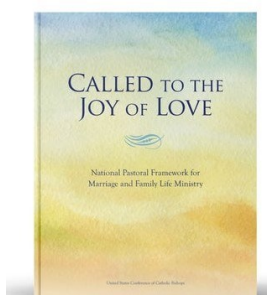




"For it is in consoling that we are consoled."

Spiritual Support for Grieving Parents



CALLED TO THE JOY OF LOVE

National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry

--by the USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, 2021

"Accompanying Couples Who Have Lost A Family Member, Especially A Child

The loss of any close family member, especially a child may be a source of tremendous pain, grief, and distress. To accompany a grieving family, a pastoral plan should aim to educate, encourage, and engage." --Page 23

Answering the Call...



The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents

A Catholic ministry serving the spiritual needs of grieving parents whose children of any age have died by any cause, no matter how long ago.

The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents, founded in 2009, offers spiritual retreats for grieving parents where they have the opportunity of getting away from everyday life to focus on their individual spiritual journeys. To focus on... where God is in their lives right now... where their children are... how the rich teachings of the Catholic Church can bring peace, comfort, and hope. In a safe and loving place, it also gives them the opportunity to meet other grieving parents who can truly understand their pain.

To Accompany a Grieving Family, a Pastoral Plan Should Aim to

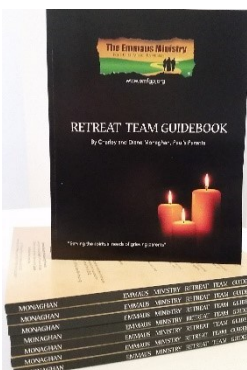
EDUCATE...*grieving parents and families on what the Church teaches regarding circumstances such as miscarriage, infant death, and suicide, as well as on forgiveness/vengeance and the hope of the Resurrection.*

All Emmaus Ministry programs are based on the rich teachings of the Catholic Church and the Catholic Catechism on the promise of eternal life.

Resources include [*"What the Catholic Church Holds to Be True About Death and Resurrection"*](#) (Emmaus Ministry), [*Pregnancy and Infant Loss Resources*](#) (Emmaus Ministry); and [*"Behold Your Child"*](#) (Archdiocese of Dubuque, IW), as well as the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1259-#1261, #2319 (Life in the Womb); #2280-#2283 (Suicide); and #1465 (Forgiveness).

ENCOURAGE... *family members to return to sacraments and the life of the parish...to recognize and share in the Paschal Mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection.*

All Emmaus Ministry retreats are offered by parishioners and/or diocesan personnel who have received our no-cost training. We focus on the fact that grieving parents can find true comfort, hope, and peace in the Paschal Mystery and the promise of eternal life, in the belief that God's love is stronger than death. Focusing on the fact that life has changed, not ended, gives parents hope. Knowing that they will see their children again provides peace. Offering and embracing the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick is the core of our spiritual retreats—and of our ministry, as a whole.



ENGAGE... *in training for pastoral leaders and parish staff to assist grieving parents and family members... (to offer) events focused on how to cope with death and the stages of grieving; and provide opportunities for grieving families to meet other families who have experienced loss for mutual support and comfort.*

The mission of the Emmaus Ministry is to train and empower parishes and diocesan staff in effective ways to spiritually minister to grieving parents. We have published a 181-page *Emmaus Ministry Retreat Team Guidebook* in English and in Spanish, which is also available electronically. It contains templates and step-by-step directions on how to introduce and maintain the Emmaus Ministry in a parish or diocese.

In addition, at no cost to parishes or dioceses, we offer in-person and virtual training in coordinating Emmaus Ministry Spiritual Retreats. At our expense, we go wherever we are invited to offer this training and lead your first retreats. Parents participating in our retreats pay a nominal fee or make a free-will offering. Our mission is to bring the good news of eternal life to as many grieving parents as possible.

ENGAGE... *in opportunities for grieving families to meet other families who have experienced loss for mutual support and comfort.*

While Emmaus Ministry Spiritual Retreats are focused on supporting grieving parents in their spiritual journeys after the loss of their children, more often than not parents form strong bonds and support each other. A parent's grief is very different from any other. Only another grieving parent can truly understand the pain. The Emmaus Ministry brings all of these parents together in a safe place to experience the love and palpable presence of the Holy Spirit and their children at our retreats.

Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents

The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents is a Catholic ministry currently being offered in 14 dioceses throughout the United States.

It was developed by grieving parents for grieving parents.

If you are interested in adopting this powerful ministry, we will travel to wherever you are, at our expense, to train you and help you offer your first retreats.

Using our *Emmaus Ministry Retreat Team Guidebook*, grieving parents in your area, working with your diocesan/parish staff are typically able to adopt and carry the ministry forward on their own. If not, we will return as many times as you need us.

To find out more, call us today! We are ready to serve the grieving parents in your diocese or parish. Call 800-919-9332. Or email us at info@emfgp.org.

*Developed
BY grieving
parents
FOR grieving
parents.*

Here's What People Have to Say About the Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents

GRIEVING PARENTS

"We came away emotionally and physically exhausted, but with a renewed faith that our children are truly alive and still with us. We came away with Hope."

"The time we spent with you was life transforming. It had a profound effect and helped us heal as a couple."

"This was a Godsend to us. We have been so isolated in our grief and have not had any help with the spirituality of grieving...we are so grateful for this ministry."

FAMILY LIFE DIRECTOR

"Since the launch of the Emmaus in the Archdiocese of New York in 2017, we have conducted 13 in-person and six virtual retreats for grieving parents, at little or no cost to us. Parents experience a warm, safe place of healing and comfort, unique in their grief-journey, because each participant is a grieving parent, and knows at least a little of their pain. Coupled with the rich tenets of our faith, a seed of hope is planted into these parents, all of whom are on different spiritual grief-journeys."

Sue DiSisto, Parenting and Family Life Education Specialist
Kathy Wither, D.Min., Director, Family Life Office, Archdiocese of New York

PASTOR

"The Emmaus Ministry to parents who have lost children is an incredibly important part of healthy, faith-based grieving. I have been honored to be one of the team members for day-long retreats, to share the love of Christ with these loving parents. It is truly one of the most important and sacred experiences of my priesthood. I encourage all pastors to consider bringing this ministry to their parish."

--Fr. Joseph Raeke, Pastor of Pilgrim Catholic Collaborative, Carver, MA

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

"The Emmaus Ministry manifests Christ's healing love to grieving parents through the compassionate accompaniment of other grieving parents who share their profound sorrow and walk with them on a journey of Hope in the promise of the Resurrection."

Beginning to end, our experience with the Emmaus Ministry has been one of completely professional, well organized and beautifully presented days of spiritual enrichment and companionship."

--Patrice Fitzpatrick, Pastoral Associate, St. Patrick Parish

PRIEST

"It is a sacred privilege to be a part of the good and love that the team brings to hurting and grieving parents. In many cases, this unique ministry is the first to actually understand the depth of the loss of these parents."

--Fr. Eric Carpine, OFM