

Joanne Marie & Elizabeth Marie Gillis

By Jan Marie Gillis, in memory of her daughters

The newsletter covers many aspects of the subject which deals with the *loss of our precious loved ones*. I would like to submit the following letter because I HOPE it may be of benefit to any parent who is deciding whether to have another baby or not. This letter was written on the 10th October, 2004, which is Joanne Marie's 24th year in Heaven. The 29th October, 2004 is "Baby" Beth's 19th year in Heaven.

On the 24th May, 1975, a delicate, sweet baby girl traveled alone from the dark, isolated place (the womb) to the welcoming and receptive cuddles of her parents Gavin Phillip and Jan Marie Gillis. This baby girl was named Joanne Marie and her parents were loving and kind but poor due to expensive home loan repayments. Joanne was well nurtured but rarely experienced luxury. Joanne Marie was a content baby and a very well behaved toddler and very fortunately for her parents Joanne was rarely ill and only had one serious accident in her short life.

On the 12th November, 1976, a delicate, sweet baby boy joined our family and his name is Matthew Phillip. Joanne Marie enjoyed the friendship and company of her brother. Matthew Phillip was a sickly baby and a toddler who was very accident prone. Matthew managed to fracture his skull several times and was x-rayed for skull fractures four times before the age of five and the Mater Children's Hospital's doctor said we would be ordered to make Matthew wear a safety helmet if he should return for another skull x-ray because it was a danger for him to have continuous skull x-rays. We were always worried that Matthew was not going to live to see his teenage years.

On the 10th October, 1980 Joanne Marie traveled alone, once again, to a distant, destination, heaven, never to return to cuddle her loving Mama, Daddy and brother. To save you working it out, Joanne Marie went to Heaven, 32 days before Matthew's 4th birthday and incidentally 24 days before my 28th birthday, 4th November, 1952. I have never enjoyed a single birthday since 10.10.80. However, because of my long standing sorrow and so-called depression I unintentionally ruined every one of Matthew's birthdays since his 3rd birthday. Matthew's 4th birthday and my 28th birthday DON'T register anywhere in my memory bank and nor do the following year's birthdays.

Joanne Marie's demise was pneumonia septicemia but the doctors' initial suspicion was meningitis so as a precaution everyone who had had close contact with Joanne was advised to have a test to clear them. However, we had to rush Matthew to the hospital within hours of losing Joanne because the doctors were worried that we were going to lose Matthew as well.

On the 1st March, 1982, a delicate, sweet baby boy joined our family and his name is Douglas Phillip. Douglas was also constantly ill during his infant years and toddler years. It was discovered through many medical tests that he had Chemotaxin disorder which meant that his white blood cells didn't multiply quickly enough to combat certain infections and in Douglas's case it was pneumonia which nearly took his life several times.

It was now that we finally discovered that Matthew also had Chemotaxin disorder which explained all his sickness during his infancy. Now try to imagine how difficult it was to even think of having another baby and to know that if the baby was a boy then it was highly likely that he too would have Chemotaxin disorder! However, Dr Wood was a specialist in blood disorders and he said that if he and his wife were in our position then they would take the chance because the baby could be a girl who had no problem. On 29th October, 1985 "Baby" Beth, Elizabeth Marie was stillborn at nearly 6 months gestation.



Somehow I managed to find the courage and strength to go through another pregnancy? A delicate, sweet baby girl, Bellettia Eileen was born 17th February, 1987. I breast-fed Bellettia until she was 2 years and 3 months old because I loved her and because I was too fearful to face the possibility that she had Chemotaxin disorder so I would not let her have the blood test. Today is the 10.10.2004 and I am writing this message to all the parents and family members of "Lost Loved Ones" because the circle of birth-days has come full circle because my Matthew Phillip and his wife Sarah are due to have their first baby in March, 2005. Matthew turns 28 and I turn 52 in November.

I do not go to church on a regular basis and I have to admit that quite often I am very upset with God about different issues but "My Hat Goes Off to God" for blessing our family with this wonderful surprise. I'll let you know in March, in fact I'll probably let the whole world know, what is my first grandchild's birth-date and name. (I wonder how much the sky-writers are?).