



Heart Of My Heart

Catholic Miscarriage & Infant Loss Support

Guide For Families

Diocese of Colorado Springs, Colorado

To the Families

If you are here, you have likely suffered the unthinkable loss of miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss. We're sorry. We are so, terribly sorry, for your pain, for your despair, for your anger, for your sorrow.

We understand because we have been there. In March 2021 we lost our fourth child, Bernadette Marie to an early miscarriage. It was she, along with the courageous stories of many other families who have drank the cup of miscarriage and infant loss, who inspired the development of this ministry.

This Resource Guide and ministry is for you.

You are loved, you are not alone in your loss, and God's mercy is infinite.

The most up-to-date information about this ministry can also be found at
<https://heartofmyheart.org>

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PART I: Managing the Physical Loss of Your Child

AT YOUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE

It is an unfortunate reality that we live in a world where many of our medical professionals lack the bedside manner that they would have, if they had a truly correct pro-life worldview. We have pro-life doctors within our Diocese, but we don't always get to choose our doctors, due to health insurance plans and other restrictions.

If you find that your doctor does not share your pro-life worldview, we do not want you to be caught off guard if the following occurs:

- Your doctor shifts from discussion about “your baby” and instead refers to your child as a “pregnancy” or a “fetal demise.”
 - i.e. Your physician says, “The pregnancy is not viable.”

Though they may not mean to do this, the shift in language begins the process of dehumanizing our children. When our children are dehumanized it becomes very easy for the lies of the enemy to creep in and convince us that we don't need to treat them like the precious children of God that they truly are.

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

- Particularly in the case of a very early miscarriage the ultrasound technician may not understand your desire to have a picture from your ultrasound. Your child may not yet “look like a baby” but as a people of life, we know their humanity and worth. Life begins at conception, and a new life was known and planned by God long before we have walked this earth.

This is one of the only pictures you may ever have of your child. If you want a copy, insist on being given a copy.



MISCARRIAGE COLLECTION KITS & DELIVERY AIDS

In cases of early pregnancy loss, it may be difficult to preserve the remains of your child, but if you are able to do so, Miscarriage Delivery Aids are available through the **Respect Life Apostolate, at no cost to families**. Please contact Ashley Slack at 719-960-7197, or pick up a kit at the front desk of any Colorado Springs Pregnancy Center (CSPC). The CSPCs will provide a kit, no questions asked, and have three locations across our diocese:

<https://www.elifenetwork.com/contact-us/>

A Miscarriage Delivery Aid includes a delivery aid that allows your baby's remains to be recovered and then respectfully placed in a vessel with saline solution, and a velvet pouch for burial or cremation. They are available in different sizes based on the needs of the family and how far along in the pregnancy you were. Directions for use are included with each kit and also at <https://heartofmyheart.org> under the Burial Resources tab.



Pictured: Heart of My Heart miscarriage delivery aid, available in our Diocese

MEDICAL INTERVENTION FOR HEALTH & SAFETY OF MOTHER

If you require surgical intervention to complete a miscarriage, **Colorado Legal Statute 25-2-110.5** (hyperlink below) demands the proper care of your child's remains and their release to your family or a funeral home, if you request it. **Please be sure to ask the medical facility about your rights to your child's remains**, if this is your family's situation, and rest assured that both major medical systems in our area have policies in place to serve you in your time of need.

Colorado Legal Statute 25-2-110.5:

<https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/crs2017-title-25.pdf>

The relevant section of this Statute can be found **on page 151** of this document.

Post-Partum Depression, PTSD & Infant Loss

<https://www.rejoicecounseling.com/project/healing-from-miscarriage/>

PART II: Burying the Dead: A Corporal Work of Mercy

FUNERAL & MEMORIAL MASSES

The Church understands that burying the dead is one of the corporal works of mercy (CCC 2447). The Church also affirms, “**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).

Miscarried and stillborn babies are children who have died before Baptism. This may also be the case with children who die soon after birth. At Heart Of My Heart, we believe strongly in the healing power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We always encourage families to seek out healing in our Lord by requesting a Memorial Mass or an Order for Naming and Commendation for their miscarried and stillborn children. In some cases, the Funeral Liturgy may be appropriate. Always seek guidance from your parish priest.

