

## Ritual for Healing and Wholeness After an Abortion (Christian tradition)

This Christian ritual is intended for use when counseling a woman who has had an abortion and feels the need for closure and/or forgiveness. The woman should be encouraged to invite her partner, family members or friends to participate if they are affirming of her abortion decision. (C) signifies the clergy person or lay minister, (W) signifies the woman making the decision, (O) signifies others in attendance. A candle, matches, water, and oil are necessary. If desired, Holy Communion can be included as part of this ritual.

### Opening Words

C) Blessed are you, O Holy One, for your presence with (name).

### (Clergy person lights candle.)

We light a candle to signify the presence of the Holy Spirit here now, and with (name) always.

### Antiphonal Reading

C) Our help is in the name of the Lord

W/O) who made heaven and earth.

C) Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

W/O) they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

C) they shall run and not be weary,

W/O) they shall walk and not faint.

### Prayer

C) Let us pray: Merciful God, we ask you today to renew and make whole your beloved daughter (name), who has made a difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy. We are saddened that the (name's) circumstances made this decision necessary. It was not simple, it was not painless, but it was the best decision she knew how to make. She carries the weight of the decision in her heart. We call on you now to make your presence known to (name), to surround her with your healing power and to lift the weight from her heart with the power of your love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

### Reflection

C) In the book of Luke, we read of a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. In those days, a bleeding woman was considered to be unclean and sinful, a pariah. No one would touch or be touched by a bleeding woman for fear of contamination. As Christ walked through the pressing crowd, the woman reached out and touched his garment and was healed immediately. Feeling his healing power going forth, Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" Eventually, the frightened woman came trembling and fell at his feet. She was no doubt afraid that Jesus would be angry at her for defiling him. Yet, in the presence of a crowd who would judge her sinful, Jesus said: O, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

### (Clergy person takes water, makes a cross on W's forehead)

(Name), this water represents the love of Jesus Christ, which is poured down upon you now and always, for eternity. No matter what you do, or how far you go, you can never separate yourself from Jesus' love.

### (Clergy person takes oil, anoints W's forehead)

(Name), this oil represents the healing power of Jesus Christ, which will renew your spirit. Give yourself over to the Great Physician, the Wonderful Counselor, he will nurture you and make you whole.

### Psalm 121

W) I lift my eyes to the hills?  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.

C) He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.

He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

**W)** The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

**C)** The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.

**Prayer**

**C)** Let us pray: God of love and mercy, deliver (named) from despair, sadness and grief. Grant her your perfect peace, confirm her past decisions, and fill her with your Holy Spirit, so that she may claim the life you offer in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen. **(Clergyperson blows out the candle.)**

**Benediction**

**C)** **(Name)**, this candle is for you to keep. Whenever you burn it, may you be reminded of God's constant presence in your life and steadfast love. Go in peace with God.

**TEXTS CITED IN THE RITUAL FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS AFTER ABORTION:**

Psalm 124:8 Isaiah 40: 31 Isaiah 40: 31 Luke 8:43-48 Psalm 121

*This ritual was developed by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Minnesota, January, 1993, for use by the Options Clergy Counseling Service. It may be freely reproduced for the purpose of pastoral counseling only.*