



prenatal partners for life

# Hope



THE NEWSLETTER FOR PRENATAL PARTNERS FOR LIFE

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**Do Not Fear, for I AM with you; do not be afraid, for I AM your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand.**  
**Isaiah 41:10**

As I write this article, it is on the **Feast Day of the Solemnity of All Saints Day**. We live in a time where we need the wisdom of the saints more than ever. One can easily forget Who is really in charge amidst all the challenges and uncertainty. We can forget our wellbeing and peace is with the One who created us and if we follow Him and His teachings and Commandments, our souls can rest in Him no matter what is going on in the world. **"The world is thy ship, not thy home,"** said Saint Therese of Lisieux. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and put all our trust in Him alone each and every day!

**"Pray, Hope and Don't Worry,"** another great Saint, Padre Pio said. As the dignity and value of life is threatened more and more, we will continue to pray that all life is protected, valued, loved and seen as the gift it is. We will still work to change hearts and minds to see the unique gift children with special needs and health issues are and that they are worthy of all treatment and care and should not be discriminated against. ***The world would have peace if only men of politics would follow the Gospels,*** said Saint Vincent de Paul

Saint Maximilian Kolbe said, **"The most deadly poison of our times is indifference. And this happens, although the praise of God should know no limits. Let us strive, therefore, to praise him to the greatest extent of our powers."** I think indifference is still very poisonous along with deception in society today. The deception that a child with special needs will ruin your family and marriage and that they have nothing to contribute to society. These kids teach us what love really is and they help the world become a better place.

**"Love's profit lies in its practice,"** said St. Bernard. So let us love one another, no matter who we voted for. Let us love both moms and babies and cherish all life at every stage. **"The man who truly loves God also loves his neighbor,"** said St. Anthony Mary Claret. But let us love in truth, not in false lies of deception and evil. **If you want peace, work for justice. If you want justice, defend life. If you want life, embrace the truth – the truth revealed by God,** Saint John Paul II. *People seem to have forgotten the Commandment of God; Thou Shall Not Kill, and that human life is precious and made in God's image.*

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, **"Abortion is the killer of peace in the world. . . the greatest destroyer of peace, because if a mother can destroy her own child what is left for others but to kill each other – there is nothing to prevent them."** All children are a blessing and a gift with a purpose and plan from God. Saint Gianna Molla who died for her child said, **"One cannot love without suffering and suffer without loving."** As we enter the Christmas season, it is appropriate to remember it was **preborn Saint John the Baptist who leapt in his mother's womb with joy at the sound of the Blessed Mother Mary's voice recognizing preborn Jesus,** who came as a baby to teach us about suffering and love.

This Christmas season, I wish you love, peace and truth in Jesus our Savior. May you find your hope in Him and be blessed with the abundance of His love, life and peace! We know our hope does not disappoint if it remains in the One who is always faithful, true and unchanging. **"Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in You."** St. Augustine of Hippo. **All Saints of heaven, pray for us!**

With His Love,  
Mary

SUPPORT

INFORMATION

ENCOURAGEMENT



# Family Spotlight

We are the Gundry family - Lisa (mom), Devan (dad), Thomas (7), Peter (5), Simon and Sawyer (2.5) and baby #5 due in late June. Early on in pregnancy with our now 2.5 year old twins, Sawyer was diagnosed with Prune Belly Syndrome and bilateral club feet. We were told he had a less than 5% chance of surviving past delivery and if he did survive, he may have no lung or kidney function. There is an in-utero surgery offered in some Prune Belly Syndrome cases but we were told it was too risky with a twin pregnancy and were instead offered selective abortion, which we declined. At most follow up appointments, abortion was offered but we always declined.

The twins decided to come fast and early at 34 weeks gestation. After life saving measures at our local rural hospital (including intubation for both babies and chest compressions and multiple rounds of epinephrine for Sawyer) they were airlifted to Children's Minneapolis where Simon spent 3.5 weeks in the NICU and ICC and Sawyer spent 15 months in the NICU, ICC, and PICU. For much of that time, our family relocated 2.5 hours from home to be closer to the NICU. Having (at the time) a 5 year old and 3 year old made it a juggling act and not always possible to make it to the hospital.

