

SUPPORT FOR MISCARRIAGE OR INFANT LOSS

We offer support for anyone experiencing—or who has ever experienced—miscarriage or infant loss.

Burying Your Baby's Remains

You can bury your baby's remains, even in early losses or when a miscarriage occurs in a medical facility. Through our partnership with Covenant Resources Miscarriage Ministry (www.covenantresources.org), we can provide same-day miscarriage burial supplies and related resources.

Ways We Can Support You

- Assistance with planning a prayer service, funeral, or burial
- Connection with others who have experienced loss
- Help starting, leading or joining a support group or book study
- Making phone calls on your behalf for any aspect of miscarriage or infant loss

Additional Parish Resources

- Our parish library includes books to support families navigating miscarriage and infant loss
- We hold a monthly prayer service in honor of an unborn child or infant lost too soon
- We have a memorial garden where you may place a memorial stone

REMEMBERING CHILDREN LOST TOO SOON

On the second Sunday of each month after 8:30 AM Mass, we gather in the Memorial Garden for the Unborn for a **brief prayer service** to pray for unborn children, infants lost too soon and their families. During Jan/Feb/Mar or bad weather, we meet in the parish hall. All are welcome. You are invited to pray in the garden anytime; a QR code located on a stand there provides an audio version of the prayer.

Names of unborn children or infants lost too soon may be submitted for **our memorial page** - In Remembrance of Children Lost Too Soon: stjohnsadel.org/in-remembrance-of-children-lost-too-soon

You may also place a personalized memorial stone--inscribed with a name, date, or other meaningful words--within the landscape of the garden. Learn more at:

www.stjohnsadel.org/memorial-garden-for-the-unborn

You are invited to join us each October for a Respect Life Mass, followed by the dedication and placement of memorial stones in the Memorial Garden for the Unborn.



PARENTS AND EMERGENCY BAPTISM

"If the infant is in danger of death, it is to be baptized without delay." Canon Law 867 § 2

"In case of necessity, any person can baptize provided that he have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he pours water on the candidate's head while saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), no. 1284

"If the head of an infant is exposed (or another part of the body) and there is imminent danger of death, let him be baptized...; later, if he is delivered alive, he should be baptized again under condition." Code of Canon Law, 1917, para. 589, c. 746

"Care should be taken that every fetus born prematurely, no matter at what stage, be baptized absolutely, if life is certain, but conditionally if life is doubtful." Code of Canon Law, 1917, para. 590, c. 747

"If the baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the baptism, so that he records the baptism.." Canon Law 878

UNBAPTIZED BABIES AND THE CHURCH

"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 for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which cause him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them," allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism." CCC, No. 1261

CONTACT US

St. John's Catholic Church
Respect Life Committee
24043 302nd Pl, PO Box 185
Adel, IA 50003
office@stjohnsadel.org
(515) 993-4482

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MISCARRIAGE SUPPORT AND A QUICK CATHOLIC GUIDE TO MISCARRIAGE, STILLBIRTH AND INFANT LOSS



RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE

www.stjohnsadel.org/respect-life-committee



CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH DIGNITY AND
NAVIGATING THE LOGISTICS OF A MISCARRIAGE,
ACCORDING TO THE CHURCH.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you." Jer 1:5

"Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God." Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), no. 2319

What to have in case of emergency:

- Your priest's phone number
- A plan for burial
- Holy water (or water may be used)
- Be in a state of grace
- The intention to do what Holy Church does
- **The words of (conditional) Baptism.**

One person must say the exact words while pouring water on the baby's forehead at the same time:

("If you are living) I baptize you in the
(pour water) Name of the Father,
(pour water) and of the Son,
(pour water) and of the Holy Spirit."

A Quick Catholic Guide to Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss

SEE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR HOW ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, ADEL, IA CAN SUPPORT YOU THROUGH MISCARRIAGE OR INFANT LOSS

If suspecting a miscarriage:

Consult your doctor. Have your husband with you.

Your doctor will evaluate your hormone levels with blood labs and your baby's size and heartbeat by ultrasound. Ask for pictures.

If decisions must be made or mother's life is also at risk, seek the guidance of a priest.

Pray for a miracle. Seek the sacraments. Ask for the intercessory prayers of the saints and your loved ones. **Tell God you have the explicit desire and intention to baptize this child.**

It can take days or weeks for the miscarriage to complete naturally. A doctor might suggest a medicine or a procedure to assist. Be **absolutely** certain of death before taking action.

The loss of a child is a terrible suffering. Know that you are not alone and have done nothing wrong. Miscarriages are unfortunately common and often offer no explanation.

If an early miscarriage:

Early miscarriage can feel like labor or a menstrual cycle. Go to the hospital if you have excessive bleeding and are changing your pad more than once an hour.

At home, collect what you can - this means clots. Place a strainer in the toilet to catch tissue. Use gauze to rinse out blood. Find the membranous sac and break it open. **Give conditional baptism while sprinkling with water.**

Parents can and should do this. Place in saline solution and preserve in a refrigerator until burial. If saline isn't available, the freezer may be used. You may contact St. John's for a miscarriage kit to help you collect your baby's remains.

If in a hospital, ask your child's remains be returned to you. Stand your ground: this will be a rare request. All tissues will be reviewed in a lab. Sign paperwork needed to release for burial. A funeral director can help if resistance. It may help to have someone else pick up the remains or to have someone with you.