A Mass can be celebrated privately, or it can be within the context of a larger Memorial Mass open to anyone touched by these types of losses. We offer these types of Masses at various locations around the Diocese on about a quarterly basis. Not only is this a corporal work of mercy, but the opportunity to seek healing in our Lord is invaluable.

CASKETS, VESSELS & URNS

The Respect Life Apostolate has caskets available for miscarriage losses specifically, at no cost to families. Please contact us if you are in need of one.

Additional resources include:

<https://heavensgain.org/>

<https://www.elizabethministry.org/>

<https://trappistcaskets.com/infant/>

This ministry is especially notable because caskets for full term infants are of NO COST to families, as a beautiful act of mercy for those experiencing later losses.

DignityMemorial.com

Urns are available for very low cost to families in our Diocese and are appropriately sized for preborn children. Ask your Dignity funeral home about this option. **Children’s casket-vault combinations** are also available, at a discounted rate for families in our Diocese.

BABY RESTING GOWNS

For the burial of stillborn children and full-term losses, we have available at no cost to families, baby resting gowns, handmade out of the generous donations of wedding gowns that have been converted into resting gowns for our tiny saints. Contact us at <https://heartofmyheart.org>

BURIAL & CREMATION

COLORADO SPRINGS

Mount Saint Francis Columbarium offers a Holy Innocents niche for the ashes of preborn children at no charge to families. The outside of the niche is engraved “Holy Innocents.”

Contact information: (719) 955-3810 or msfcolumbarium@stfrancis.org

Dignity Memorial owns multiple funeral homes and cemeteries within the Diocese of Colorado Springs. While this is not a Catholic organization, **Memorial Gardens Funeral, Cremation & Cemetery** offers a Catholic section in Memorial Gardens. They will also accept, prepare and bury remains of preborn to 1-year-old babies, at no cost to families. These children are buried in the Garden of Angels portion of the cemetery with a temporary grave marker. Families may purchase a permanent headstone if they desire. Cremation costs do apply if a family pursues this option instead.

Contact information: Lisa Carter or Kailah Rose-Metzbower at 719-390-4906, lisa.carter@DignityMemorial.com and kailah.rose@DignityMemorial.com.

OUTSIDE OF COLORADO SPRINGS

Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery is located at 34201 Country Road 33, Kiowa, CO 80117, on the Our Lady of the Visitation Catholic Church’s 60-acres. They offer a special section called **Holy Innocents Hill**, for the respectful burial of fetal remains due to pregnancy loss. Holy Innocents Hill has unmarked, individual graves available at no cost to families. Families also have the option of purchasing a plot if that is their desire. **Contact information:** (303) 646-4964.

Calvary Catholic Cemetery is owned and operated by the St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Stratton, CO. They offer an unmarked section of the cemetery with unmarked graves for the burial of preborn children, at no cost to families. **Contact information:** (719) 348-5336

Catholic Funeral and Cemetery Services (CFCS) of Northern Colorado includes **Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery**, **St. Simeon Catholic Cemetery** and **Archdiocese of Denver Mortuary**.

Mt. Olivet Cemetery is located at 12801 W. 44th Avenue, Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033 and offers the **Precious Lives Burial ministry**. All families, no matter their faith are welcome to place their miscarried and stillborn children into care with this ministry. They will bury our infant losses, at no cost to families. They also offer monthly memorial Masses. **Contact information:** (303) 502-9666, <https://cfccolorado.org/immediate-need/precious-lives-burial/>

MEMORIAL IDEAS & OPPORTUNITIES

There are many opportunities to memorialize your child, and while this is far from an exhaustive list, we hope it will be a helpful place to start.

Sacred Heart of Mary Memorial Wall, Boulder, Colorado

<https://sacredheartofmary.org/memorial-wall>

“Small plaques with words of remembrance honoring a baby lost by abortion, miscarriage or stillbirth may be ordered on this website. The plaque will be placed on the Memorial Wall as a tribute to and in memory of your child.”

