



## Francis Bonaventure O'Brien

March 15, 2015

### Obituary of Francis O'Brien

Francis Bonaventure, the beloved baby boy of David and Retzel, died of unknown causes on March 15, 2015 at 7:06 p.m. He was 7 weeks old. In addition to his parents, he is survived by his four siblings-Clare Jessica, Toby Zachariah, Joshua Raphael and Bernadette Marie.

Francis was born on January 20 at 6:20 p.m. and he lived the normal life of a newborn, surrounded by love and affection. He was particularly attached to his mommy, both emotionally and literally. He was best known for finding comfort in his Retzel's arms. He loved his daily walks with Retzel and Bernadette and enjoyed the sun on his face. Clare and Toby loved to carry Francis and held him after school. Joshua and Bernadette loved to talk to Francis on his bouncy seat and were his playmates.

From the very beginning, Francis exhibited great physical strength, lifting his head from the day he was born. He showed great strength of will until his last breath.

When Retzel and David took him to urgent care last week, they didn't know it would lead to Francis being admitted to the hospital. After Francis failed to improve following a blood transfusion, the doctors searched for answers to

explain Francis' condition. What they discovered after an MRI was that Francis had suffered seizures, a stroke and massive brain swelling. In light of the tests results, they told us that he would not recover and had only a few hours to live.

After picking up the kids and Francis' grandparents, the entire family smothered him with love, tears, lullabies and praise songs as we released him to take his final journey to heaven.

The doctors were amazed at Francis strength which allowed him to last for more than a day and a half after the MRI revealed his condition. We wondered why little Francis was holding on. Instead of dying on Friday night, his little heart persevered until Sunday evening. We think he was waiting so that the priest-David's boss at the parish where he works now and the one who celebrated a beautiful baptism for Francis a few weeks before-could rush back from Michigan. When Fr. Ed arrived a bit before 7 p.m., it was a shock. We never expected to see him. He anointed Francis and prayed with us in the midst of a tsunami of tears. When Fr. Ed left, Francis took his last breaths and went to be with the Lord.

In his short life, we believe Francis fulfilled his earthly mission. He taught us so many things. We learned that the weakest and the smallest can be great examples of strength. He reminded us of how dependent we all are on our loving Father just as Francis depended on us for everything. Francis also showed us that every moment matters and we can make a tremendous impact in the little time we are given. In his short seven weeks of life, Francis was already a community builder, an example of strength, and a great source of love and affection.

We know Francis is with God now and not suffering anymore. But the rest of us still need and depend on the love, prayers and support of our family,

friends and loved ones through this most difficult of times. Pray for his siblings, who miss their little brother dearly.

There will be a wake on Friday, March 27, 4-6 p.m. for family only at Beyers Funeral Home in Lady Lake, Florida. The funeral is set for 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 28 at St. Timothy Catholic Church in Lady Lake. ([www.sttimothycc.com](http://www.sttimothycc.com)) All are welcome to the funeral.

In lieu of flowers, two memorials have been set up for those wishing to honor Francis Bonaventure. Please do not feel obligated. Your prayers are worth their weight in gold.

#### Francis O'Brien Memorial Fund

Friends have set up a memorial fund for the family. You can visit <http://www.gofundme.com/p6p7vk> for more information.

#### The Francis O'Brien Memorial Garden

A small garden behind the school has been a new and ongoing project throughout the past year. With the pregnancy and birth of Francis, the garden has not received the attention Retzel intended to give it. If you would like to contribute to turning this garden into a memorial for Francis, please contact the school. We envision the garden to be filled with flowers, a fountain, maybe a bench, fruits and vegetables and a statue of St. Francis. We hope it will be a blessing for all the children in the school for years to come. Here is the school's information.

