Other Resources Continued...

Please visit our Elizabeth Ministry section of the parish website for links to prayers, novenas and additional resources.

Books
After Miscarriage: A Catholic Woman’s Companion to Healing and Hope, Karen Edmisten

Songs
Held – Natalie Grant
I Will Carry You – Selah
Blessings – Laura Story
Before the Morning – Josh Wilson
I Will Praise You in this Storm – Casting Crowns
Come to Jesus – Chris Rice
Lullaby – Creed

Spiritual Resources
Some saints who look after mothers and fathers who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth and infant loss:
-St. Gianna
-St. Gerard
-St. Catherine of Siena
-Mary as Our Lady of Sorrows
-St. Catherine of Sweden
-St. Stephen of Hungary

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Saint Patrick Elizabeth Ministry:

Miscarriage and Infant Loss

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.”
– Revelation 21:4
A word from the Elizabeth Ministry...

We wish to extend our deepest condolences to you and your family if you have experienced or are experiencing now the loss of your baby or little one due to miscarriage, stillbirth, illness or accident. As a parish, we hope this booklet will provide you with resources that might be helpful to you as you navigate such a difficult time. This list has been compiled by finding out which unique services and resources have been helpful to parents who have themselves experienced a loss in their lives. If there is a resource or service you desire or need not listed, please call us or e-mail us so we can better serve you. We have a dedicated ministry, the Elizabeth Ministry, ready to support you and your loved ones and want to be of help to you in any way, so please reach out to us and allow us to help. If you know of someone who could benefit from this booklet or from any of the services mentioned, please get in touch with the Elizabeth Ministry or call the parish office.

We mourn with you and offer our prayers for you and your intentions. May God comfort you and bring you peace.

Sincerely,

St. Patrick Parish and the Elizabeth Ministry

Other Resources

Websites

www.facesofloss.com - A place to share your unique story of loss.

www.labelledame.com - One of many websites where you can purchase and customize special jewelry in honor and memory of your precious baby.

www.memorialsonedenhill.com - A special Catholic shrine of The Holy Innocents in Massachusetts. At their website, you can memorialize a child's name on a candle holder or plaque. In exchange, the named child and family will be prayed for daily during the Rosary for Life, at the Holy Mass, and during the Hour of Great Mercy at the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy and during special Masses on December 12 (the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe), December 28 (the Feast of the Holy Innocents), and on the third Saturday in July.

www.nowilaymedowntosleep.com - Non-profit organization that has created a network of professional photographers who will offer free portrature services to parents experiencing miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss. Photographers serving our local hospitals can be found on their website.

“But Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

-Matthew 19: 14
Spiritual and Emotional Healing
When You’ve Experienced a Loss…

- Many women and families have found it very consoling to have a funeral mass and/or burial service for their baby. No child is too young to receive the benefit of a funeral mass, blessing or burial. Tell the hospital what you desire and contact the parish as soon as you are able to make arrangements.
- Naming our babies is an important way we honor and recognize each individual life. You can give your baby a name, even when your baby is lost to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss and even when the gender is unknown. It is never too late to give your baby a name. You can pray for guidance in choosing a name.
- Seek out counseling and support. In addition to the natural vulnerability to post-partum depression, anxiety and psychosis, the loss of a baby is an enormous suffering and many women, men and families benefit from counseling and support groups.
- Give yourself time to physically heal. Accept offers for help and ask for it when you need it. Task a family member, spouse or friend to let others know how they can help you, if it is uncomfortable or exhausting doing this on your own. The Elizabeth Ministry is ready to serve you. Please call the parish or our ministry coordinator and let us help.

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“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”
-Deuteronomy 31:6

Elizabeth Ministry of St. Patrick’s Church
The Elizabeth Ministry is a ministry dedicated to supporting and celebrating life through both spiritual and tangible ways. One of the arms of the ministry is dedicated to supporting mothers, fathers and families experiencing the tragic death of a child due to miscarriage, stillbirth, infant or child loss. We provide meals, prayer support and names of individuals or couples in our parish who have also experienced loss and are willing to be a one-on-one support for you. The Elizabeth Ministry also organizes a special mass each year to honor and remember these precious babies and children. To receive their support in any form, please contact:
Carrie Lupini: 765-438-2482
Parish Office: 765-452-6021
http://www.stpatrick-kokomo.org/ministry-list/elizabeth-ministry

Note: If it is more comfortable for you, you can also contact the parish office to have a member of the Elizabeth Ministry contact you, or you can go to the parish website and download a contact form to fill out and mail or bring it to the parish office. This form can be placed in the collection basket at church.

Parish Counseling Services
Saint Joan of Arc and Saint Patrick have professional counselors on staff, ready to meet with parishioners. To inquire about these services, contact:
Heather Becker, M.A. at Saint Joan of Arc (888-701-1060)
Kelli Conlon, MSW at St. Pat’s (765-454-7179)

Support Groups
Many support groups for grieving parents are offered in the Central Indiana area. For a complete list, visit the Saint Patrick Elizabeth Ministry section on the parish website or pick up a printed copy from the parish office.

Parish and Local Resources…
Embrace tangible ways to remember your baby - a memorial garden or tree, a piece of jewelry, remembering your baby during personal and family prayers, journaling, a photo, or anything that is comforting to you.

