

# What Just Happened?

Parents who lose a child before birth often mourn the ability to physically embrace that child. If you have experienced such a loss, know that you are not alone.

*The Catholic family of Western Kentucky embraces you* as a supportive community during this time of grief, whether you experienced your loss many years ago or very recently.

We encourage families to find ways to remember the children they have lost through miscarriage or stillbirth. Embrace Ministry is a community of parents who have gone through the process already and are here to help. It is our hope and prayer that this brochure brings you the comfort of knowing *you are not alone.*

Whether you experienced a miscarriage early in your pregnancy or full term; whether it was just recently or years ago; whether it was you or someone in your family; *we are here for you.*

Contact:

Diocese of Owensboro  
Office of Marriage & Family Life  
270 - 683-1545  
familylife@pastoral.org

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

I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;  
wonderful are your works!

My very self you know.

My bones are not hidden from you.

When I was being made in secret,  
fashioned in the depths of the earth,

Your eyes saw me unformed;  
in your book all are written down;

my days were shaped, before one came to be.

Psalm 139: 13-16

*Saints to turn to for comfort:*

**Saint Catherine  
of Sweden**

Patron saint of miscarriages

**Saint Gerard**

Patron saint of expectant mothers

**Padre Pio**

Patron saint of adolescents (also  
suffered many health ailments)

*From USCCB Prayer of Blessing of Parents  
After a Miscarriage, concluding rite:*

May God give us peace in our sorrow,  
consolation in our grief,  
and strength to accept his will in all things.

Amen.

*Much of the information in this brochure was taken with  
permission from catholicmiscarriagesupport.com*



# Embrace Ministry



Support and care for those  
experiencing a miscarriage

*Provided by the Diocese of Owensboro  
Office of Marriage & Family Life*

# What Does the Catholic Church Say?

The Catholic Church believes every person's life is sacred, and that life starts at conception.

"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, no. 2319)

"From the moment of conception, the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way ... his whole being bears the image of the Creator."

(Donum Vitae, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Introduction no. 5)

For those concerned about a baby's salvation without baptism, we can take comfort in these words from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1261:

"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 caused 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."

# What Do I Do Now?

Can I name my baby, even if I don't know if it was a boy or a girl?

**Yes.** Naming your baby allows you to acknowledge his or her unique identity, as well as your own grief. If you are concerned that you might name the baby the wrong gender, consider a gender neutral name or look to the day your baby died and choose from a list of saints for that day.

Can I have a memorial service or burial?

**Yes.** If you intended to baptize your baby you may have a funeral, memorial service, or burial. Contact your local priest or the Office of Family Life for more information on how to coordinate this. Many families, for various reasons, do not have any remains. You may still have a Memorial Mass or prayer service, and we have a booklet to help you. Please note: If you have guilt over this, please try to pray about it and let go of the guilt. Being unable to bury your baby does not lessen his or her impact on your life or change the fact that he or she is an immortal soul who is loved very much.

## Resources

### Funeral Homes:

Many local funeral homes offer counseling, support, and other special services upon request for parents who experience a loss through miscarriage or stillbirth. Check with your local funeral home to see what support they can offer.

### Cemeteries:

You can also check your local cemetery to see if they have a special section designated for baby memorials.

### Hospitals:

Most hospitals have a pastoral care staff or hospital chaplain office. Sometimes they'll even have a Catholic priest or deacon on call for encouragement and prayer. For further information about logistics of D&C and delivery procedures after your loss, CatholicMiscarriageSupport.com has a page devoted to "How to Navigate the Hospital."

### Online Resources:

- catholicmiscarriagesupport.com
- ewtn.com (search: "miscarriage")
- usccb.org (search: "miscarriage")
- foryourmarriage.org (search: "miscarriage")

### Facebook Pages & Groups:

- Footprints on My Heart
- Angels in the Sky
- Mommy to a Little Saint

### Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep:

NILMDTS offers remembrance photography to parents suffering the loss of a baby at birth or shortly thereafter with a free gift of professional portraiture. Visit [NowILayMeDownToSleep.org](http://NowILayMeDownToSleep.org).

## To Family and Friends...

While someone might have good intentions to avoid additional pain by bringing up the subject, please know that we want to talk about it. We want to know that you are acknowledging our loss and are here to listen and support us through this difficult time. As parents suffering a loss, we don't need to have our grief "fixed." We just appreciate knowing that you acknowledge our grief and you are there to share it with us. *For more information, CatholicMiscarriageSupport.com has a page called "For Family and Friends" with suggestions on what to say and what not to say.*