Through family and our church community we were connected with Mary from Prenatal Partners for Life. Mary, Colleen, and Julie have been such blessings to our family! They have provided amazing support for our family and visited Sawyer when we haven't been able to - giving me much peace of mind knowing he has people to cuddle him and read, talk, and play with him when I can't be there. They always bring snacks and treats for us, toys and balloons for Sawyer and the other boys, and we've gotten a family grant for gas cards, DoorDash gift cards, Dominos gift cards, a car seat, and more.

Sawyer has now been home for just over a year and is thriving. He has met so many milestones that we were told he would never meet, and he continues to prove everyone wrong! Sawyer has taught our family, friends, and community just how precious every life really is.

-The Gundry Family





## Joy, Sorrow, and Memories

There is something about the special time of the Thanksgiving and Christmas season that makes grief more keenly felt. Maybe it's because of the happy memories that were made and are remembered, and now won't ever be the same. Maybe it is because families are gathered together so the one missing is felt more intensely. Everything is different and changed in your world. Your heart is broken but the world keeps going. Because it's hard for people who have not experienced the loss of a child to grasp the immensity of the pain parents and families feel, holidays can be a challenge.

- \*If you are grieving, be gentle and patient with yourself and others.
- \*Be flexible and don't be afraid to simplify holiday plans that may be too stressful or cause anxiety.
- \*Grief is exhausting and the first year of loss is especially hard. Take care of your health!
- \*If some situations or people are too challenging or painful to be around, it's okay to practice self-care and have limits.
- \*Know that people grieve differently. Don't compare yourself with others. Grief is unpredictable, with ups and downs at the most unexpected moments.
- \*Cling to God! God loves you and is with you! He grieves with you and will never leave you!
- \*While you will never stop grieving, it will get better. There will always be the pain of loss but also the joy of their life and the joy of God's love and of heaven.
- \*Sorrow, joy and thanksgiving can all be present at the same time. As time passes, sorrow becomes less raw and joy and thanksgiving for the gift of their life becomes stronger.
  
- \*If you are supporting a grieving family, don't be afraid to acknowledge the loss and mention their loved one's name. Families love having people remember and say their child's name. They never forget it.
- \*Listen and be present if they want to talk. Share memories. Don't be afraid to show emotion and let others be comfortable showing emotion.
- \*Be gentle and patient. Be understanding and flexible if plans change.
- \*Remember the loved one who has died by including them in some special way. Some ideas are: lighting a candle in their memory, having a table setting for them at the table, making a special centerpiece in honor of them, having a toast in honor of them, giving gifts to a charity in their honor, visiting their grave, sharing stories, making a craft or special dish, doing something to help others in their honor, saying prayers with their name, having a special Mass or prayer service, releasing lighted lanterns or balloons, sharing pictures, videos or small gifts.
- \*Offer practical support by giving meals, running errands, wrapping presents, babysitting, gift cards, driving children, yard work, and anything else needed.
- \*Most of all pray for them and let them know they are loved and are not alone. Remind them that you are there when needed, and check up on them regularly. Let them grieve in their own way.
- \*Remind them of God's love and faithfulness. Words of love and care are so comforting and life giving to a hurting heart.
- \*Don't forget their child at important days of the year like a birthday, anniversary of their death, or another important milestone.

## Our Mission

Prenatal Partners for Life is dedicated to providing families (either expecting or those who have had a child with special needs, health issues, or a life limiting condition) with the support, information, and encouragement they need to make informed decisions involving their child's care.

We believe that these children are unique gifts from God and have a special purpose in life that only they can fulfill. We believe that these children are made in God's image, and that He has a plan and a purpose for every life He creates, no matter how long or short that life may be. We believe that these precious children are a blessing to their families, their communities, and the world.

Our goal is to provide honest, practical information and support by linking expectant parents or new parents with other parents who have had the same or a similar diagnosis for their child. We also strive to educate the world about the unique blessings that these children are. We call them "Teachers of Our Souls."

The support we provide can be given in person, over the phone, by email, or in written correspondence and may include a variety of practical assistance that is based on each family's individual needs.





Thank you everyone for your love, kindness, prayers and support throughout the year! We are so grateful to all our benefactors, volunteers, friends, supporters, and the families we have been blessed to serve! God is so good, and you are all such a gift to us, and we are so thankful for you! Please remember us in your year-end giving with a tax-deductible donation if you are able. Know that you are always in our prayers! Please keep us in your prayers too!

***\*Remember:** we give out a personalized ornament to families who have lost a child. Please let us know if there is anyone you would like an ornament to be sent to.*

