

# Our Story... from a Pregnancy Loss to the Creation of a Ministry



In 2008, at a Queen of the Miraculous Medal Parish Circle meeting, one of the members mentioned that her son and his wife had just suffered their second miscarriage, and told how they were both devastated by the loss of their child. As a mom, the circle member wanted to share comfort and assistance. She struggled as to how she could best help her son and his wife. About half of the ten women present at that meeting shared that they too had miscarriages years earlier which they had never gotten over. They felt a sense of loss, confusion, and even guilt as to the eternal life of their child promised in Baptism. Due to the circumstances of their child's birth/death, most did not have a prayer service, memorial, and/or burial in which to say good-bye to their baby as part of their grieving process.

At this same time another circle member, Rosemary Gunsett, learned that her daughter-in-law suffered her second miscarriage in less than six months. Rosemary began to search the Internet for resources to share with her son and his wife to help them deal with their loss. Their miscarriage brought back painful memories as Rosemary had also lost a baby at about three months gestation on Good Friday, March 24, 1967. She was at home and alone; her husband who was in the military was deployed. Having just moved to the area a few months earlier, Rosemary did not know what to do. She asked a friend to take her to the Emergency Room at the local hospital, which happened to be next door to a mortuary. This was not the scenario she had envisioned to welcome her baby. After hearing the nurse tell the doctor that Rosemary had a spontaneous abortion, she was devastated and overcome with grief. The terminology used by the nurse in reference to Rosemary's miscarriage was offensive as she and her husband desperately wanted this child. Rosemary experienced the emptiness, grief, and devastation that other mothers feel who lose a child during pregnancy.

Often a mother who has miscarried or had a stillbirth is left with a feeling of emptiness, guilt and sadness, which can certainly be described as a hole in her heart. Fathers also share this same sense of loss and devastation. Family and friends may not know what to say or do to help. During Rosemary's Internet search, she contacted a ministry of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio. The director of this ministry shared advice, information, resources, and expertise as to how to provide Catholic/Christian options to parents who suffer the loss of an infant through miscarriage or stillbirth. Through this process Rosemary was able to heal from the loss of her baby so many years before, as well as offer comfort to her son and daughter-in-law.

When volunteering at our local hospital, Rosemary shared her story with a nurse. She told the nurse about the ministry that she found while searching the Internet and how it had helped her deal with both her own miscarriage and the miscarriage of her daughter-in-law. A few weeks later, the nurse called Rosemary and asked her to help a family who had just lost a full term baby boy. They were homeless, living in a shelter and had no means of paying for a funeral for their son. They were desperate for any help that they could get. Rosemary contacted a funeral home and cemetery that would provide a dignified burial/interment for their baby, at no cost.

Thus began **Treasures In Our Hearts (TIOH)**, an all volunteer ministry at Queen of the Miraculous Medal Parish, Jackson, MI, created in memory of Gabriel Gunsett - March 24, 1967 and Kaitlin Rose Nelkie - August 18, 2006. Serving those who experience a pregnancy loss, **TIOH** provides comfort and assistance to families of all faiths with memorial and burial/interment options, funeral home assistance, and grief support.