[www.lakemontessori.com](http://www.lakemontessori.com)

# Tribute Wall

DD

“ *My prayers are still with you. I'm enrolling your family in Marian of Immaculate conception perpetual Masses.*

David Darois - July 13, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ *Sending much love and hugs to all the family. I share in your heartbreaking loss and am keeping all of you close in thoughts and prayers. Rest in peace baby Francis. I know Uncle John is holding you in his arms and will take good care of you.*

Christine (Domino) Poremba - April 11, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you especially today as you celebrate the life of your dear son and brother, Francis. Love, Col*

Colleen Gray - March 28, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ *Dear David, Retzel & Children, Our prayers are with you. God Bless you! Love, Doel & Lee*

Doel & Lee Burgos - March 27, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ *Francis Bonaventure O'Brien*

Dearman - March 26, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ Dearest O'Brien Family, Please know that your family is in our hearts during this difficult time. Sending prayers your way, that you may receive God's love, comfort, and peace through those who love you... In Christ's Love, The Dearman Family <3

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**Dearman** - March 26, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Dear Retzel, David, & family, I am so very sorry & sad that you are suffering this terrible loss. Your beautiful son was born into an extraordinary loving family, a little heaven here on Earth. And now he is with God. May your love & faith in God & in each other sustain & comfort you in this very painful time. With love & prayers, Susan

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**susan Goff** - March 26, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ ###GESTURE###

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**Dearman** - March 26, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ Dear David and Retzel (and all your beautiful children!), we love you and we're so very sorry to hear of your beautiful Francis' passing. So thankful that he is with our loving Lord Jesus right now. The story you shared of his short life here on earth was so beautiful. Please know you all are in our thoughts and prayers. We love and miss you guys, David and Naomi

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**David and Naomi Lay** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EV

“ Thinking of You With Sympathy... Wishing you strength & love during this tough time! God be with you all!

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**Eros-Tess Villafuerte** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

HD

“ Dear David and Family, My thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of sadness. I pray that God will give you the strength you need to get through this weekend and the days ahead. Love and prayers. Hortense Dunn

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**Hortense Dunn** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DO

“ Dear David and Retzel, You and your beautiful family are in my thoughts and prayers. What a wonderful gift for all little Francis is. Thank you for sharing his story. God bless you all and keep you, Debbie Ollis

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**Debbie Ollis** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ Retzel, David, and siblings of Francis O'Brien: Please accept our sincere condolences...we pray, especially at our dinner hour, for all those who have recently gone home to the Lord. We also are praying for the "comfort" of the family. Love to all, Ruth and Aidan Licari

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**aidan licari** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ Retzel & Family, There are no words to express the emotions we are feeling while hearing the news of your loss. We are praying for your family and keep you all very close to our thoughts. I hope you continue to find strength and peace as heaven has another angel. Sending our love. Jessica (Fiesta) & Matt George, & Chante' Randerson

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**Jessica Fiesta George** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CJ

“ Dear Retzel, I feel so blessed to have known you and your little Francis. I cannot imagine the loss your family is feeling right now... the loss I am feeling for you must not be but a drop in your ocean. You are in my prayers. With much love, Cheri

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**Cheri Jenner** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CF

“ Dear O'Brien family, We are dearly sorry for the loss of your little Francis. Please know that your family will be in our constant prayers during this most difficult time. Words cannot express how much we love you and support you. We will think of you often and remember Francis in our prayers. In Christ, the Carlson family Pensacola

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**Carlson Family** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Please know that we are praying for you all during this difficult time. May the Lord grant you peace as you mourn. Your Heart of Mary Family is with you. God Bless,

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**Most Pure Heart of Mary School** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ I was blessed to meet baby Francis at CGS in Largo. I held him in my arms and was so amazed by his strength so early on. He held his head high and was so alert. His beautiful mother tended to all his needs during our class. I was so touched and inspired by her dedication and devotion to her baby boy as well as her desire to share her faith with her children and others. I will always remember baby Francis and keep him and this beautiful family in my prayers. With love and sadness Mary Carey

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**Mary carey** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Dear Retzel & David, I cannot imagine what you are going through but know that your faith will get you through. Our days together at the CGS training made me feel like we knew each other or a long time. Francis will always be that special Lamb for me. Prayers for you and your family especially your other Lambs. Carmen West Holy Spirit Catholic Church Lantana, FL

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**Carmen West** - March 24, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Lots of love and prayers from the farm.... It is difficult to know what to say ...so we will say that we are with you...a lovely saying of St Pope John XXIII: When men are animated by the charity of Christ, they feel united and the needs, sufferings and joys of others are felt as their own....we are with you....in some way how we wish that we could divide your sorrow. It is with great love that we love you.....we don't have to see you often to be readily connected again!!! That's God's Family....love,prayers... the Gantt Family of Christ the King, Andalusia, Al A wise man once told us....Trust....Surrender....Believe...Receive...

