

Sharing Space:

A Stillbirth

Luisella Magnani

Abstract: In this brief paper the author shares a profound experience with a mother who has just experienced a stillbirth.

Keywords: stillbirth, prenatal communication

One Sunday in July 2016, I was at the Pediatric Hospital when the Chaplain informed me that in the obstetrical ward there was a mother who was going to deliver her dead child. Her child had died in her womb five days prior. Her baby was at the 15th week from conception. For 15 days she had informed her doctor about an unusual tiredness she felt, and about the many negative perceptions and feelings, which invaded her mind and body. She had felt as if she were absorbing very negative sensations from her womb.

She spoke to her doctor, her husband, and her family, but everyone said to her, "It's you, it's only your own impressions. Everything is well. Don't worry!"

She underwent an echogram one week before that Sunday in July, and the baby's heartbeat was normal. Moreover, the child moved his legs as if he were playing. But the days passed and her baby in the womb moved less and less. Two days later, in the evening, she felt that her baby was dead. She underwent an echogram the next day. Indeed, during the echogram the doctor said that her baby was no longer alive. A few days later, at 3:00 in the morning, her baby was stillborn.

The mother explained to me that she had felt an unusual tiredness in the weeks leading up to this, but nobody had listened to her words and feelings. She did not succeed in praying. She could not think of what was happening inside her and her baby. She made a comparison between that pregnancy and her previous three pregnancies. She has three other children. But this time, she felt in unusual ways that she had not felt before. I said to her:

My dear lady, dear lady, your own state of being during those 15 days when you sensed something was unusual was the very special communication between your baby and you. He was speaking to you. He was telling you that he was going to die, that he was dying. He was saying goodbye. He was saying that only to you. And, it was such an intimate communication that no one had to perceive, but only

believe in it, a communication only you had. And, you did not succeed in praying because what you were living was already the Prayer of all Prayers. God was that in-between Atmosphere embracing your baby-in-your-womb embracing you-with-your-baby.

Why wasn't that mother listened to regarding her baby? Why didn't anyone consider that the mother's distress was reflecting her baby's distress? Why wasn't importance given to that intimate communication between the mother and her baby?