



URGENT NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FAMILIES UNITED IN GRIEF – ST ANNE’S CATHEDRAL WELCOMES SAYING GOODBYE SERVICE

Families who have suffered the pain of baby loss at any stage of pregnancy, birth or in infancy are invited to join a special service on **Sunday 1st June 2014** at 3.30pm at St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast. The Saying Goodbye services help families pay tribute to their lost babies and provide an opportunity for people to say goodbye.

The Saying Goodbye services, are the first set of national commemorative services to take place in Cathedrals and Minsters across the UK, with this being the first year the service will be held at St Anne’s Cathedral.

The Belfast service will feature music, poetry and readings, mixed with acts of remembrance and time for reflection. The service is free to attend and open to anyone of any faith or no faith.

The Saying Goodbye services were established by Staffordshire couple Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, who have lost five children through miscarriage. Zoe explains "*We decided to take the pain of loss and create an organisation that could help others who have previously, or are currently going through the grief of losing a baby. The aim of our charity The Mariposa Trust is to help support those who have suffered the pain of losing a child at any stage. Approximately one in four pregnancies, or 250,000 per year end in miscarriage, plus 4,000 through still birth and more in infancy in the UK alone. The Saying Goodbye services are there for parents, family and friends who have lost to pay tribute and remember their cherished child.*"

The organisation was set up in 2012 and saw seven Saying Goodbye services taking place in the UK including York Minster and St Paul's Cathedral. 2013 saw 18 services and 2014 is set to see 25 UK services including Canterbury, Glasgow, Llandaff, Winchester, Exeter and York.



Andy commented: *"Having lost five babies, we experienced firsthand how loss can affect people. We wanted to create services that would give a wonderful goodbye to babies that have been lost, and allow the parents to grieve in a supportive environment. When you have parents saying 'this is the first time in 50-years that I am being able to grieve and say goodbye', you understand that whether it happened yesterday or half a century ago, the pain is still there, and people need help and support. We set up the Mariposa Trust to offer that help and support to anyone who has experienced baby loss at any stage."*

Zoe added: *"A loss before 24 weeks gestation is not recorded with a certificate, which leaves the parents with no official recognition of the baby's life. As miscarriage often takes place at home without medical intervention, people can be left with no avenue for grief, and as no memorial service usually takes place, the opportunity to officially recognise the unborn life, can just pass by. With stillbirth and early infant loss, services are usually conducted quickly whilst parents are in the depth of despair, and not at a time when people can truly take onboard and process the grief. Saying Goodbye aims to give people the opportunity to remember their lost baby in a fitting way, whilst also uniting with others who have faced similar sadness."*

Professor Lord Robert Winston, one of Saying Goodbye's many Ambassadors, said: *"Miscarriage is often something that's not acknowledged or talked about in the UK, and people certainly do not appreciate how utterly distressing it is for women, and indeed their extended families. It's a loss of a precious life, and whether the loss happens in early or late pregnancy it's traumatic, and a natural grief process must be allowed to happen. I hope that these services will be a turning point in the nation, and through this new organisation miscarriage will become more widely understood, and families will know that their pain and loss has been heard and recognised."*

For more information please visit the Saying Goodbye website - www.sayinggoodbye.org or follow on Twitter @SayinggoodbyeUK

Editor's notes:

For interview requests or further information please email press@sayinggoodbye.org or call 0845 293 8027

****NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE - Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates can be contacted on: 07890 198131****

Seats for all services are issued on a first come, first seated basis

Saying Goodbye is part of the Mariposa Trust, a Charity and Company limited by Guarantee, charity number 1151108.

Saying Goodbye are working closely with Bliss, Tommy's, The Lullaby Trust (formerly FSID) and other charities to provide counselling, information and support.

