, nor did He shame her. Neither did He pretend that nothing was wrong. He did not ignore her action which was far beneath her dignity. That would have left her on the same self-destructive path. He listened patiently and with compassion, and in his listening she found a new path, a new understanding, a new strength to change.

Having learned from Abby's story, and guided by research, we are expanding our Support After Abortion outreach, so that women can contact us anonymously via phone, email, Facebook, Instagram, and a website chat function. In addition to in-person confidential sessions, we are also offering more flexible pathways to healing, including online sessions, privately or in a small group setting.

If we can support you, or someone you know, please be in touch.

UPCOMING EVENTS



MAY
17

Joy-Filled
Marriage Preparation Course



JULY
19

Women's Health Forum
Lamb of God Centre



MAY
28

Life Matters Workshop:
Christian Parenting in a Digital Age
Bishop Joyce Centre, Sockburn



JULY
27

Life Matters Parent Workshop
Holy Family Parish



JULY
12

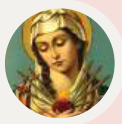
Dio Date Night for married
and engaged couples



RECURRING EVENTS AT HOLY FAMILY PARISH

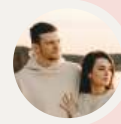
2ND MON
EACH
MONTH

7 Sorrows
Grief Support Rosary



4TH MON
EACH
MONTH

ARISE
Infertility Group



JOHN PAUL II CENTRE FOR LIFE

We are a Charitable Trust with a small team of part time staff, a volunteer Trust Board AND A BIG MISSION.

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marriage and family



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legacy to build the
culture of life



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to commemorate
your loved one



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special day with
a celebration donation



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for the cost
of a latte

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Thank you for your support

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