

In 1960 the stamp of “ILLEGITIMATE” was finally removed from birth certificates in the state of Texas. The fight phrase for this change was that “no child is illegitimate, every child is a miracle” and the father’s name on the birth certificate would read “unknown”. The woman behind this, Edna Gladney, was the founder of the Edna Gladney home in Fort Worth, Texas. I was one of the last infants born in this home for unwed mothers before Ms. Gladney died.

This being my story, I was raised to believe that I was very special and chosen. At sixteen, my junior year of high school, I quickly found myself trying to acquire all new friends in a new city, many miles away from what I had considered home. I made some choices like any other teenager that weren’t in my best interest, and surely not with any predestined awareness of the journey that was getting ready to transpire. So . . . 16 and pregnant, and determined to have the baby - I was going to be a mom! Well . . . things didn’t flow from there as I had imagined . . .

One day after I had broken this news I was told I was being taken to a doctor to have some tests ran and then, an unimaginable thing happened. I remember signing some forms and a nurse calling my name to come in and the next thing I remember is being awakened by a rather large African-American nurse with a sharp, to the point voice instructing me to “get up honey, and you get in this restroom and you wash your face.” Very weak and definitely not really having the stamina to walk yet, I lifted myself up slowly and sat on the edge of the bed. The physical pain I felt was excruciating. Then finally, which seemed like a long time, I made it over to the basin with a mirror hanging over it to wash my face.

Looking up in the mirror that day, seeing myself with two instant black eyes, that wouldn’t wash off, the reality of what had transpired flowed through my whole body. I first remember anger . . . then humility, shame, and embarrassment. I had had an abortion . . .

I quickly stuffed all of these feelings into my personal memory bag, making sure that I knotted it up real tight, where nothing would seep out. I lived with these feelings until late 2004. After 29 years of very instrumentally and strategically keeping my abortion a secret, I was very blessed to be “chosen” to be one of eleven women in

Centerville, Texas gathering at the “Abiding Place”, an awesomely reverent place, with my sisters in Christ and with God.

The weekend of December 9th and 10th will forever have a place in my heart. On the last day of our retreat, right before we left to come home, three very special sisters in Christ supported me as I walked through God’s country to the top of a hill, a place that it destined by God to house a memorial to the unborn. As we embraced each other, we cried, prayed, and sang to the Lord. God responded with His miraculous extension of grace through this sisterhood and He began the beginning of closure in this journey for me.

I know to this day that God’s extension of grace is limitless and it all began for me at a place named “Gilead”. I thank God daily for that place of peaceful serenity and a final place of rest for my unborn child, and for me . . .

Thank You God! And all God’s people said .....AMEN!!!