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**susan and kyle Gantt** - March 23, 2015 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ Dearest Retzel and David, No words could ever convey our heartache for your loss. We are saddened and will continue to pray as your whole family grieves. Much love, Barbara and Tom

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**Barbara Stanton** - March 23, 2015 at 12:00 AM

GC

“ David and Retzel, I am so very sorry to hear about the loss of your son. I cannot begin to imagine the feeling, but, from your write-up, I am certain your faith will support you. God bless you and your family, George

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**George Chernowski** - March 23, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KT

“ I am so sorry for your loss! Know that our prayers are with you and your family during this difficult time. Take comfort in the peace and love of the Good Shepherd. Love and blessings, Katie Tate CGS level I training Grand Rapids, MI

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**Katie Tate** - March 23, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Dear David, Retzel, and kids, I am sorrowing with you as the ending of Francis Bonaventure's earthly journey. I am moved by your own living Faith and may the Lord hold each of you in his loving arms. We have that solid assurance of our Catholic Faith that we will see and celebrate with Francis once again in the fullness of time in the Heavenly Kingdom. Michael

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**Michael Cooper, S.J.** - March 22, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ Please know that my heart is sharing in the tears and heaviness of this time .... Jesus taught us to come to him as a child. I understand this to mean with the purest and most innocent faith we can will ourselves to give, and to live with conviction and example! Your little saint Francis did this brilliantly in his short life. He was a powerhouse of God's Love for his parents, his siblings, his parish, his extended family, and hundreds of friends in every direction of America, and other parts of the world. Little Francis has made an impression on each one of us; therefore, he leaves his tiny footprints with us, left behind, to continue our journey. He will be with his parents in the depths of their souls where God dwells. He will continue to give his loving family strength for life. Retzel & David, I love you and your family, and I cherish the friendship Retzel and I will always have as MCA sisters. God is with you .... Peace and Prayers and Prayers and Prayers, Dana

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**Dana Sharon Bowers** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ Dear O'Brien Family: My prayers are with you during this difficult time. May God's enduring love comfort you. Francis Bonaventure, pray for us!

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**Joey Dunbar** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ Dear David, Rachel and children, Peace and consolation in our gentle, loving God! Please be assured of my love and prayers for you in this time of sadness. My love and prayers, Sr., Ginny

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**Sr. Ginny Wagner** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Dear Dave and Retzel, Please know that you and your family are in prayers for comfort and peace in the loss of your dear Francis Bonaventure. You do not know me personally, but I am aware that you both served at Stirling years back. Baby Francis is not really a loss; he has been found in God eternally and will be watching over you and his brothers and sisters from his home in glory. All the same there is the void in our hearts and homes that only prayer can fill--and your own deep faith. May you all find comfort and peace as you remember the words of Jesus to his friends: "I am risen up and am still with you." Yours in the love of the Trinity, Sister Joseph Miriam, M.S.B.T.

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**Sister Joseph Miriam, M.S.B.T.** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Dear David and Retzel and children, May the Triune God flood your beings with peace and consolation in this time of deep sorrow. The obituary was such a beautiful tribute to your dear infant and all of you for your faith. You are in my prayers. Love and sympathy, Sr. Virginia

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**Sr. Virginia Morris, MSBT** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ David, Rachel and children, I just heard about your son Francis' recent death. My heart and prayers go out to you. I remember fondly your stay at my place in Madosn, AL about five years ago. Bernadette was just an infant. It was a special time for me to share my home with you. I see you are now in Florida - so many changes!! I am now at our Motherhouse in Philly after a few other missions. Things change and our lives change, life moves on but when we touch one another's hearts, that remain. Hearing about the loss of your infant son touches my heart and know you are in my thoughts and prayers. In the love of the Trinity, Susanne

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**Susanne Thibault, MSBT** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AL

