

CHRISTIN ROSA



Choosing *Life* after
a Devastating Prenatal Diagnosis

Saving Nate not only reiterates the truth of the preciousness of every human life but also lays out a road map for how to persevere in faith. Christin Rosa and her husband, Mauricio, never gave up, even while being pressured by multiple doctors to abort their baby boy. Their witness is inspiring, and this book is a must-read for anyone who's ever received an unfavorable prenatal diagnosis.

Abby Johnson, Planned Parenthood clinic director turned pro-life advocate; author of *Unplanned* and *What's in Mommy's Tummy?*

Saving Nate is a powerful and deeply moving testament to the unwavering love of a mother and father who chose life for their child in the face of overwhelming uncertainty. Christin Rosa's journey through a devastating prenatal diagnosis and her steadfast trust in God's plan echo the stories of many families who've been pressured to view their children's lives as disposable. As someone who lived the reality of surviving an abortion and has dedicated my life to advocating for the dignity of every human being, I am profoundly moved by the courage, faith, and resilience displayed in these pages. This book is a deeply personal reminder that every life is a gift from God.

Melissa Ohden, founder and CEO of the Abortion Survivors Network and author of *Abortion Survivors Break Their Silence*

Christin's account of her pregnancy with Nate is not only engaging, suspenseful, and heartwarming but also maddening. Her faith, courage, and perseverance against all odds are inspiring. Yet her treatment by those whose job it was to care for her and her baby is shocking, especially the insensitivity and stark callousness of the doctors she encountered. For me

as an obstetrician, it was enlightening to read her perspective as a patient. Are babies—especially if they’re not “perfect”—considered disposable? This book is a must-read for anyone in the field of obstetrics. Attitudes must change, and I believe Christin’s story will help make a difference.

Dr. Patti Giebink, retired obstetrician, former abortion doctor, and author of *Unexpected Choice: An Abortion Doctor’s Journey to Pro-Life*

I’ve heard from many moms and dads who’ve been told, “Your baby is incompatible with life” or “He (or she) won’t live very long.” And with each story my heart breaks. That’s why I’m so thankful for *Saving Nate*. Author Christin Rosa and her husband, Mauricio, don’t hide the struggles they faced when they received a devastating diagnosis. They share their fears and doubts even as they know their comfort and provision comes from our Father in heaven. As Christin writes, “He’s the One who holds us tightly. . . . It’s to Him we must cling.” And as Mauricio says, “we’re people of life, so we’ll always fight for life.” If you or someone you know is walking this journey, this book won’t change a diagnosis—but it will bring hope where there is hurt.

Robyn Chambers, vice president of advocacy for children at Focus on the Family

From the very first page, I could hear the roller coaster; I felt myself on the same ride that Christin describes. The emotions, the impossible choices—no parent should ever have to face them. I, too, was presented with the option to end my baby’s life following a prenatal diagnosis, and I also made the choice to carry her to term. The courage Mauricio and Christin showed in the face of fear is extraordinary. The faith and hope they carried

with them through every step of this journey is a beautiful gift to the reader. I'm deeply grateful for Christin's vulnerability in sharing her story and for the hope she offers with each word. *Saving Nate* is a sacred offering of strength and courage to everyone who reads it.

Laura Huene, BSN, RN, CPLC, founder of String of Pearls (perinatal hospice) and life coach with the Purpose Project

I worked with Mauricio Rosa when Nate was born, so reading Christin's account of their journey reminded me of the faith this couple displayed during the many highs and lows of that time. Their confidence in God was and is an inspiration to me. More importantly, this is a story of God being greater than the odds Nate faced. *Saving Nate* will encourage you to celebrate and stand for the gift of life.

Kirk Giles, copastor of Forward Church in Cambridge, Ontario, and former president of Promise Keepers Canada

The hero of *Saving Nate*, as Christin makes so clear, is our Lord, Jesus Christ. Her story is a testimony that despite a death-embracing culture, Christ is not done with Canada. *Saving Nate* will encourage you, inspire you, and embolden you to share the hope of Jesus Christ.