The Shrine and Parish Church of The Holy Innocents, New York, New York

<https://shrineofholynnocents.org/shrine-of-the-unborn>

From their website: *“The world's only Shrine of the Unborn dedicating children who have died before or at birth is located at the Parish Church of the Holy Innocents. You will find a candle lit in their memory and the BOOK OF LIFE with your baby's name inscribed. You will also receive a certificate from the Shrine of the Unborn. May you experience comfort and peace in knowing your child will be remembered! The first Monday's of every month at our 12:15 pm Mass honors the unborn listed in the BOOK OF LIFE and their family.”*

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, Littleton, Colorado

<https://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org/>

From their website: *“We offer parents experiencing the loss of a baby the complimentary gift of professional portraiture. Through an intimate portrait session, photographers gift families with delicately retouched black and white heirloom portraits.”* They also provide Colorado hospitals with Remembrance Care Packages for families and organize and host an annual Remembrance Walk.

Other Ideas

- Certificates of Life and personalized artwork, jewelry, garden stepping stones, and other memorial items may be found online.
- Consider scheduling an annual Mass intention at your parish in memory of your child.
- As a matter of family culture, count your miscarried and stillborn children as members of your family. Name them, talk about them, share them with your children here on earth. May we rest in the hope of all being united one day in Heaven.

PART III: Counseling, Healing & Support

Heart of My Heart Support Group

This support group is facilitated by a professional counselor, and runs for 6-8 weeks. It culminates in a Memorial Mass for the group and their families. If you are interested in joining this support group please complete the [Interest Form on our website](#). One-on-one support is also available from those who have walked through miscarriage and infant loss. Contact us to be linked up with a support person based on your personal needs and situation.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers are lay counselors who have received extensive training on a variety of needs including grief counseling. **Contact Melissa Smith at (719) 481-3511, ext. 1105** to be connected with a Stephen Minister near you.

Local Professional Catholic Counselors

Accendo Counseling, 720-770-2741

<https://www.accendocounseling.com/>

Imago Dei Counseling, 719-310-2211

<https://www.imagodeicounseling.com/index.php?id=1>

Catholic Charities

Colorado Springs: <https://www.ccharitiescc.org/health-well-being/counseling-services/>

Denver: <https://straphaelcounseling.com/>

THE HOLY MASS



For the most up-to-date offerings of Memorial Masses in the Diocese please visit our main website: <https://heartofmyheart.org>

Monthly Memorial Services are available through the [Precious Lives Burial](#) ministry at Mt Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

INFERTILITY

Pope Paul VI Institute - Evaluation & Treatment: Miscarriage

<https://popepaulvi.com/evaluation-and-treatment-programs/#miscarriage>

Diocese Natural Family Planning Instructors

<https://www.diocs.org/Offices/Marriage-and-Family-Life/Natural-Family-Planning>

FertilityCare.org

PRENATAL DIAGNOSIS & STILLBIRTH

VeritysVillage.com *provides support from diagnosis to delivery and beyond. Our private support group is a great place to ask questions and connect with others who are going through a similar journey. Seasoned parents will come alongside you as well, sharing valuable wisdom and experience as you carry your special baby and prepare for delivery, whatever that make look like.*

Perinatal Hospice & Palliative Care - <https://www.perinatalhospice.org/>

BeNotAfraid.net *“is a private non-profit organization supporting parents carrying to term following a prenatal diagnosis. Our staff and volunteers strive to develop relationships of trust while providing for the emotional and tangible needs of parents at diagnosis, during pregnancy, at birth, and during the post postpartum period for up to one year.”*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[CatholicMiscarriageSupport.com](https://www.catholicmiscarriagesupport.com)

An informational website about all things related to miscarriage from a Catholic perspective.

Behold Your Child, Archdiocese of Dubuque, <https://dbqarch.org/BeholdYourChild>

Reflections for Families & Professionals, additional Catholic miscarriage resources.

