



HOW TO ADOPT THE EMMAUS MINISTRY

To serve the spiritual needs of grieving parents in your diocese whose children of any age have died by any cause, no matter how long ago

AN OPEN LETTER FROM CHARLEY AND DIANE MONAGHAN TO DIOCESES INTERESTED IN ADOPTING THE EMMAUS MINISTRY FOR GRIEVING PARENTS

Dear Family Life Ministers,

If you are interested in possibly adopting the Emmaus Ministry for grieving Parents in your diocese, you are being called by the Holy Spirit to a ministry of consolation for parents who have experienced the death of their precious children. Many would argue that nothing in life more horrendous; ministering to these parents can be daunting.

After our only son, Paul, died in 2002 by suicide, we searched for years for some semblance of peace and comfort. It was only when we began to focus on the fact the he is still very much a live and at work in our lives right now that we found what we are looking for. For our son, and all of our children who have died, life has **changed**, not ended. The promise of eternal life is very real.

At last we had Hope, which caused us to return to our deep roots in Catholic faith.

As grieving parents, however, we found that we need to be reminded of this over and over again. In 2009 we heard the call of the Holy Spirit and worked with Franciscan Friars at St. Anthony Shrine in Boston, MA to develop what is now known as the *Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents*. It is very much a ministry for grieving parents offered by grieving parents, with the help from diocesan and parish personnel and Spiritual leaders.

Through Half-Hour, One-Hour, One-Day and Weekend Virtual and In-Person Spiritual Retreats, as well as frequent email and social media postings, we serve the spiritual needs of the grieving parents whose children of any age have died by any cause, no matter how long ago and no matter how close to God they do or do not feel.

We help parents give themselves the gift of time to get away and focus on where God is in their lives right now and where their children are. See www.emfgp.org for more details.

We are completely pastoral. We are not holistic in that we do not offer counseling, therapy, or any kind of socialization support. We do not employ licensed counselors. This is because we believe that being spiritually grounded is most important. Without hope and faith in the promise of eternal life, no amount of counseling or therapy will bring the true peace and comfort that grieving parents need most.

For this reason, our sole mission today is to bring this good news to all grieving parents throughout the United States. We invite you to join us as you serve the spiritual needs of the grieving parents in your diocese!

And, because of our generous donors and grant awards, we are able to bring this very powerful and simple ministry to you at NO cost for our time, travel or training.

On behalf of all the grieving parents who will find much peace and comfort in your work, thank you for heeding the Spirit's call. Please call us today for more information on how we can bring this powerful ministry to your dioceses and your parishes—at very little, or NO cost. Call us at 800-919-9332 today!

With Joy in the Risen Lord,

Charley & Diane Monaghan





EMMAUS MINISTRY FOR GRIEVING PARENTS

Overview

OUR MISSION.

We are a Catholic ministry that serves the spiritual needs of all grieving parents (no matter what religion) whose children of any age (from conception to old age) have died by any cause (including abortion, miscarriage, suicide, overdose, etc.), no matter how long ago (from a few days to more than 40 years ago because a parent is always a parent.) We are a ministry offered *by* grieving parents *for* grieving parents dedicated to providing this powerful ministry to grieving parents all over the United States at no cost to dioceses, parishes, or parents.

OUR ROLE.

As Emmaus Ministry Retreat Team Members, our role is to provide parents with the opportunity to spend dedicated time away from everyday life to focus on their spiritual journeys after the death of their children. Primarily, as retreat team members, we do our best to handle the logistics of preparing for the retreat and having it run smoothly. What actually happens at each retreat, however, as we stand back, is the palpable interaction of the Holy Spirit, the parents, and their children.

OUR METHODOLOGY.