Matthew Harper, executive director of Speak for the Unborn

Christin writes a courageous, compassionate, and hope-filled testimony of God's goodness in the most uncertain and heartbreakng circumstances. In a world where a prenatal diagnosis is often met with fear and the pressure to choose death, this book stands as a beacon of truth, love, and unwavering faith. Page after page, it offers another way with the gentle yet firm

reminder that all human life has value. *Saving Nate* is not just a book—it's an *encouragement* to trust God even when the odds seem stacked against you. Whether this could be your story or you simply want to learn more, this book will encourage you in your faith and in your resolve for life.

Jojo Ruba, founder of RedeemingConversations.ca

Honest and thought-provoking, *Saving Nate* takes the reader into the depths of the Rosa family's fight for their baby's life. Christin takes the reader on a real and raw emotional roller coaster of trusting God while standing firm against the doctors' "reduction" advice. Highly recommended.

Sandra Gullacher, operations manager for Life Room

Reading *Saving Nate* felt like I was not only watching the events of Christin Rosa's life unfold—I could also imagine the emotional ups and downs she and her husband faced. I felt myself cheering them on! Under pressure from medical professionals to abort Nate, Christin and Mauricio did not consider abortion to be an option as their relationship with Jesus guided them and they leaned on Him. This is an essential book for anyone who is considering abortion because their unborn child has some abnormalities or might not survive. Well done, Christin. Thank you for letting us journey with you and for inspiring us!

Greg Musselman, minister-at-large with the Voice of the Martyrs
Canada and former host of *100 Huntley Street*

As someone who has experienced the devastating trauma of a past abortion, I can personally attest that abortion is never the answer it's presented to be. *Saving Nate* is a poignant and

beautifully written page-turner that sheds light on realities many parents face yet are rarely talked about. Christin offers hope and encouragement, even when everyone around her seems to be pushing for death. She compassionately unpacks situations that others might face and highlights the importance of knowing God and His Word. Her story is informative, educational, and deeply moving. My prayer is that this book will change many hearts and minds about the value of life and ultimately direct readers to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jocelynn Rodrigues, founder of Restored and Redeemed Ministries and speaker for RedeemingConversations.ca

It was difficult for my tear-filled eyes to focus on Christin Rosa's account of the battle for her son Nathaniel's life, yet it was even harder to put down the book, because my emotional state kept me glued to each page. Christin presents a beautiful, heart-wrenching tale that artfully weaves her background and marriage to Mauricio with the struggles the couple faced when they discovered she was pregnant with twins. The voices around them shouting death were loud, but more powerful was their trust in Jesus Christ.

Marie-Blanche Mitchell, retired teacher and author of *Loving Zoe*

Saving Nate is a profoundly beautiful journey of faith, medicine, and God's grace cooperating in our world. We witness a family trust in God's divine plan regardless of the outcome and how their faith drew countless nurses, doctors, and others they encountered into a captivating story that only our Lord could author.

Cameron Côté, western outreach director for the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform and host of *The Pro-Life Guys Podcast*

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a Devastating Prenatal Diagnosis

FOCUS
ON THE FAMILY®

A Focus on the Family resource
published by Tyndale House Publishers

Saving Nate: Choosing Life after a Devastating Prenatal Diagnosis
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A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

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Interior design by Cathy Miller

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ISBN 978-1-64607-183-8

Printed in the United States of America

32 31 30 29 28 27 26
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

*Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all who are appointed to die.*

PROVERBS 31:8, NKJV

The monitor beeps.

I'm propped up on pillows in a hospital maternity ward. Sensors are attached to wires strapped to bands across my protruding belly. A blood pressure cuff is shackled to my right arm. An IV pokes out of my left. I should be in extreme pain this far into labor, but I feel nothing more than a light pressure with each contraction. I marvel at the wonder of the epidural. Other than the discomfort of being confined to this bed, I'm in good spirits, expectant, and hopeful.

