



In the recently released pro-life film, *The Matter of Life*, it was stated that only 4% of churches are actively involved in a pro-life ministry. It is more critical now than ever before for parishes to activate and engage with women facing unplanned pregnancies. Footprints was developed specifically to help parishes do just that! The women served by Footprints know abortion is not an option but are terrified of what lies ahead and are mourning the loss of their dreams for their future. They desperately need us to pick them up, dust them off and bring them to the Lord; the Lord who says, "...surely I know the plans I have for you...plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29:11

There are three main components to the program:

- 1) There are weekly small-group meetings led by trained facilitators that are designed to bring these women into the presence of Jesus to experience His mercy and grace. Being in a state of grace is crucial so that they can hear the still small whisper of God's voice during this highly chaotic and stressful time. We encourage groups to meet on a weekly basis at the parish and read through each chapter's material, so that the women begin to view the parish as their home and the parishioners as their family. Each woman is spiritually adopted by a specific ministry within the church, and they will serve as her personal prayer warriors from this point forward.
- 2) After seven weeks of small-group meetings; the women, their families, and friends are invited to attend a Celebration of Life Dinner that has been planned and prepared by the facilitators and volunteers of the parish. It is a time to celebrate each young mom's heroic decision to parent or place her child for adoption. Members of the clergy and heads of various parish ministries are also invited with the purpose of making a personal connection with the women and extending an invitation to participate in more programs of the parish (single parent groups, Moms and Tots, baptismal preparation, young adult groups, women's studies, etc.). We want them to feel connected and continue to grow in their faith journey.
- 3) The facilitators are the women's primary contact and act as liaisons to connect them with parish and community resources and services. They will help develop a "wish list" for each woman which can be shared with parishioners to provide immediate and long-term material support, as well as assistance with duties once the baby is born (babysitting, meals, etc.).

Let us have the courage to walk with these women during this chaotic time, to guide them to Jesus, and welcome them with their precious babies into our churches and families! To quote someone who witnessed a family member benefit from Footprints: *"I wish this program was available when my sister was single and pregnant because then she would never have left the Church."* This is what Footprints is all about — to provide the opportunity for a parish community to model the love of Jesus — so that our church becomes the first place a woman facing an unexpected pregnancy seeks help, rather than the last.