

## Lethal Fetal Anomalies: What to Do?

By Dr. Roni Grad

Babies in the womb who have been diagnosed with “lethal fetal anomalies,” namely conditions or birth defects incompatible with life, are often targeted for abortion, even in states that protect the unborn from the time of fertilization. Furthermore, many who survive to term are left to die following their births. Yet, with appropriate medical care widely available today, these babies may survive many years. And even if it pleases God that some survive only five minutes after birth, that short life is still one that was well worth living.

Baptized children with these “lethal” anomalies are as much a part of the Body of Christ as all who are baptized (Matthew 19:14 [Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16]; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Their dignity rests squarely in the fact that Christ died and rose again for them (c.f. Galatians 3:28). In Baptism they have been gifted The Faith and in them, God is restoring His image (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Even in their profound weakness, they are indispensable to the Body as a whole (1 Corinthians 12:22). When they suffer, God is with them, as He is with us. And when He calls them home earlier than most, we know that we will see them again on the Last Day, in the New Jerusalem, where there will be neither tears, nor death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4).

We thank God that some parents and pro-life physicians are speaking up for these children! For more on this, your Lifeline team commends the following piece: <https://wng.org/roundups/pro-life-doctors-parents-challenge-concept-of-lethal-fetal-anomalies-1717530567>.

Two additional points:

First, occasionally it pleases God to take one of these children while s/he is in the womb. Families who regularly receive God’s gifts in His Divine Services may take comfort in the fact that their baby heard the Gospel even while *in-utero*, and thus have reason to rest in His mercy (c.f. Luke 1:44; Romans 10:17).

Second, if you have been part of a decision to prematurely (i.e. before God’s time) end the life of one of these babies, and sincerely regret and repent of having done so, know that Christ died for this sin as well. We encourage you to meet with your pastor to confess your sin and receive God’s life-restoring forgiveness through him in Holy Absolution (John 20:21-23).

We your English District Lifeline Team thank God for all He has done and continues to do through you and pray His richest blessings on your proclamation of the sanctity of *all* human life from fertilization to forever in your congregation and community.