Colorado Catholic Herald series by Ashley and Bill Slack on supporting families through miscarriage and infant loss: <https://www.diocs.org/Herald/Author/pfauthid/220/ASHLEY-AND-BILL-SLACK>

PART IV: From the Church

FROM THE USCCB AND VATICAN

USCCB: Solace and Strength in the Sorrow of Miscarriage

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/solace-and-strength-sorrow-miscarriage>

USCCB: Loving Parents After Miscarriage

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/life-issues-forum-loving-parents-after-miscarriage>

ITC: The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptised

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070419_un-baptised-infants_en.html

DEVOTIONS & NOVENAS

The Seven Sorrows of Miscarriage: Entering into the memories of a miscarriage is like praying with the Seven Sorrows of Mary.

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/the-seven-sorrows-of-miscarriage>

PATRON SAINTS



This resource guide is available to download and for printing additional copies at
<https://www.diocs.org/Pastoral-Services/Respect-Life-Apostolate/Miscarriage-and-Infant-Loss-Support>

APPENDIX I:

Caring for Your Child's Remains When Miscarriage Occurs at Home

If we could only hold your hand as you endure the emotional and physical sufferings of miscarriage, I promise you, we would. If we could only cradle your precious child, however small at birth, and prepare them for burial for you, I promise you, we would. If we could take this pain and grief away from you, I promise you, we would.

We are so sorry that we can't. But it is our prayer that this guide for helping you to care for your child's remains will be solace, comfort and practical help to you, as you navigate this loss.

There are some things you need to know first, as a matter of preparation for this trial:

- **Your baby is small.** Very small. By definition, a miscarriage is a prenatal loss that occurs before 20 weeks gestation. At most baby is about 4-inches in length. At their tiniest, they may not be discernable at all through the amniotic sac. Please refer to the Development Chart included in this kit to help you to find and identify your precious child.
- **You do not have to search through the amniotic sac to find the remains of your child. Only do this if you are comfortable.** Your child can be buried or cremated as is, so please do not let this be a barrier to you in preserving their remains.
- **Your miscarriage may take hours or days.** Please do not hesitate to seek medical attention if you are concerned or are experiencing excessive blood loss. Consult your doctor about signs and symptoms to watch for that demand emergency attention.
- **It is possible that your miscarriage will not be completed at home,** and that you may need additional medical intervention to avoid a dangerous infection. Always alert your medical provider when you have had a miscarriage.

What is included in your Miscarriage Delivery Aid:

- 1 strainer
- 1 squirt bottle
- 1 vessel (sizes vary) and 1 velvet pouch for vessel
- 1 pair of gloves
- 1 single-use crazy-glue tube
- **What you will need to obtain yourself: Saline solution** (contact lens solution works, even generic brands)

How to use your Miscarriage Delivery Aid at home:

1. Once you begin spotting or cramping, bring the strainer with you during each trip to the bathroom.
2. As soon as you sit down on the toilet place the strainer under your bottom, and strain everything out of your urine stream. This will allow you to catch and recover any pregnancy tissue and your child's remains. You may find the following: blood clots, placenta, amniotic sac, umbilical cord, and your baby.
3. Use the squirt bottle (filled with water) to clean off everything that is recovered. If the amniotic sac is recovered, you may not be able to see your child inside the sac, even once you clean it off with water.
4. If you physically handle any pieces of fetal tissue, wear the provided gloves, or other medical grade nitrile gloves.
5. Place any recovered remains into the provided vessel with saline solution. Use the provided crazy glue to secure the lid to the vessel, to ensure an airtight seal and to avoid leakage. You may place the vessel into the velvet pouch if you desire.
6. Place the vessel into a refrigerator at home until burial, cremation and/ or until they are transferred to the care of a funeral home. This is important for preservation purposes.
7. The *Behold Your Child* ministry of the Archdiocese of Dubuque suggests placing a lit candle near the refrigerator as a sign and symbol of the importance of the child's remains.

****If you are unable to recover remains during a trip to the bathroom:**

Clean off the strainer, let it air dry and dispose of the gloves. Begin the process again during each trip to the bathroom until you believe that the miscarriage is complete.

For additional help, support and resources please visit:

<https://heartofmyheart.org>