

Counseling & Support

You are not alone. There are many Catholic faith-based counseling services to assist with PPD, PTSD, and any other experiences you might have. Contact a parish office for information.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee Catholic Cemeteries also offers Family Service Counselors. Call 414-438-4420 or see here for more information:

<https://www.cemeteries.org/Cemeteries-Services/Family-Service-Counselors.htm>

Elizabeth Ministry

Elizabeth Ministry International offers the same companionship that St. Elizabeth did to Mary, helping others say, "Yes," to God's plan through seasons of life, loss, and love.

They follow Catholic teachings and are headquartered in Mukwonago.

Visit www.elizabethministry.org or call 888-524-0557.



Miscarriage and Infant Loss Support



BURLINGTON • LYONS
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

ST. MARY • ST. JOSEPH • ST. CHARLES

Parish Offices:

St. Mary: **Linda Dykas**

ldykas@ourblcc.org 262-763-1500

St. Joseph: **Tami Koenen**

tkoenen@ourblcc.org 262-763-2050

St. Charles: **Jami Morrow**

jmorrow@ourblcc.org 262-763-2260

To our families

If you are here, you have likely suffered the experience of miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss. We are sorry for your pain, despair, anger, sorrow, and any other feelings you might be experiencing in this moment.

Please rest assured you are not alone in this experience. Many people in the pews know this pain.

This resource guide is not magic. It simply offers some practical and spiritual points to help navigate your experience.

To everyone else, may this be an educative guide to learn, strengthen, and share our Christian faith, the dignity of life, and the message of God's love.

You are loved. You are not alone. And God's mercy is infinite.



Managing the Physical Loss

At the Doctor's Office

It is an unfortunate reality that many medical professionals are trained in a worldview that is not thoroughly pro-life. We have many pro-life doctors and an Archdiocesan Healthcare and Bioethics Committee, but we do not always get to choose our doctors or medical professionals, especially in emergency situations. These points may help so that you do not feel caught off guard if the following occurs.

Language may shift from "your baby," to simply, "pregnancy" or "fetal demise." For example, "The pregnancy is not viable."

The doctor may not mean to do this, but the shift in language is the beginning of a dehumanizing process. When children become dehumanized, it becomes easier for the lies of the Enemy to creep in and convince us that they do not deserve the same dignity as the children of God that they are.

Do not let allow anyone to make you feel like this loss is not worth mourning. But also remember what Jesus said from the Cross: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). This is an opportunity to unite our suffering to Jesus's on the Cross, and to offer that suffering for the conversion of heart for those who do not share the same respect for life.

An ultrasound technician may not understand your desire to have a picture from that ultrasound. Your child may not yet “look like a baby,” but as people of life, we know their humanity and worth. Life begins at conception, and this life was known and planned by God long before any of us walked this earth. **This may be the only picture you may ever have of the child. If you want a copy, insist on being given a copy.**

Miscarriage Collection

In the cases of early pregnancy loss, it may be difficult to preserve the remains of your child, but if you are able to do so, they may be recovered and receive burial. At home, use a strainer to catch tissue. If in the hospital, ask that your child’s remains be returned to you. **Tell all medical professionals involved and stand your ground. This will be a rare request for them.**

Take all the time you need to say goodbye. For stillborn babies later in development, be aware that there will be bodily form, and your baby will be extremely fragile.

Local funeral homes provide services for retrieval of remains.

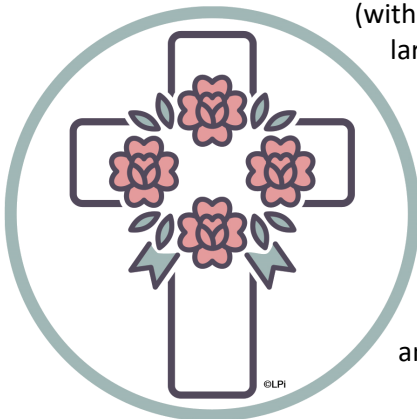
Burying the Dead, a Corporal Work of Mercy

Funerals and Memorial Masses

The Church teaches that burying the dead is one of the corporal works of mercy (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2447). She goes on, “As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites” (CCC 1261).

There are funeral Masses for miscarried babies, stillborn babies, and those who die soon after birth but before Baptism.

As Catholics we believe that at the Sacrifice of the Mass, we are together with Jesus in his suffering on the Cross, and place our own sufferings at his feet. A funeral Mass (with remains) or memorial Mass (without remains) can be celebrated privately, or in the context of a larger congregation. **There is no charge from our parishes for this.**



Caskets, Vessels, Urns and Graves

Funeral homes offer full services for miscarriage, stillborn children, or infant loss up to a certain age at significantly reduced rates, and often free of charge.

Our Tri-Parish cemeteries offer special plots for these situations free of charge. Contact the parish offices, should the need arise, and they will connect you with our cemetery staff.

Praying for the Dead, a Spiritual Work of Mercy

Memorial Ideas

There are many opportunities to memorialize your child. This is not an exhaustive list, but we hope it will be a helpful way to start.

- Name your child. God knows us and loves each of us uniquely and personally.
- Pick a patron Saint for your child. He or she will be your child’s spiritual guide until you are in the next world with him or her.
 - This Saint may be the inspiration for the name of your child.
 - Put an image of that Saint in your home.
 - Pray for your child in a special way on that Saint’s feast day.
- Personalized artwork, garden stones, and other memorial items can be found online.
- Schedule an annual Mass intention at our parishes on or near significant dates.
- Count miscarried children as members of your family. Share their story with your children on earth. May we always hope to all be reunited in heaven one day.

Archdiocesan Cooperative Burial

Any pre-born baby who dies before 20 weeks gestation can receive reverent interment at Holy Cross Cemetery or Pinelawn Memorial Park in the Milwaukee area through the cooperation of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Catholic Cemeteries, Pinelawn and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare through four hospitals of the Milwaukee area (Elmbrook, Franklin, St. Francis and St. Joseph) and Columbia/St. Mary’s Hospital in Milwaukee and Ozaukee County.

A pre-born child from the Kenosha area can receive reverent interment at All Saints Cemetery in Pleasant Prairie through the cooperation of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Catholic Cemeteries and the United Hospital System (St. Catherine’s Medical Center and Kenosha Medical Center, sponsored by the Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare).

Approximately every six weeks, cemetery personnel travel to the histology labs in the hospitals and retrieve remains for Christian burial. Each child is recorded individually in the cemetery burial records by exact location. Families are welcome to attend the burial services, published on the cemetery website.

<https://www.cemeteries.org/Cemeteries-Services/Burial-of-the-Pre-Born.htm>