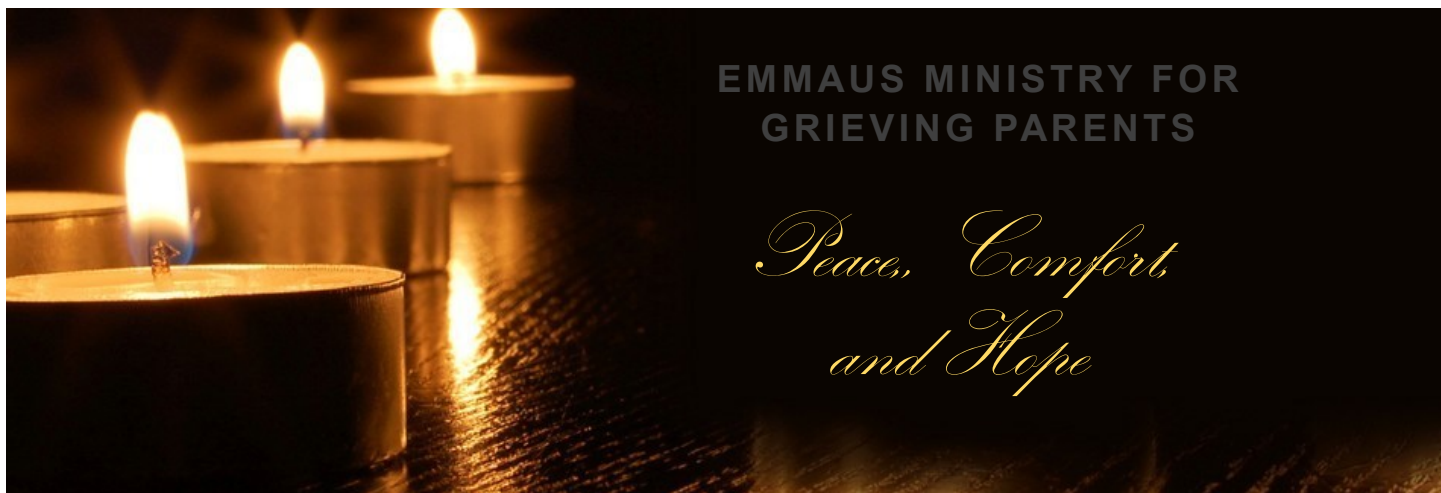
We offer spiritual nourishment via Half-Hour, One-Hour, One-Day, and/or Weekend Spiritual Retreats. We tell parents who come to our retreats, "You are giving yourselves the gift of getting away from everyday life to focus on where God and where your children are in your lives right now."

The Emmaus Ministry is not a support group and it is not holistic. It definitely does not offer therapy, workshops, seminars, or grief counseling for two reasons: (1) We and most of our Emmaus Retreat Team members, are not qualified or professionally certified in any of these fields; and (2) More importantly, we believe that, without deep-rooted faith and trust in the promise of eternal life, no amount of counseling or therapy will bring the true peace and comfort that grieving parents need most. What we do offer is the opportunity for parents to deepen their spiritual relationships with God and with their deceased children on an ongoing basis.

We accept all grieving parents wherever they are in their spiritual journeys. We recognize that very often feelings of grieving parents can seem "irrational" or "unusual" to others. We do not judge or assume. All feelings are valid. (See our booklet, "Sorrow Like No Other," available on Amazon.)

The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents

c/o 194 Bishops Forest Drive, Waltham, MA 02452 · www.emfgp.org · (800) 919-9332 · info@emfgp.org



EMMAUS MINISTRY FOR GRIEVING PARENTS

*Peace, Comfort
and Hope*

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents is based on

1. **Catholic Catechesis.** See our Catholic Catechesis summary below.
2. **Emmaus Ministry Retreat Guidelines/Requirements.** (Strictly adhered to and provided to all parents via hard copies and verbally at the beginning of each retreat)
 - Emmaus Ministry retreats focus on the spirituality of the grieving process. We do not offer counseling, therapy or grief services. Our retreats are not seminars, workshops, conferences, or counseling. They offer spiritual nourishment.
 - We never “go around the room” asking parents to introduce themselves. For each parent is on his/her individual spiritual journey and we do not ask or force parents to say anything.
 - We encourage parents to share as much, or as little, as they wish, with no pressure at all. Many parents participate by listening only for the entire duration of the retreat, which is perfectly acceptable.
 - We allow time for all who do wish to speak, while preventing anyone from monopolizing the conversation.
 - We do not require participation in any of our sessions. If parents choose not to participate in a particular session, preferring to walk the grounds or spend time in the chapel, that is totally fine and we never question why.
 - We respect each other by refraining from comments that could be hurtful, e.g. “I don’t know why my child had to die; he wasn’t a drug addict.” None of our children deserved to die. God’s love shines on all of them equally, no matter what.

OUR COSTS.

Because it is our mission to provide this ministry to as many grieving parents as possible all over the United States, we never charge for any Emmaus Ministry Retreat Team services or travel expenses. (Donations for travel expenses are happily accepted, however.)

Individual sites may charge a Registration Fee or accept “Free-Will Offerings,” (which are usually very generous) to cover the cost of food, stipends, and retreat materials.

We come to you as coaches to help you adopt the Emmaus Ministry in your area charging nothing for our services.

