

Abortion's 'Invisible Grief' Surfaces With Nationwide Gravesite Ceremonies

Most people will acknowledge that losing a child is a terrible thing. That's why it is the focal point of the National Day of Remembrance set for Sept. 14.

This solemn event will memorialize tens of thousands of children buried at gravesites around the nation—a tiny fraction of the 55 million children killed by abortion since it was legalized in 1973. Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, Priests for Life and the Pro-Life Action League are coordinating this day to heighten awareness that every abortion results in the death of an innocent child, to create an appropriate outlet for both personal and national grief, and to pray for an end to abortion.

The grief caused by abortion is an “invisible” grief—what grief therapy expert Dr. Kenneth Doka defines as “disenfranchised loss,” one not recognized or socially sanctioned and therefore not triggering the type of social support people normally receive at a time of significant loss.

Post-abortion counselors attest that this grief is amplified by the message that abortion is a legally protected right to be celebrated by our society, leaving no room for mourning the loss of the aborted child. To admit that loss would require abortion advocates to acknowledge a real baby is involved.

The National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children is set for Sept. 14 to mark the 25th anniversary of the burial of several hundred abortion victims in Milwaukee. Solemn prayer vigils will be conducted at the Milwaukee gravesite as well as 34 other burial sites and dozens of other memorial sites

dedicated to the unborn victims of abortion. There are hundreds of such sites across the country.

"The graves of these victims are scattered across America—graves of sorrow and graves of indictment on a nation that permitted the killing of the innocent," says Monica Miller, co-director of National Day of Remembrance and director of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society.

The gravesites stretch across the country from Riverside, Calif., to Wilmington, Del.—including a grave in Los Angeles containing the remains of 16,000 aborted babies.

Eric Scheidler, co-director of National Day of Remembrance and executive director of the Pro-Life Action League, lives near the Chicago-area Queen of Heaven Cemetery, where 2,000 tiny abortion victims were buried in 1988 by Cardinal Joseph Bernadin, then prelate of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

"It's sobering to realize that these grave markers for the unborn victims of abortion list only a date of burial," Scheidler says. "They have no birthdays because they were never allowed to be born."

In a time when thousands of abortions are legally performed each year on children of the same gestational age that neonatal surgeons work to save, National Day of Remembrance coordinators look to this project to emphasize the humanity of unborn children.

"Having a memorial service where these babies are buried reminds us that abortion is not merely about beliefs but about bloodshed; not just about viewpoints but victims," notes Fr. Frank Pavone, co-director of National Day of Remembrance and national director of Priests for Life.