When ready, some men and women find it helpful to share their story of loss and would like to have a circle of support from others who have experienced loss. The Elizabeth Ministry can put you in touch with others who have experienced a loss and can be a source of empathy and comfort to you in a unique way.

Stay close to Jesus. During times of immense suffering, we might feel abandoned by God or have feelings of anger toward Him or the Church. It can be very painful to go to Mass and see other families or to participate in the lives of others when everything seems trivial compared to our loss. During these times, God wants us to seek Him with even greater fervor. Even if we aren't ready to participate in our normal ministries and parish life, we can go to mass or make a holy hour and continue going to reconciliation, even if all we can do is manage to go or sit in the back and cry. God will never abandon us. Mother Mary especially knows the immense pain of losing a child. Seek her guidance and love. Begin a new devotion or prayer or novena. Many have found that they have felt closest and most connected to their babies during times of prayer, while making a Holy Hour or receiving the Eucharist at Mass.

Early Miscarriage (Before Twenty Weeks)
When you experience a miscarriage, the gestational age of the baby will likely determine the hospital's policies on the handling of the remains. Currently under Indiana law, healthcare facilities are not required to give parents the option of burying or cremating the remains of a baby younger than 20 weeks. Many have found that although an option isn't presented, they can ASK to receive the remains of their child. Thankfully, a current bill is circulating in Indiana legislature that is positioned to change this, requiring parents to have this option presented to them. If you experience an early miscarriage at home, you can keep the remains of your baby and bury them on your own or contact a funeral home to arrange a formal burial of the remains. The funeral home and parish will help you to make arrangements and know your options. If you experience an early miscarriage and would like to have a special mass and/or burial service, please contact the parish as soon as you are able.

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
-Isaiah 41:10
Planning a Mass and/or Burial...

Later Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss
Current Indiana law requires parents to bury or cremate the remains of a baby that is lost to miscarriage at 20 weeks or later. Depending on the doctor and facility, s/he may be more or less sympathetic to your desires, so you might need to be assertive about your wishes. The Church permits the cremation of miscarried and stillborn babies, but you might also have the option of traditional burial. St. Joseph Hospital purchased a plot of land at Puckett Cemetery (west of town on SR 22), where miscarried and stillborn babies can be buried. This is a service that is available to patients of both hospitals. The hospital and funeral home will need to work together. As soon as you experience a miscarriage, stillbirth or infant loss, please contact the parish so we can help you determine your options for a Mass or burial.

Baptism is a sacrament for the living, so miscarried or stillborn babies will not receive baptism. The Church teaches us that we entrust these little ones to the great mercy of God, knowing that Jesus had very special affection for children. Therefore, we do not need to concern ourselves with their salvation. All babies, whether miscarried, stillborn and those who die after birth, can have a funeral mass and Christian burial. Our priests and funeral coordinators will work with you to plan these occasions. They can be as private or as public as you desire. Some choose to forego a Mass and opt only for a graveside service and burial. The Church also offers special blessings for parents who have lost a baby. Simply ask one of our priests for a blessing.

If you have experienced a loss and did not keep the remains for burial, it is okay. Miscarriages, especially early ones, often occur suddenly and under stressful circumstances. The Church knows and understands this and you have not done wrong in any way by not burying your baby or having a funeral Mass.

How To Help Someone Who Has Experienced a Loss...

Acknowledge the great pain and suffering of the loss.
Sometimes people are hesitant to acknowledge miscarriages and stillbirth as real losses, since they can happen early, are quite 'normal' (about one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage), or out of a fear of saying the wrong thing. However, the loss of one's child is an unimaginable pain, yes even when lost to miscarriage or stillbirth. The loss of baby or young child, either before or after birth, is the loss of a precious family member and is a loss of dreams and plans. Often times, these losses bear additional suffering because they go unacknowledged, happen quietly, or because adequate support is never received. If you know someone experiencing the loss of their baby or child, first and foremost, acknowledge this loss. See below for ideas on how to tangibly or spiritually offer your love and support.

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“How to Help Someone Who Has Experienced a Loss...”

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”
-Proverbs 3:5-6
Let your words be words of love.
Expressing sympathy should be done delicately and with love. We should avoid being nosey or asking impolite or painful questions. Any words we offer, whether written in a card or shared in person, should be in sensitivity to the pain and suffering of the other. We should not dismiss their pain, rationalize their experience or go on with the details of our own sufferings, unless we are invited to do so.

Those who have experienced the loss of a baby or child have shared that some of the most hurtful words they received were of the following nature:

"You can always have another." (Dismisses the uniqueness and preciousness of THIS life)
"At least you weren't very far along." (Implies that this life is not worth mourning)
"You'll be pregnant again soon." (Assumes that all couples conceive easily and mechanizes the beauty and gift of creating and nurturing life)
"You could try for another baby." (Hurtfully suggests that the couple or mother somehow failed)
"Well this is just nature's/God's way of taking care of things." (Suggests that their baby or child was an imperfect one)

When trying to express your condolences, consider these:
- "I am so sorry for your loss."
- "My heart is aching for you. I have experienced a loss also. Please let me know if I could ever be a listening ear."
- "I want to help you in any way I can right now. Could I __________ (provide a meal, watch your children, help with any household chores or errands, etc.)?"

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