I turn my eyes downward and try once again to pick up where I left off in my book, reading and rereading the same paragraph for the third, fourth . . . I've lost count of the number of times. The clock on the wall tells me it's getting late, almost nine thirty. I pause my reading yet again, considering that the long-awaited moment of our hopes, prayers, and fears has almost arrived. The long months of anticipation became weeks, then days, then hours, and they have now dwindled to minutes.

I glance around the hospital room. My husband, Mauricio, is sitting near the bed reading something on his phone. An avid reader, he's spent this time feeding his passion for theology and keeping family and friends updated on my progress. The sky outside is now dark, and the streetlights have come alive on this first day of spring.

Like thrill seekers securely fastened into a roller coaster just beginning its ascent, Mauricio and I have been inching our way toward this day, preparing for the inescapable plunge that we have no way of stopping.

The smells of disinfectant, clean linens, and musty hallways mingle with the sound of indistinct voices from the hallway outside my room.

My thoughts drift to the inevitable. Like thrill seekers securely fastened into a roller coaster just beginning its ascent, Mauricio and I have been inching our way toward this day, preparing for the inescapable plunge that we have no way of stopping. We know we're approaching a drop that will take

our breath away with its intensity. We steel ourselves for the jarring twists and turns that are sure to shake us and maybe even eject us from the coaster—at least it feels that way. We have no choice but to cling tightly to our seats and to each other, utter desperate prayers for help, and hope that somehow we'll make it through.

We didn't choose to board this ride, and we certainly wish we could get off somehow, but we have faith in the good God who promises to be with us. He's the One who holds us tightly. It's His great and powerful arms that hold us as we hurtle along at break-neck speed. It's to Him we must cling.

Jenny, the nurse who's been monitoring me, enters the room. Her curly red hair is swept up into a tight ponytail. A friendly smile adorns her face.

“Let’s take a look here and see how you’re doing. I think we must be getting close now,” she says as she checks to see how dilated I am. Her relaxed and self-possessed manner helps put me at ease, at least a little bit.

It’s Monday, March 20, 2017. This date has been marked on my calendar for several weeks. Moreover, we’ve been praying that I would make it this far. I’m thirty-eight weeks pregnant with twins, and it’s crucial for the babies to be close to full term when they’re born—especially “Twin A,” as the doctors call him. So here I am. After what seems like forever, I’m about to give birth to two precious babies, thankful to have made it this far.

Examination complete, I look to Jenny, eager for her report. Mauricio stands up and steps to my side.

“You’re dilated the full ten centimeters, so . . . it’s time,” she announces with a twinkle in her eye. “I’ll alert Dr. Sharma and the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] team, and we’ll get everyone assembled in the OR [operating room]. I’ll be back for you in just a few minutes; then we’ll get this show on the road.”

Jenny is barely out the door when Mauricio, who’s known by family and friends as Mau, takes my hand, his long brown fingers interlacing with my own, and begins to pray: “Lord, thank You for bringing us to this day. We ask You to bless the doctors and nurses as they deliver the babies and to guide everything they do. We pray for Your protection over Christin and the twins, and we ask that You save our little boy. Go before him, and prepare all the care that he requires. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

We didn’t choose to board this ride, and we certainly wish we could get off somehow, but we have faith in the good God who promises to be with us.

Mau gazes at me intently, his dark brown eyes filled with a mixture of love and concern, then takes out his iPhone to update his family in Brazil, my family in other parts of Canada, and our church family here in Calgary, Alberta, that the time has come.

Though I should be a mess at this moment, filled with fear and anxiety, I'm actually not. I've never before felt such an odd mixture of excitement, uncertainty, and peace.

PART ONE

“Do You Want to Keep It?”



