



## *Pro-Life Activities*

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Please note that we are unable to provide the Spanish version in today's release. The Spanish version will be made available next week on our website. Thank you.

### **LIFE ISSUES FORUM**

**October 2, 2009  
For Immediate Release**

#### **Inside Repeat Abortions By Mary E. McClusky**

Why would a woman have fifteen abortions in sixteen years? In her upcoming book, Impossible Motherhood, set for release on October 6, Irene Vilar attempts to answer that question. Vilar's courageous and frank attempt to chronicle her story is an opportunity to examine the disturbing cycle of repeat abortions, to look beyond the abortion industry's talking points to the tragic reality of abortion, and to draw attention to the healing that is possible by God's grace through the ministry of the Church.

Advance excerpts of the book reveal that Vilar's difficult childhood included a suicidal mother, two brothers with heroin addictions, and her own unhealthy teenage relationship and eventual marriage to her 50-year-old college professor who felt that children smothered sexual desire. "My story is an exploration of family trauma, self-inflicted wounds, compulsive patterns, and the moral clarity and moral confusion guiding my choice," she writes.

Vilar defines her life by her abortion experiences. She admits to an abortion addiction and describes that time of her life when she aborted child after child as a "steady stream of unhappiness." Yet she never spoke about her abortions, and tried to suppress her feelings, although every time she read or heard about abortion she reacted with uncontrolled emotion.

Many women experience profound guilt and shame after an abortion. In an attempt to recover the child they lost, they may try to have "replacement babies." When the circumstances remain the same, the next child is aborted, increasing self-loathing and perpetuating the destructive cycle. Like other women who've had multiple abortions, Vilar admits to sabotaging her contraceptive methods to experience the self-mutilation of repeat abortions.

Vilar's story is a stark reminder that women who choose abortion have often suffered from emotional and physical trauma. Instead of addressing their emotional and material needs, the abortion industry exploits their situation, offering them a "quick fix." Despite Vilar's stated goal to tell her story without politics, the excerpt from Impossible Motherhood is filled with pro-choice talking points. This is not surprising: the book's co-author, Rachel Jones, works for the Guttmacher Institute, the research affiliate of Planned Parenthood, the number one supplier of abortion and contraception. Despite the abortion industry's influence on her book, Vilar seems to have freed herself from their hold on her personal life. Now re-married, she credits the self-reflection required for writing her story during her sixteenth pregnancy for the successful birth of her daughter and later, her son.

Other women who struggle with a past abortion may find a glimmer of hope in Vilar's story. The self-destructive cycle of abortion can end by accepting God's forgiveness, and by learning to forgive themselves and all those who were involved in the abortion decision. Though women who have lost a child to abortion often think "I don't deserve to be happy," God does not want us to despair. He desires our happiness and offers forgiveness and healing. Encourage any woman you know who's had an abortion to find hope and healing in the Church's post-abortion ministry, Project Rachel, which has been providing free, confidential help to grieving women and men for twenty-five years. To learn more and to find services near you, visit Project Rachel at [www.hopeafterabortion.com](http://www.hopeafterabortion.com).

Mary McClusky is Special Projects Coordinator at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops' pro-life activities, go to [www.usccb.org/prolife](http://www.usccb.org/prolife).