



Jordan

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9 November 2003 – 19 June 2004

Proud parents of six-month-old Charlotte, Adriana and Martin were surprised but delighted to learn that they were pregnant with twins. But their excitement turned to fear and sorrow when the twin boys were born prematurely at 30 weeks of pregnancy. Justin was fine, but Jordan suffered severe problems and complications and spent most of his little life in hospital. His mother Adriana tells of his valiant struggles.

Written by Adriana Lim, Jordan's mother

Last year in May 2003, I found out that I was pregnant. It came to me as a shock. At that time, our eldest girl Charlotte was only about six months. We were not prepared to have a new member of the family just yet. But before long, we were all delighted to find out that I was pregnant with a pair of twins!! I was happy, yet apprehensive, having no idea how I could cope with three. Nevertheless, with my mum's promise to help me through, I soon found myself anticipating the twins' arrival. I am really lucky to have a great mom!

Things didn't turn out well, however. On 8th Nov 2003, while attending our best friend Andrew's wedding, my waterbag broke before dinner started. My husband Martin rushed me to hospital and doctors tried their very best to stop the labour as the twins were only 30 weeks old, so very premature. After about seven hours, when nothing had worked, finally the doctors performed an emergency C-section. On the morning of 9th November 2003 at 4.00 am, Justin and Jordan were born weighing 1.25 kg and just 975 grams respectively.

Hours later, Martin came to visit me at the hospital ward after seeing our babies, bearing news that Jordan had a serious problem with an imperforated anus. This came to me as a huge blow and I felt devastated. But with the help of my very supportive mother, my two younger brothers and my close friends, I quickly pulled myself together to face the challenges ahead. Little did I know the future ahead was heartbreaking.

As the twins were so premature, they were sent to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in the hospital for observation. While Justin was doing fine, the doctors had to perform an operation on Jordan just days after he was born, to open a hole at the side of his abdomen (colostomy) for his motion. He also had a series of other problems including a heart problem leading to difficulties in breathing, septic ileus with abdominal distension, low-lying spine, amongst others.

Two weeks later, doctors performed another emergency operation on Jordan's small intestine which had holes in it, causing it to be stuck. This meant severe indigestion and poor Jordan's tummy was like a balloon. So we spent the next few months going to hospital every day to visit the boys. Justin was growing steadily but Jordan's condition always fluctuated and I've forgotten the number of times I almost collapsed seeing him suffer. Gradually, we learned to not think or worry too far ahead and just live from day to day.

Justin was discharged from hospital about two months later as he was gaining weight well, but Jordan stayed on in the NICU until 24th February 2004 when he was discharged. But he went back to the hospital a fortnight later because he was not breathing properly. From then on, he became a regular at the hospital. He would stay for a week or so and be discharged. But it wasn't long before he was admitted again. Back and forth, we would go to the hospital and home. Nurses and doctors got to know Jordan well and some became quite attached to him. Most people were very fond of my angel as he was a good baby, seeming to understand whenever others talked to him.

One night in May 2004, Jordan was coughing badly. I rushed him back to hospital with the help of my god sister Jennifer. His oxygen level had dropped and he was not breathing well when we reached the hospital. Doctors and nurses gave him oxygen and suctioned him immediately. As soon as he stabilised, he was admitted to the Respiratory Ward. Jordan cried nonstop and our hearts broke to see him suffer like this. The next day, they upgraded him to the High Dependency Ward. I have no idea how many buckets of tears I shed that day. Jordan cried for four straight hours and I was totally helpless. His chronic lung problems meant that it was very serious indeed that he had developed pneumonia. Doctors checked on him every hour and they finally decided to give him medication to help him sleep in order to rest both his weary, collapsed lungs. Shortly afterwards Jordan was admitted to the Children's Intensive Care Unit. By then, my world was shattered.

We never saw him awake again. In that month, he had gone through two major operations for his heart and intestine and several small procedures. He was also breathing through a strong ventilator. No matter how many times doctors tried, Jordan couldn't

wean off it. He even turned blue a few times right in front of me. There were three terrifying occasions when doctors had to revive him. All those needles and tubes in his tiny body (4 kg) were just too much for everyone to bear.

Every day during that month was stormy for us. But for the support I got from my family and friends, I wasn't sure how Martin and I were going to pull through. My mom did her best to tend to my two other little ones at home while Martin and I hung around the hospital watching over Jordan every day. My two brothers Adrian and Jun Bin visited Jordan after work every day no matter how late or tired they were. My other friends also gave us their concern and of course their blessings. My aunt and uncle even invited a highly respected monk to the hospital to pray for Jordan, in the hope of reducing his sufferings. Without them, Martin and I would not have overcome these difficulties.

On the morning of 19th June 2004, we got a call from the hospital at 5.00 am. Our angel was not doing well. They wanted us to go to the hospital immediately and instantly, I knew something bad was going to happen. On arriving, we saw several doctors outside his room and several nurses inside—Jordan was not going to make it. He left us almost immediately as I held his lifeless body and gave him my last kiss.

After taking off everything from his body, the nurses changed him into his own clothing brought by one of our best friends, Cecilia, who rushed back home to get it for us. Jordan's godmother, Ivy, Jennifer and her sister all rushed to the hospital to see him for the last time. I cuddled him and everyone there took turns to do so. We couldn't leave him on the cold bed. It was a heartbreaking moment for all of us there. I cannot forget how his body turned more stiff and cold by the minute. It was unbearable. Jordan had turned almost black when I laid him down at the casket company. We cremated him that very afternoon.

The next day, in the company of Martin, my mother, my brother Adrian, uncle, Ivy and Cecilia, we set Jordan free out into the sea. We hope he can start a new life free from sufferings.

Now he is in loving memory to a lot of people who have taken care of him or played with him. We hope he's happy in a good place called Heaven.

I still look at his photo every day and tell him I love him no matter where he is now. He will be in my heart till the end of time. This will not change because he is and always will be my son, my Jordan...