“ Retzel and David...please accept my sincerest condolences over the passing of Baby Francis from his earthly life to that of eternity. My prayers are that "somehow" the void in your hearts and in the hearts of Francis' siblings will be replace by God's precious mercy and love. God bless, love, aidan

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**aidan licari** - March 21, 2015 at 12:00 AM

PA

“ Sorry to hear of your loss. May God continue to lift you all up and carry you through as He does always! Patricia and Michael Barber

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**Patrica** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LO

“ Dave, Retzel & family, We are so sorry for the loss of your precious little Francis Bonaventure. What a beautiful testament to his life! You have been and will continue to be in our prayers. Hugs, Lauren & Dennis

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**Lauren Lombardo O'Brien** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ We hold on to the Mystery that holds us all... and now hold on even more dearly for your dear baby boy, Francis sees now face to face that Mystery unveiled. We are convinced that when that moment came in his, all too short journey of this life, to be face to face with our God of Love, that he felt things all very familiar... for Francis experienced throughout his whole life that Love through you! Now, one who is created in your image is in the Presence, completely embraced, of the One who we know is the author of Life and Love. We are with you in prayer, in grief, and in love. Sue, Michael, and children Francis and Anthony, please pray for us.

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**Sue and Michael DeFerrari** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ Dave, Retzel and dear children, We hold fast to the Mystery that holds us all... and now, hold on even more dearly as your beautiful boy Francis has come to know that Mystery face to face. I'm convinced that, at that moment, Francis experienced the fullness of a very familiar Love... familiar because Love was his primary experience on his, all to short, journey here. Now, one who looks like the two of you now lives and loves in the very Presence of Love Himself! We are with you in prayer, in grief, and in love. Sue, Michael and children Francis and Anthony, pray for us.

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**Sue and Michael DeFerrari** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Dear Retzel, Dave and Children, I am so sorry for your loss of Francis Bonaventure. May God wrap His arms around you with Love as He wrapped Francis with Love as He welcomed Francis into Heaven. My prayers and Love to you all!

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**Marie Frechette,MSBT** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ What a wonderful tribute to your son. So nice to see the photos posted of the family. My prayers are with you.

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**Sr. Flo Waters MSBT** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Please know you are all in my prayers at the loss of your dear son Francis. My our Triune God give you strength and peace during this time.

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**Sr. Flo Waters MSBT** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

FL

“ Sending you love across the miles. Remembering your beautiful family in your time of need. Honoring Francis's short earthly life and eternal legacy. With sympathy and consolation, Felicia

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**Felicia Leon-Driscoll** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Dear Retzel and David, I am holding you and your family in my prayers at this time of loss. There are no words but to know God is with you in this as are many others. Love and prayers Sr. Barbara Mc

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**Sr. Barbara McIntyre MSBT** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SD

“ We are very sad to hear about your lost. May God give you both the strength, fill your hearts with peace, love and understanding. Be at peace knowing that your have your little angel in heaven with God looking over for you all and praying for you. Love, Mr & Mrs S. DePasquale

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**Sal & Alicia DePasquale** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EK

“ Retzel, David, Claire, Toby, Joshua and Bernadette, We are so sorry for your loss. We will continue to pray for you and hope that you feel the love and prayers for comfort from all of the many lives you touched.

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**Erica and Andrew Klein** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LJ

“ Francis Bonaventure O'Brien

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**Linda Jones** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Dear Retzel & David I am so sorry to hear of the death of baby Francis. Take comfort in knowing that he now rests in the arms of Jesus. I shall keep you and your family in my prayers. Love & Peace Dan Bozza Sr.

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**Dan Bozza Sr.** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ Retzel, David & the children, Words cannot express how grieved I am at the loss of wonderful little Francis, I can only imagine the pain you are going through. But be comforted by the words King David uttered when his little son died, " I will go to him, but he will not return to me." 2 Samuel 12:23. Though we all may not understand why the Lord chose to take sweet Francis, what a joy to know he is surely in heaven waiting for you all to one day join him. Francis lives on in eternal peace! I pray the Lord will heal your wounded hearts and wipe your tears, and speak to your hearts so that you may have peace that passes all understanding. Love Otices, Sarah and the children

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**The Bosha Family** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ David and family, I am sorry for your loss. I know it gives you some comfort knowing that little Francis is with the Lord. Praying for comfort and peace for all of you. Penny

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**Penny Freeman** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ My heart goes out to all of you. Know that you have been in my prayers constantly. As Francis was surrounded by his family, your love and tears, so, too, are you now surrounded by our love and prayers. The power of one individual, so dependent on his Mom & Dad for everything, is a strong message for us, if we're willing to listen.

