



DECREE

Diocese of Colorado Springs Policy for Burial of Fetal Remains

All human life is sacred. Fetal remains (i.e., miscarriages, stillborns, etc.) should be given a proper, dignified and reverent burial. For that purpose, Catholic Cemeteries typically offer two options for the burial of fetal remains. For live births, only option B is permissible; with coordinated efforts between the respective cemetery and a funeral home/director.

Option A: The Catholic Cemeteries provides a free unmarked grave. The fetal remains may be buried in a grave with other fetal remains, however, each in its own proper burial container. A private and proper burial is highly encouraged (cf. Rite of Christian Burial) and will be facilitated by the parish having operational responsibility over the cemetery and a funeral home/director, if/as appropriate. Available information regarding the remains (i.e., received from; any given name; name of funeral home; date of final disposition and interment or inurnment, etc.) is to be recorded in the parish's cemetery and, if a funeral was held, in the funeral record books.

Option B: The family visits the cemetery to select and purchase a suitable grave plot or niche. A proper funeral liturgy and burial is encouraged (cf. Rite of Christian Burial) and will be facilitated by the parish having operational responsibility over the cemetery. A proper burial container is required, unless a casket or urn is purchased from a funeral director. A burial plot/niche marker or monument is encouraged. The infant's name on the marker or monument must match the name on the official death certificate. Information from the funeral home's Clergy Record is to be recorded in the parish's cemetery records and, if a funeral was held, in the funeral record book.

Catholic Cemeteries typically have dedicated sections for the burial of fetal remains. In some cemeteries it is called the *Holy Innocents Section* and is created to provide a dignified place of remembrance and prayer to all families that have experienced the loss of a child. It offers an

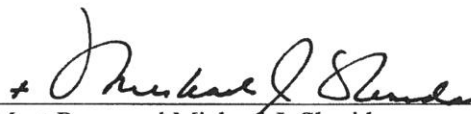
opportunity for bereaved families to memorialize a beloved child and is a very special place for prayer and reflection.


Parishes within the Diocese of Colorado Springs with operational responsibilities of cemeteries are therefore asked to disseminate and discuss this information with the funeral homes and funeral directors in their local area.

Concerning the burial of fetal remains, funeral homes and directors are, in turn, asked to please:

1. Contact the office of parish having operational responsibilities of the applicable cemetery (i.e., St. Charles Borromeo Church in Stratton for the Calvary Cemetery; Our Lady of the Visitation Church in Kiowa for the Queen of Heaven Cemetery; St. Anthony Church in Hugo for the Mt. Calvary Catholic Cemetery; and Holy Family Parish in Leadville for the St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery) to coordinate the funeral and/or graveside burial service.
2. Provide all available and necessary information concerning the burial of fetal remains to the responsible parish for official church and cemetery recordkeeping purposes (i.e., Clergy Record data or like record).

I, Michael J. Sheridan, Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado Springs, do hereby promulgate this Policy for Burial of Fetal Remains this 27th day of October, 2016 and declare that it shall take effect today, and shall continue in force and effect until thereafter revoked or amended by me or my successor.


Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan
Bishop of Colorado Springs


Rev. Msgr. Ricardo Coronado-Arrascue, JCD
Chancellor

