

Bereavement photographs taken of babies and with their parents are valuable mementos for grieving families, serving as a gentle link to memories and feelings pertaining to the precious short time spent with their baby or babies. Touching Souls Bereavement Photography works to honor parents' emotional experiences by providing photographs, taken unobtrusively before, during, and after death, which offer a real and emotional history of their child's presence they might not otherwise have. Many parents have found them helpful in the telling of their story of loss to family and friends, fostering greater understanding and support. The collection of photographs, presented reverently in an album, is theirs to keep. A mother of a stillborn baby wrote in response to her photos:

" You have captured the beauty of our son, his thick hair, his soft face and hands, his cuddly body. You have also captured every nuance of emotion we experienced, every heartache, every proud moment, and especially the love, and we value each feeling... You have validated our role by enabling us to share with our family and friends an important part of ourselves..."

For parents, having an artistic record of this short time with their baby affirms their reality and validates their feelings then and over time. The pain of loss is not diminished, but honored in such a way as to help them move forward as they grieve.

Touching Souls serves families experiencing the death of a baby, and collaborates with support programs in hospitals and other institutions that provide care at the end of life. Todd Hochberg has worked in the bereavement field since 1997 and has spent the last twenty years as a medical photographer at Advocate Health Care in Chicago. His bereavement photographs have been featured in *LIFE* magazine,

Photo District News, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *ADEC's journal The Forum* and *SHARE's Caring Notes*. Todd's work is part of the permanent collection of the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and he presents to a variety of groups nationally and locally. Todd serves on the board of directors of PLIDA (Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance) and is an active member of ADEC (Association for Death Education and Counseling), SAH (Society for the Arts in Healthcare) and CECC (Chicago End of Life Care Coalition). Todd brings a highly attuned sensitivity to this work and has a deep understanding of how photography can play a powerful role in supporting families through grief and healing. For more information, please contact Todd Hochberg.

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At the heart
of it all,
what matters
most is:

Who has
touched our
lives and

Whose lives
we've touched.

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Pictured are Baby Jesús, Mirza and José – my deep gratitude.
Photograph and Content © Todd Hochberg



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