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OUR RETREAT MATERIALS.

We encourage individual sites adopting the Emmaus Ministry to adapt the various parts of the ministry to your particular situation to better serve the spiritual needs of your grieving parents.

To maintain the integrity of the ministry, however, we do expect you to (1) adopt the Mission and Core Values of this document; (2) follow the general structure/schedule of our retreats, as outlined in our *Emmaus Ministry Retreat Team Guidebook*; and (3) offer at least two retreats per year somewhere in your diocese.

IDEALLY... Resources Needed to Successfully Adopt The Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents In Your Diocese

Introducing the Emmaus Ministry for Grieving Parents in your diocese is relatively easy incurring comparatively little cost. It is very much a parent-led ministry requiring as little or as much clergy or parish personnel involvement available. Here are some specifics...

MINISTRY ADOPTION

To successfully adopt this ministry, your diocese needs to...

1. Embrace the mission of the ministry: To serve the spiritual needs of all grieving parents whose children of any age have died by any cause—no matter how long ago;
2. Have the intention of eventually maintaining the ministry in your diocese on an ongoing basis with at least two spiritual retreats for 20-25 parents per year somewhere in your diocese. (Offering one retreat per year in each Vicariate is ideal.) We will do everything in our power to help you introduce and maintain this ministry in your region—including coordinating and leading your initial retreats at no cost to you—no matter how long or how many retreats it takes. However, the goal is to eventually have someone in your diocese designated to work with grieving parents and spiritual leaders from your parishes in embracing it and carrying it forward;
3. Commit to an aggressive diocesan-wide promotion plan.



THANK YOU

On behalf of all of the grieving parents who will receive peace, comfort, and consolation from your efforts in this ministry, thank you profusely!

Please call 800-919-9332 or email diane@emfgp.org

PEOPLE

For any Emmaus Ministry retreat, the more parish and parent involvement, the better—even for your initial retreat. If you have a parish or diocesan committee able to provide food and sustenance, for example, and a Spiritual Leader able to provide spiritual support at your initial retreat, that would be ideal.

For your Initial Retreat(s), the Emmaus Ministry will provide the following at no cost to you:

1. Online registrations and follow-up phone calls
2. Retreat leadership and coordination
3. Retreat materials, including templates for orientation folder handouts, Memorial Candles, prayer services and Comfort Crosses.
4. Evaluation of the retreats with recommendations going forward.

For your Initial Retreats, you would be responsible for the following:

1. Suitable facility to hold the retreat, preferably a parish wanting to adopt the ministry (see below) or your Pastoral Center.
2. Spiritual leader (priest, deacon, spiritual director, religious, etc.) to give a 40-minute reflection focused on a spiritual perspective of grief or grieving, specifically oriented to grieving parents.
3. Parish Liaison to help coordinate the logistics of your Emmaus retreat and to assist people who prefer to talk with someone locally and register in person, rather than online;
4. Aggressive diocesan-wide promotional plan to ensure that people in your entire region know about your retreat;
5. Group of parish volunteers to provide food and drink throughout the day (or funding for catering services, which is typically \$500-\$750).

For subsequent retreats, ideally you or your regional site(s) would have the following:

1. Two supportive Pastors willing to offer at least one retreat per year in your diocese;
2. Two-four grieving parents (or parish personnel) willing to coordinate and lead retreats;
3. On-site person who is able to answer questions and take registrations for people who prefer not to use the internet (e.g., parish office manager);
4. Committee of regional parishioners to take ownership of planning, preparing, and serving coffee & donuts, lunch, dinner, and ongoing snacks and beverages.



**Your Plan for
Adopting This
Ministry**

PROMOTION (Activities that have worked in other areas)

1. Send flyers and press releases to all surrounding parishes. Request postings on as many regional church and community bulletin boards as possible (electronic and non-electronic—we can provide flyer and registration form templates).
2. Obtain agreement from regional Catholic churches to repeatedly run small bulletin ads beginning 3-4 months before the first retreat date. (We can provide the ads)
3. Request regional pastors to include notice of the ministry and retreat in Mass announcements. (We can provide sample announcements)
4. Ask pastors, deacons, or pastoral associates to personally invite parents who have held funerals for their children in your region.
5. Invite a reporter to write an article on the new ministry for your diocesan newspaper (or submit your own article; we can write the article for you or provide you with sample articles).
6. Invite a reporter to write an article on the new ministry for your local newspaper.
7. Ask local regional hospital chaplains, hospice staff, funeral directors, etc. to promote the retreat.
8. Have your local Catholic TV station, if available, to interview members of your retreat team.
9. Use social media to promote the retreats.
10. Use any other means you have available to promote the retreats.