It is appropriate to prepare your baby for burial yourself at this stage. Take a picture, if possible. If you've been unable to save remains, it is okay: your child is loved. You can still honor your baby and have Mass offered.

If stillborn:

If able, take time to say good-bye and talk to your baby that has died. Prepare for labor, arrange other childcare, and decide the funeral details.

Baptism is only for the living, but you should **be prepared to conditionally baptize** if there is any reasonable doubt as to whether the moment of death has already occurred.

For the labor: How will you be induced? Do you want to hold your baby? What will comfort you as you wait? Who else do you want there to say hello and goodbye? How would you like pictures taken? What are the burial arrangements? Inform the medical staff.

Know that your baby's body will be extremely fragile and deteriorate quickly. A special blanket to hold him/her intact or a Cuddle Cot might be available to allow for longer preservation.

Take ALL the time you need to say goodbye to your baby. Do NOT be rushed. Consider keeping a lock of hair, making finger prints and using items you'd like to keep as tangible reminders of your dear child.

St. John's can connect you with others who have experienced infant loss if you would find support helpful during this time.

If born in danger:

Baptize your child immediately (see reverse side) - before being transferred into intensive care where ready access is limited. You can use a godparent by proxy. Call a priest.

Implore God for a miracle. Seek intercession from the saints and your loved ones. Talk to his/her guardian angel.

Ask God to guide you and to give your family special graces for this journey.

Ask to hold your baby. Be near your baby. Talk to your baby. If possible, allow skin-to-skin contact. Let your baby know your love while in your care. Ask someone to take a picture of you together.

Husband: Your leadership is imperative. Be prepared to make many decisions for your family during this difficult time. Invoke St. Joseph for help. Mother will be emotionally and physically exhausted. Protect her - your bride, the heart of your home.

For help:

Name your baby. This will give him/her a formal place in your family's prayers and actions. You can guess the gender, act on a hunch or a hope, honor the day's Saint, or give your baby a neutral name. Say your baby's name when talking with others.

Rely on your husband. Accept help from others and balance your need for privacy and support. Designate someone to provide updates and answer questions. Be in contact with your priest, doctor, spiritual advisor, funeral director and other mothers who have miscarried.

Take care of yourself. Rest. Pray for your health and healing. Be aware that infection can occur if the miscarriage is incomplete.

Know that the pain of losing your child might not fully hit you until weeks later. Seeing pregnant mothers and babies might cause you to cry. This is normal and it's okay to not be around them as you heal.

A father will grieve his child, too - likely in a different way and sometimes later when he is done caring for his wife.

Where to bury:

A Catholic hospital might have special burial arrangements to consider. If you have chosen a funeral home, the hospital will call for your baby to respectfully be picked up. After 20 weeks a fetal death certificate is often required. There might be additional paperwork to release your baby's body for private burial.

When contacting a cemetery to purchase a plot, be clear about fetal remains or infant. Baby can share a headstone with parents or siblings. Build a wood box, buy one at a craft store, or secure a casket. A funeral home might provide one at no charge. For a casket crafted by monks at no cost to the family go to: New Melleray Abbey Child Casket Ministry trappistcaskets.com/caskets/#/cskchild.

For a list of Iowa cemeteries offering miscarriage burial, refer to the Diocese of Des Moines website for Miscarriage, Infertility, & Infant Loss www.dmdiocese.org/ministries-and-faith-formation/marriage-and-family-life/miscarriage-infertility-infant-loss

If you are considering a home burial, seek the guidance of a priest.

What to offer:

The Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Wisconsin offers memorial services for unborn children.

Requiem Mass, Mass of Christian Burial, Mass of Angels, Funeral Rite for Infant, Vigil for the Deceased or a graveside committal. Talk to your priest. "The local ordinary can permit children whom the parents intended to baptize but who died before baptism to be given ecclesiastical funerals." Code of Canon Law 1183.2

If there are no remains, consider asking for a Memorial Mass and the Churching ritual, or a Blessing of Parents After Miscarriage. Talk to your priest.

To enroll in a Triduum, Novena or Gregorian Mass series, look online or ask a retired priest.

To have Holy Mass at St. John's offered, Mass Intentions request forms are available in the church entry. If you have questions, please contact the office.

How to honor:

See "Remembering Children Lost Too Soon" on the reverse side.

Keep a journal and write letters to your child, dedicate a box for mementos, or consider a visible tribute for your home or to wear. Talk about your child and use his/her name. Do something special on the anniversary of death - visit the cemetery, attend Mass, sing a song, light a candle, thank God for his/her short life.

Truly take the time to grieve and acknowledge your loss. Unite your pain to Christ's passion and Mary's sorrows. Offer suffering to God and it can become 'an instrument of salvation,' a path to holiness, that helps us reach Heaven.

Ask your baby, your little saint in heaven, to intercede for you daily in your family prayers. Have one person say his or her name, and all respond "Pray for us," or in Latin "Ora pro nobis."

If unbaptized, pray for the repose of your child's soul. Be hopeful, trust in God's goodness, and ask our Blessed Mother to care for your child as her own. Read Philippians 4:6-7, and ask God for the peace of His presence. Your baby has committed no mortal sin, and is happy.

