

Perhaps you were born for such a time as this. Esther 4:14

Dear Friends,

I am nearing the end of my first year here at Next Step Pregnancy Services as Executive Director and what a year it has been! If I would have known what the year would bring when I began, would I have done anything differently? In thinking on this letter, I looked for inspiration from other followers of Christ and their doubts and struggles to find their place. Almost immediately I was reminded of St. Joseph, whose role in the Christmas story has so much to teach us. Joseph is often described as quiet, humble, and obedient. He was a man who, like his wife Mary, was asked to place all his trust in God no matter what. Now I have never been described as quiet, humble, or obedient. More like restless, proud, and headstrong. So, one might wonder why St. Joseph came to my mind in such a tumultuous time. Because by trusting in God, Joseph *"immediately put into action the plan of God."* * And that is what we have been called to do this year. Now. To act. Saint Joseph listened. He believed. He obeyed. He was not, I am sure, without his doubts or fears, but those reactions did little to deter him from his faith. He trusted in God's plan in the face of circumstances that may seem insurmountable. Uncomfortable. Unpopular. Radical. This is much like my own position and what we here at Next Step, and you, our partners, face in our pursuit to protect the unborn and to serve those in need. What we fight for is considered by some to be unpopular, harmful, antiquated - radical. But still we are relentless.

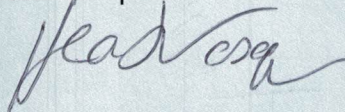
Throughout this year we have experienced unprecedented ups and downs: loss of volunteers, loss of fundraising events, illness, political upheaval, and an upswing in uncertainty, loss, and abortion-vulnerable women. We have also seen compassion, generosity, and justice prevail. We have been able to help more women and families than ever before because of timely gifts and charitable givers of time and talent at just the right moment for just the right need. God also is relentless in His pursuit of us!

We ask now that God pour His many blessings upon you and your families this Holy Season, and we pray that we may remain steadfast in our mission to pursue Him and His plan for us, so that we, like St. Joseph, place our trust in Him who is God, and courageously put His plan for us into action. In conclusion, our Next Step family wishes you a peaceful and joyful Christmas and we thank you for all of your gifts and service to our life-affirming mission.

*(blogpost by Sr. Barbara Gerace, stjosephhelps.wordpress.com, February 16th, 2018)

Joyfully Yours,

Heather Vasquez



*For unto Us,
a Child is born...*