CHAPTER 1

LET THE RIDE BEGIN

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,
for he who promised is faithful.*

HEBREWS 10:23

Mau and I met in Calgary in 2006. Originally from Edmonton—Alberta’s provincial capital, some three hours north—I was born into a typical white, middle-class Christian family of five. After graduating with a degree in education from the University of Alberta, I moved to southern China in 2004 to teach English. It was simply something I felt the Lord calling me to do.

I loved my time living on the campus of Shantou University, making friends with students and faculty alike, and traveling throughout Southeast Asia whenever I had a break from school. I loved the tropical climate, fresh fruit, culture, and adventure. But as the second year there started drawing to a close, I knew it was time to return to Canada or I’d never be able to leave my cherished home away from home.

As I began praying for direction, for some reason I sensed that God might bring me to Calgary, though I couldn't imagine why. After all, my parents, sister, and brother all lived in Edmonton, and they were looking forward to my return. I applied for teaching jobs in both cities but was only invited for interviews in Calgary. After receiving a job offer, I found myself in a new city where I knew next to no one.

Mau, also raised in the church, grew up in the giant, concrete, high-rise metropolis of São Paulo, Brazil. The younger of two sons, he grew up in a modest, middle-class home with parents who were both teachers—in many ways a childhood much like my own. After completing his degree in architecture and working in his field for a couple of years, Mau decided to go abroad to take his training to the next level. In 2001 he was accepted into a graduate program in architecture at the University of Calgary, where he devoted himself to his studies and to mastery of the English language.

After completing his master's degree, Mau was invited by his university supervisor to work in the small architectural firm he'd just opened. Although Mau never intended to remain in Canada long term, Calgary became his new home.

Calgary is a midsize city of about 1.5 million people that rests in the foothills of southern Alberta, shadowed to the west by the Rocky Mountains. Calgarians love the outdoors: camping, hiking, skiing, kayaking, skating, swimming, running—every season is another opportunity to enjoy nature. My aunt and uncle graciously hosted me when I first arrived in the summer of 2006—at least until I found a couple of roommates and a house to rent. As I settled into my new living situation and job, come September the realization hit me that I was adjusting to a new city, working

a mediocre job, and living life with no real friends. I began to wonder if perhaps I'd misheard God.

God, what am I doing here? Living here just doesn't make any sense. I could be with my family and friends at home, yet I'm here, doing what? I didn't sense any sort of answer to my prayers, so I thought about packing up my belongings and heading back to my real home.



I'm watching the clock now. It's nine forty. Jenny returns to the room with Dr. Sharma, followed closely by a young intern who is still rather awkward in his bedside manner. Dr. Sharma, on the other hand—middle-aged and beautiful with her glossy black hair—is everything I could hope for in a doctor: competent, efficient, compassionate, unhurried, and trustworthy. I know my babies and I are in expert hands. Equipped with the best resources and medical professionals this city has to offer, this hospital receives all high-risk pregnancies for delivery.

Dr. Sharma flashes Mau and me a reassuring smile.

“Okay, Christin,” she says, “we’ve got the whole team assembled in the OR. As we discussed earlier, the NICU team is there, ready to intubate your baby boy as soon as he’s born. Once they have him stabilized, they’ll bring him to the NICU. We are hoping to deliver these babies vaginally, but since you’re on an epidural, we’ll be able to perform a C-section without delay in the event of complications. Your baby boy is in position to be delivered first, followed by your baby girl. Do you two have any questions before we bring you to the OR?”

We shake our heads, and I direct my reply somewhere between her and Mau: “No, I don’t think so. I’m ready.”

“All right then. We’re going to wheel you just across the hall,” the doctor says as Jenny unlocks the wheels and begins to move my bed.

Mau washes his hands and puts on a sterile blue hospital gown and cap. Jenny takes a picture of us, both smiling, both giving a thumbs-up. I’m filled with excitement—the wait is almost over!—too much excitement to feel any significant fear. I’m ready to have these babies; I’m ready to find out how this story will unfold.

