

Blessing after a miscarriage

For we who trust in God,
in our pain and sorrow there is
consolation,
in the face of despair there is
hope,
in the midst of death there is life.
...as we mourn the death of our
child _____
we place ourselves in the hands
of God
and ask for strength, for healing
and for love.

—From "Blessing of a Couple after a Miscarriage,"
Book of Blessings (The Liturgical Press)

Footprints

How very softly
you tiptoed into my world.
Almost silently,
Only a moment you stayed.
But what an imprint
your footsteps have left
upon my heart.

Dorothy Ferguson, Little Footprints

Should a miscarried baby be baptized?

Consult your chaplain, or priest.

Naming your child

Give your child a name. If you don't
know the gender, then perhaps give it a
gender-neutral name or call your child
"baby" (with your last name). Giving
your child a name helps to say good-
bye.

Burial is important

It is important, with the help of your
funeral director, to find a burial place in
a cemetery for your child, so you have a
place to go and visit your child's body;
knowing that your child's body is in a
safe place.

It is important to grieve

Seek mental health treatment or grief
counseling if your healing does not
progress.

MISCARRIAGE

IMPORTANT CATHOLIC BURIAL INFORMATION FOR YOUR BABY



You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my
mother's womb.

Psalm 139:13

Miscarriage is described as a pregnancy loss prior to
20 weeks of gestation. Many assume that a death
through miscarriage is rare. However, statistics show
that one out of four pregnancies ends in miscarriage.
Too often this crisis remains unaddressed while the
grief of this loss calls out for healing and comfort from
the faith community.

Dear Parent(s),

As members of the Coldwater Cluster of Catholic Parishes, Fr. Walling, Fr. Ralston and I wish to extend to you our prayers, sympathy and support at this time of loss and grief at the death of your miscarried baby. This pamphlet is to help you make an informed decision about what to do with your child's remains.

CATHOLIC /CHRISTIAN BELIEF

Your little loved one's soul, created by God at its conception as immortal, lives on in heaven. And your baby's body—fetal remains or "tissue," as some may call it—however or wherever the extent of its prenatal development—however or wherever the manner of its earthly handling—is a fit candidate for resurrection on the last day. This is basic Christian belief and teaching. Given the dignity of the human body and of any and every unborn human life, prenatal human remains are as deserving of respect as any adult human corpse. All possible steps should be taken, by all those involved, even if the miscarriage happens at home, to retain the prenatal remains, placed in a "worthy vessel" and given suitable funeral rites, including burial in a cemetery. Mental Health Professionals believe that this is the best way to allow parents, especially the mother, to grieve well and to honor the earthly life of their baby, however short its duration.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

In Ohio, the Grieving Parents Act (SB 175) was passed in 2008, allowing parents upon request to obtain a death certificate for a miscarried baby, which would permit them to take possession of the remains for burial, and would give them the opportunity to do so before the remains are disposed of according to hospital policy. The Act also created uniform standards which health-care providers (each hospital or clinic) would be required to inform parents about the disposal procedures of the baby's remains and about parents' rights to seek a death certificate.

GRIEVING WELL

Experts say that parents are becoming more attached to developing babies these days than they were in previous decades, due to technological advances such as ultrasound procedures, which call unprecedented attention to the human life developing in the womb. As a result, parents who experience miscarriages or stillbirths may well grieve more acutely (than in earlier decades) and benefit from rituals, which can give them comfort and support in their grief journey.

DISPOSAL OF CHILD'S REMAINS

If you choose for the hospital or doctor's office to dispose of your child's remains, they will be handled like biomedical waste and will be treated similar to tumors or gallstones and eventually incinerated without ashes. If you decide that you want to honor your unborn child's bodily remains with any of the rites in the Order of Christian Funerals, **you must inform your doctor and/or the nurses that you want your baby's remains to be preserved, then contact your local funeral director and discuss options about funeral arrangements, including burial in a cemetery. Also feel free to contact your local priest, pastor or minister, to come to the hospital or clinic to pray with you, and then also discuss with him or her options for funeral arrangements.** Remember that Christian funeral services aim at acknowledging loss and grief, but also at affirming the dignity of each and every human life as created by God and intended for resurrection on the last day and eternal life in heaven.

COST FOR BURIAL

Sometimes young parents worry about the cost involved in burying their child, due to lack of insurance or whatever reason. Know that funeral directors take this into consideration and are most willing to work with you to address your needs. Some funeral homes offer their services without charge to parents in those circumstances. Your church may also be willing to help out. The funeral director will find out and let you know about the rules of the different cemeteries regarding burial of miscarried babies, including sharing a plot with another body (a grandparent, for example). There is no charge for any prayer or ritual or service provided by your local church, priest, or minister.

We hope that this information helps you in making an informed decision regarding the burial of your baby's bodily remains. Feel free to call upon your priests or myself and your local funeral director. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who developed as a fetus in the womb of his blessed mother, and who lived and died, was buried and is risen, be with you, especially during this most difficult time.

Sincerely,
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If no answer, please leave a message.

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