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**Jack Kane, C.M.** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CX

“ I am so very sorry for your loss I'm keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers

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**Christina xenitelis** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ Francis Bonaventure O'Brien

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**Jeanne Howard** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ My dear Retzel, David, Clare, Toby, Joshua and Bernadette There is no sorrow like that of losing a child. My dear mother who lived to age 96 as most that age had gone through a lot of losses. The passing of my brother, Francis, into eternal life, she told us at his funeral that these were the most difficult days of her life. So when I got the news about your son and brother, I immediately asked my brother Francis to show your precious Francis around heaven and to take him under his wings as a little brother. Frank loved children, so I know he will play with your child and read to him. And I asked my parents to pray with us here on earth for your consolation. My prayers and thoughts are with you. With affection  
Jeanne

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**Jeanne Howard** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ I am so sorry for your loss, and for the loss to all of us. Know that your family is in my prayers during this most difficult time. The short life that you shared with Frances was a gift. Now you have returned the gift to God, knowing that God gives only good gifts, and accepts our gifts with compassion. Be at peace.

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**Sister Susan Van Baalen, OP** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ Francis Bonaventure O'Brien

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**Daniel and Alicia** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ We are heartbroken for you all. We are praying for your peace and for the Lord to strengthen you in this very sad time. We cannot even imagine your heartache. We wish very much we could be there for you in person... Please know we are there in spirit, always. We love you all.

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**Daniel and Alicia** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AK

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this tragic time. What a beautiful tribute to little Francis, God rest his soul. God bless you and your family.

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**Antony and Alisa Kolenc** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LO

“ What a beautiful tribute to a beautiful baby boy. I'll be thinking of you this weekend. All my love, Lindsay

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**Lindsay Opiyo** - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ When Francis was born in January, we got the good new right here in Uganda and we were very happy and thanked God because we know Davids' family well. Now this morning again we get such a sad news and cannot avoid but to ask Gog Why? and many other questions. Many times we don't understand Gods ways and yet we cannot run away from Him. David and Retze we feel with you at this trying moment and we pray that God himself gives you strength and comfort at this time. (Solomon&Grace)

Solomon Okello - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KC

“ Dear Retzel, David & family, I,m so sorry to hear of the loss of your little one. May God bless you and surround you with His loving care.

Karen Conlon - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LJ

“ ###GESTURE###

Linda Jones - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ ###GESTURE###

Jeanne Howard - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ ###GESTURE###

Daniel and Alicia - March 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ ###GESTURE###

Marko Karadzic - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LP

“ We have no words. We are stunned and our hearts are heavy. We weep for you and with you. We know that your, Retzel's and your family's unbounded love and faith in G-d will carry you through. But this is an unfathomable hurt. May G-d provide you comfort and strength. As Francis sits looking down from Heaven, he knows and you must know that the love and bliss that you, Retzel, Clare, Toby, Joshua and Bernadette provided him and shared with him in seven weeks is - undoubtedly to me given what I know of your endless joy and love of life and G-d's children- more than what many experience in a lifetime. Our love and tears, Jane, Lou, Abbe and Joel

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**Louis Piels** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ Francis Bonaventure O'Brien

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**Marko Karadzic** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ My dear friends, Please accept my deepest condolences. May our Lord bless and comfort you and your family in this time of grief.

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**Marko Karadzic** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CR

“ We are heartbroken by your loss and in awe of your strength. We continue to pray for the comfort of your beautiful family.

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**Clay and Melissa Rankin** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *I am so sorry and so sad to hear of this. Please know your entire family will be in my prayers. May God's peace find its way into your heavy hearts, in time. With the deepest sympathy, Jack*

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**Jack Jezreel** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *Francis Bonaventure O'Brien*

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**David OBrien** - March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *Francis Bonaventure O'Brien*

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March 19, 2015 at 12:00 AM