My husband, on the other hand, is definitely feeling nervous. Despite all our prayers, we don’t know what the coming minutes and hours will hold for our baby boy, and Mau is all too aware that things might not go as we hope.

+ + +

Because I was without a car those first few months in Calgary, I either walked or rode the bus wherever I needed to go. A good friend from Edmonton recommended a church she’d visited that was about a twenty-minute walk from my house, so one overcast September morning I bundled up and made the trek.

The church, located near the University of Calgary, had a robust young-adult ministry. After the morning service, I met a group of single adults who invited me to go out for lunch with them. I was so starved for friendship that I said yes without hesitation. I ended up spending the afternoon with this very welcoming group of guys and girls and then attended a young-adult service back at the church with them that evening. A cheery girl in the

group invited me to join a small group that was starting up that coming Thursday. Once again I readily accepted. My thoughts of moving back to Edmonton were beginning to fade.

Little did I know that a young Brazilian architect was also there that evening. He sat a couple of tables away from mine, and though I don't remember noticing him at the time, if you ask him, he'll tell you that I stared at him the whole night. Mau says he was thinking, *Who is this girl, and why is she looking at me?* I must have been gazing in his direction, and we laugh about it now whenever we share the story (much to my embarrassment). After the service, the same cheery girl, already a friend of his, also invited Mau to join the new small group.

The following Thursday evening, eight or nine young adults arrived at the host's home and took a seat in the living room. We studied a passage from the New Testament; I stayed silent, preferring to observe and listen—typical behavior for me in an unfamiliar environment. Mau, on the other hand, shared his thoughts with ease. This immediately impressed me, especially considering that he was speaking in his second language. I had studied Chinese and knew firsthand the challenge of attempting to communicate in a tongue that you're still learning.

After the Bible study concluded and people began to mingle, Mau and I found ourselves chatting.

“So, you're from Brazil?” I asked, fascinated. “I don't actually know much about Brazil; I've never met anyone from there before. What's it like?”

Mau told me a bit about his city and country. “I have a book about Brazil you can borrow if you like.”

“I'd like that, thanks!” I replied. “How long have you been in Canada?”

“Three years now. I came here to complete my master’s degree in architecture.”

The conversation continued, each of us asking questions about the other. He was confident and articulate, his English was excellent, and I could tell he had a strong love for the Lord. I soon learned he was also very kind and often went out of his way to serve others. It didn’t take long to recognize that I was interested in him, and it turned out that he was also interested in me. He found it especially intriguing that I had recently returned from China with stories about sharing the gospel with my friends and students there.

The small group welcomed Mau and me wholeheartedly. Most of us were young professionals from various places in western Canada with no other family in town, so we became like family to each other. We got together several times throughout the week, enjoying each other’s friendship while doing life together. Mau and I had both found a place of belonging, and I no longer thought about returning to Edmonton. I’d often watch as Mau, joking with the other guys, would burst out in a hearty belly laugh until tears came into his eyes. It was lighthearted and joyful, just like him.

Not knowing how to pronounce his name, we called him MO-REE-shee-oh, or Mo for short. It was a while before he corrected me: Mao-REE-see-oh. Though I tried to pronounce his name properly, I jumped at the chance to call him Mau after learning it was the nickname he went by with family and friends.

One day in October, Mau invited the whole gang to visit his latest home-design project that was currently under construction. No one was able to go—no one, that is, except me.



Even with ten or so people inside, including Mau, the operating room still feels spacious. It's now nine forty-five, and I glance to my right to see the NICU team in their blue gowns, gloves, and masks. Nearby are two contraptions on wheels. I'm guessing that these two white devices are the latest in birthing-room equipment.

The first one is fairly simple—a small, uncovered bassinet with a clean, light-blue pad, two crisply folded sheets, and a sealed package of medical supplies waiting to be opened. What looks like a heat lamp rises up from one end of the bassinet and curves over the top.

