

Statement by Archbishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, and Bishop Bosco MacDonald, Lead Bishop for Marriage and Family Life, to mark Baby Loss Awareness Week (9th – 15th October)

Baby Loss Awareness Week is a national initiative of remembrance taking place between the 9th and 15th of October. It is an opportunity to pause and acknowledge the deep sorrow suffered by parents who have experienced the loss of a baby, especially through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, or stillbirth and infant loss. Each of these losses involves the death of a small child and the parents need our compassion and support through their bereavement. It is an opportunity for prayer.

Many women and parents carry this painful loss silently. It is difficult to talk about, and the Church has also found this difficult. We invite parents to mark baby loss in meaningful ways: through prayer, memorials or liturgical remembrance and mass. These acts help affirm the dignity and innocence of the child and support you in your journey of grief and healing. We encourage parishes to invite parents to pray in front of the Most Blessed Sacrament or light a candle for their children at any time.

“You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139). The psalmist sings of the divine origin of every human life starting from conception. During this “Baby loss week”, let us remember all babies who have died before birth or in infancy and the families who mourn them. Let us encourage parents to seek strength in the motherly gaze of the Blessed Virgin Mary who watched her beloved Son die on the cross and who now beholds Him in eternal glory. May they find comfort in the hope of eternal life and in the tender mercy of God, who knows each child by name and holds them in His embrace.

Archbishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues

Bishop Bosco MacDonald, Lead Bishop for Marriage and Family Life

How the Catholic Church remembers children who died in the womb or in infancy and supports their parents

Baby loss touches more families than we might think. For example, [around one in five pregnancies in England and Wales end in miscarriage](#). Yet many of these parents suffer in isolation. The opportunity for parents to hold their deceased baby, to name him or her and to mourn their loss can be a sacred moment. Sadly, this is not always possible, thus compounding the grief.

If you have experienced the loss of a baby, please be assured that the Church holds you in prayer and invites you to seek support in your parish community. The Church offers Funeral Masses to commend the souls of the departed to God’s mercy and love. One form is for baptised children and the other form is for those who have not been baptised, including babies lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, or ectopic pregnancy. A common practice has also been to celebrate a mass ‘of the Angels’ offered for the intention of the unborn.

We encourage parishes to make known that a Funeral Mass or an appropriate memorial service can be offered for a baby lost at any stage of pregnancy. This is not only a way of entrusting the child to God’s loving care, but also a source of consolation and spiritual comfort for grieving parents.