

## **EULOGY FOR A BABY WHO DIES AFTER BAPTISM**

I need to take a couple of minutes to say "thank you" to all of you here today. The support we have received from our neighbors, fellow parishioners, friends and co-workers has been so appreciated by our family.

We asked for and have received prayers for our family from all of you and from so many others we have come to know and love. I can say with an abiding confidence that the grace we have received as a result of your prayers has swiftly moved us from crushing grief to an attitude that, while still tinged with sorrow, is nevertheless permeated by joy.

This Faith of ours, this glorious Catholic Faith, has for centuries boldly proclaimed that an infant who is baptized and then dies, as our child has, is carried directly to the waiting arms of God to enjoy the Beatific Vision and live in Paradise forever. We as Catholic parents are called by our vocation of marriage to strive above all else to work toward helping our children arrive in Heaven someday. The Church assures us that our baby is now in Heaven. How can we not be filled with joy?

At the same time, the Church gently encourages us to embrace sorrow. The other morning as my wife sat in her rocking chair and held our child's lifeless little body, we pulled close a small replica of the Pieta which depicts the Blessed Mother holding the lifeless body of her Son. God is good. He allows us to share in a small way with Mary and all of her suffering. The Church teaches us not to waste suffering but to use it as an opportunity to show our dependence on God.

One might think that it would be difficult to eulogize a baby, but let me share some of what I've been told over the past two days. I've heard people reflecting on how fragile life is and taking stock of their own life. I've heard parents express their desire to run home and hold close their own children. I've heard reassessments of how incredibly precious each and every little life is that God gives us. I've heard recognitions of how truly short life is and how suddenly it can end, which in turn resulted in personal inquiries about God, faith and eternal life.

In short, our baby's short life and sudden death has prompted some wonderful things. This, then, is our family prayer -- we gladly give our baby back to God and endure the sorrowful pain if it prompts just one person to grow closer to Him.

And finally, to you my beautiful bride whose arms ache for your baby, you have sustained us through all of this unselfishly and with dignity and humility in imitation of our Blessed Mother. I know well that your heart is breaking and I love you.

"The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away... Blessed Be the Name of the Lord!"