

# Pro-life book review

By Jessica R. Kenney

## **My Child, My Gift: A Positive Response to Serious Prenatal Diagnosis**

“Love, not intelligence, makes us human.” This simple phrase encompasses the author’s entire approach to what could cripple any couple experiencing the joy of pregnancy.

Madeline Nugent gives parents who have received an adverse prenatal diagnosis an easy-to-use guide that walks them through the accompanying emotions and decisions that must be made, so that they

can give birth and make life-affirming plans for their child. She draws on her personal experience and many interviews with other parents. This book covers such subjects as patient advocacy, matters of faith, family life and the future of children who live with serious disabilities.

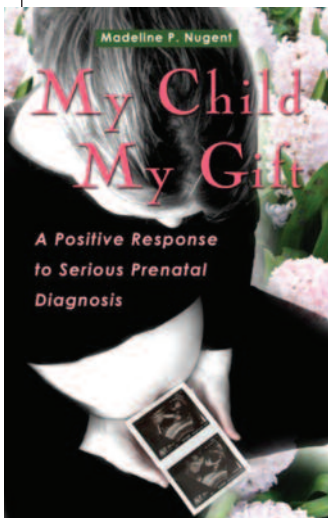
Most useful are the glossary of medical terms, a list of Scripture quotations, a list of useful agencies and resources, two grief journals, stories for siblings, the Catholic Church’s teachings on early induction of labor and a chapter for parents who have aborted their disabled babies. Use the internet if you need more detailed descriptions than those provided in the glossary.

What makes this title especially interesting is that one could use it as a practical guide for any child. For instance, on page 153, Nugent discusses sibling rivalry. The advice given there (assigning chores, disciplining and encouraging social participation) would work for any number of children. Also, there are a number of instances wherein the author gives good advice on marriage, prayer and daily life in general, for example, “Make a list of things you feel guilty about...Cross off the ones you are not responsible for. Cross off the ones you cannot change. Make a plan of action for dealing with the rest” (page 121).

However, be forewarned: This is definitely an emotionally heavy book, despite its small size. The sheer emotional tone of some interview excerpts

can be overwhelming—I found that it aroused incredibly strong feelings of empathy. So I recommend reading the book in small chunks, alternating it with another activity. After every chapter, I played with my 10-month-old son. Nonetheless, there are amazingly joyful experiences shared throughout, and overall, this is an emotionally uplifting, life-affirming and practical book that is tremendously helpful for parents who have received an adverse prenatal diagnosis or discovered their child’s special needs after birth.

*Jessica R. Kenney is associate editor of Celebrate Life. One of the resources listed in My Child, My Gift is Prenatal Partners for Life, featured in this issue of Celebrate Life on page 32.*



by Madeline Pecora  
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