FACILITIES NEEDED (assuming 20-25 participants)

1. Chapel or area in church able to accommodate a 6' table for 15-20 candles lit the entire day.
2. Large group room to accommodate 20-25 people sitting at tables
3. Three breakout rooms to accommodate 6-8 people each
4. Dining area for 20-25 people
5. Table for ongoing beverage service and nourishment throughout the day
6. Table for handouts
7. Table for "Handmade Hug Prayer Shawls," (if needed)
8. Reserved seating at Saturday Vigil Mass (if appropriate)
9. Other miscellaneous items listed on our "One-Day Retreat Needed Items."

COSTS

Costs for Emmaus Ministry One-Day Retreats range from parishes actually making several hundred dollars to a maximum of costing the parish or diocese \$500-\$750/One-Day Retreat. Major expenses include stipends for the Spiritual Leader (and possibly music ministers), plus expenses for food and refreshments. Travel and mentoring costs for Emmaus Ministry Parent Leaders have been generously subsidized by grant awards and dedicated donors who continue to enthusiastically support this ministry.

Regions able to obtain the services of (1) a Spiritual Leader who waives the stipend for the Reflection and (2) a committee of parishioners who donate food and supplies and their services for the day are able to actually make money offering an Emmaus Ministry retreat. If stipends and catering for the food is required, the average cost for a One-Day Retreat is \$500-\$750, some of which is offset by free-will offerings.



Spiritual Retreats for Grieving Parents Join US!

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

Losing a child under any circumstances is horrendous. Focusing on the spirituality of the grieving process can help tremendously.

Just as He comforted his grieving disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus comforts us and we comfort each other in this very special Catholic ministry.

With other Emmaus Parent Companions and Spiritual Leaders, parents find spiritual nourishment in a warm and loving place—to think, talk, feel and pray. They find compassion, rest and peace...at least for a time.

Space is limited! When maximum number is reached, registration will close. For more information or to register, see www.emfgp.org



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All are Welcome Emmaus Ministry Programs

All Emmaus Ministry programs focus on the grieving parent's spiritual journey

Parents find peace, comfort and hope by focusing on the rich teachings of the Catholic Church:

Life for our children has changed, not ended. Our children are eternal beings, who will live forever. It is possible to have a relationship with our children, even now. We live in certain hope of seeing our children again.

IN-PERSON RETREATS

- One-Day Spiritual Retreats
- Weekend Spiritual Retreats

VIRTUAL RETREATS

- Five-Hour Virtual Retreats
- One-Hour Monthly Midweek Gathering Retreats
- Half-Hour Weekly Saturday Morning Remote Retreats

ONGOING OTHER PROGRAMS

- Emmaus Compassion Outreach Program (newly bereaved)
- Monthly Emails
- Holiday Emails
- One-to-One Spiritual Support
- Local Onsite Spiritual Support

CATHOLIC CATECHESIS ON WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HOLDS TO BE TRUE ON DEATH AND RESURRECTION

As the Word of God is revealed in the Book of Wisdom 1:13¹:

“Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living.”

And, as amplified in the Catholic Catechism ²:

1008 “Death is a consequence of sin.” The Church's Magisterium teaches that death entered the world because of man's sin. Even though man's nature is mortal, God had originally destined him not to die. **Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God, the Creator, and entered the world as a consequence of sin.** *“Bodily death, from which man would have been immune, had he not sinned” is thus ‘the last enemy’ of man left to be conquered.”*

WHAT ELSE WE HOLD TO BE TRUE

IN THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE CHURCH TEACHES:

For our children, life has changed – not ended.

366 “The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not “produced” by the parents –and it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection.” 997 “...In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body.”

Our relationship with our children still exists and continues

954 “The three states of the Church. When the Lord comes in glory, and all his angels with him, death will be no more and all things will be subject to him. But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating ‘in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is.” 955 “So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the Church, this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods.”

Even if my child was not baptized, there is hope for salvation.

1260 “Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery 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.”

We will be together with them again.

989 “We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever, so after death the righteous will live forever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day.” 997 “What is ‘rising’? In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus' Resurrection.” 998 “Who will rise? All the dead will rise. Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.”

¹The New American Bible. World Catholic Press, 2000.

²Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition. United States Catholic Conference, 2000