Statement of Bishop Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues

I welcome the introduction of the option for parents to be given baby loss certificates where they have lost their baby before their pregnancy had reached 24 weeks gestation.

These certificates are a firm recognition of the deep grief that parents suffer after miscarriage or stillbirth and the humanity and dignity of every child in the womb. We hope that this will be a significant step towards better support and care for parents who experience miscarriage or stillbirth. Indeed, we should consider how we can provide better support in our own Catholic parishes for families who have lost a baby prematurely.

The loss of every child is a source of immense pain, and sometimes also anger or solitude for the parents and other family members. The Church stands close to parents in grief and surrounds them and their children with prayer, including through funeral rites. The Church entrusts these babies to the mercy of God for He calls all children to Himself (Catechism, #1261).

Likewise, we entrust grieving parents to God's mercy with the words of the liturgical blessing offered to them:

"Lord God, ever-caring and gentle, we commit to your love this little one, who brought joy to our lives for so short a time. Enfold him/her in eternal life.

We pray for these parents who are saddened by the loss of their baby. Give them courage and help them in their pain and grief. May they all meet one day in the joy and peace of your kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen"

Saint Gianna Beretta Molla and Saint Catherine of Sweden, patrons of the unborn and those who suffered miscarriage, pray for us.