The second is an incubator covered in clear plexiglass with two holes on each side that can be opened to attend to the baby. It will keep my baby boy warm and protect him from germs. Inside the plexiglass a striped blanket covers the small mattress pad, and a rolled-up white towel, formed into a U shape, waits to encircle my baby boy's body. Beside it are tubes, monitors, wires, and an oxygen tank.

Mau stands beside me, ready to support me during this delivery and eager to meet his son and daughter. He holds my hand and gives me an encouraging look that speaks volumes. The medical team encircles my bed, all of them dressed in scrubs. Dr. Sharma introduces me to the young man next to her.

"This is Dr. Connor," she says. "He's a resident here and will be assisting me with the delivery today."

I nod and smile, a bit surprised. I feel like I have somehow stumbled onto the set of a medical drama—both these doctors are uncommonly attractive. I'm so accustomed to watching fictional characters like this on TV that it's surprising such good-looking doctors actually exist.

“On your next contraction I want you to push,” instructs Dr. Sharma, bringing my attention back to the matter at hand. She and Dr. Connor are side by side, prepared to catch Nathaniel while still keeping an eye on the monitors.

“Okay, Christin—push!”

+ + +

Mau picked me up and drove us to the construction site. There, on a crisp fall afternoon, he gave me the grand tour. I must admit that I was dazzled, quite impressed that the guy from my small group had designed this stunning contemporary home. After the tour we decided to get some food, and we found a chic Indian restaurant nearby. Our conversation flowed so effortlessly that, before we realized it, it was ten o’clock and we were the last customers in the place. I was completely smitten with this handsome, intelligent, godly man. From that time forward, we spent more and more time together.

We officially started dating in February 2007 and were married in July 2008. We had a traditional wedding in Edmonton, surrounded by family and friends, just as I had always dreamed. The ceremony was held downtown surrounded by the stunning stained-glass windows of First Baptist Church and was followed by a reception at the renowned Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. One of the most memorable parts of the ceremony was when we sang the classic hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”:

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;*

*All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

My twenty-six-year-old self marveled at God's faithfulness in bringing me such an admirable man, but I had yet to grasp a deep understanding of how the Lord remains faithful even when one's world is shattered—an understanding that can only come through hardship. Not knowing what the future held yet still full of hope, two lives came together that day, committing in the sight of God to love and care for each other through the highs and lows, for better or for worse, unaware at the time how the lows yet to come would eventually threaten to outweigh the highs. Nine years into our marriage, we would experience the biggest "for worse" we had ever encountered.

+ + +

I begin pushing with all my might. Well, I *hope* that's what I'm doing. I honestly can't feel much of anything thanks to the epidural, but I hope something's happening. The contraction wanes, and I catch my breath.

"Good job, Christin!" says Dr. Sharma. "Okay, we're going to do this again. Here comes the next contraction."

I push again, trying to remember to breathe.

"Great job! Keep going—we can see his head!"

The contraction ends, and another soon begins. I push like I've never pushed before.

"That's it. That's it! Here he comes!" Dr. Sharma exclaims.

I glance down to see Dr. Connor ready to catch my baby in his hands, Dr. Sharma at his side.

This is the moment—the moment before my life changes forever, the moment Mau and I have been waiting for with a stew of emotions. It's that point on a roller coaster when you seem to

*There's no turning back
now, no getting off,
no way out.*

hang in the air, just before the drop. You've strapped yourself into your seat and made the agonizing ascent filled with a mixture of exhilaration and fear. There's no turning back now, no getting off, no way out.

You've reached the apex; there's nothing above you, nothing ahead but empty sky, and you can only wait—wait for the dramatic plunge.

You think maybe, just maybe, the drop might not come and you might avoid what waits ahead, but then your world begins to tilt forward, downward, as your reality once again comes frighteningly into view. So you brace yourself by grabbing onto a bar, or belt, or strap—whatever is available—with a white-knuckled grip. You know full well that there's no stopping now.

Push.

Let the ride begin.