



HOLY FAMILY PARISH

Funeral Guidelines

Introduction

Christians celebrate funeral rites to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life, which has now been returned to God, the author of life, and the hope of the just. The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.

The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of saints. Though separated from the living, the dead are still at one with the community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession. At the Rite of Final Commendation and Farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heaven and a new earth, where death will be no more.

The priests and parishioners of Holy Family extend to you their deepest sympathy on the death of your loved one. We hope that the following guidelines will enable you to participate in the Funeral Liturgy in harmony with a true spirit of Christian hope and consolation.

I. VIGIL

When there is an evening viewing, the priest or deacon will lead a Vigil for the deceased. The vigil consists of the introductory rite, the liturgy of the word, the prayer of intercession, and a concluding rite.

II. FUNERAL MASS

- 1. Time:** Ordinarily, the Funeral Mass is celebrated at 10:00 A.M. However, for a special reason it could be held later at 10:30 A.M.
- 2. Holy Communion:** All Catholics are encouraged to receive Holy Communion. However, you should remind your relatives that they should be properly prepared, viz., Sacramental Confession (if necessary) and observance of the Eucharistic Fast. The best time to go to Confession is at the regularly scheduled time on Saturday. If this is not possible, the priest would be glad to hear confessions at any time.
- 3. Readings:** Only selections from Sacred Scripture are permitted to be read at Holy Mass. The Scripture passages must be read from the approved liturgical book, the Lectionary, and not from a booklet or pamphlet.
 - a. Selections for the readings can be found in "Through Death to Life," found by accessing the booklet at: www.holyfamilychurch.org/funerals
- 4. Lector:** The Lector is someone who reads the Scripture passages. Only Catholics may serve as lectors. Please make sure that he/she is capable of performing this function. Someone familiar with public speaking and the use of microphones will help immensely in assuring that the Scripture passages are heard. Ordinarily there are two lectors, one for the Old Testament and one for a non - gospel passage of the New Testament. A third one may be employed to read the petitions if there is no deacon present. The cantor will lead singing for the responsorial Psalm.
- 5. Offertory Procession:** This is the procession in which the elements for the Eucharistic Sacrifice are presented to the priest at the altar. Only Catholics may participate in the offertory procession. Ordinarily there are two bearers.
- 6. Altar Servers:** The parish will supply the altar servers. Ordinarily there are four. If you have a particular one you would like to serve or a relative or friend from another parish, please tell one of the priests at least 48 hours before the Funeral Mass.
- 7. Words of Remembrance:** Are to express appreciation for the life of the deceased, or take the form of a prayer or other inspirational text. Only one family member or friend may speak, and he/she is to be brief, speaking no more than three minutes. The words of remembrance should be consigned to writing to ensure that their words are in harmony with the Liturgical Celebration (Mass). The script should be given to one of the priests of Holy Family 48 hours in advance so that he can make any suitable suggestions to help the "words of remembrance" convey the

consolation of God's love, grace and mercy. The words are intended to particularize praise and gratitude to God for His gifts to the deceased, especially the gift of his/her Catholic faith. The Words of Remembrance should be delivered from the ambo, not the pulpit. Like the lector, the speaker should be capable of performing this function.

8. **Music:** Only hymns found in approved Catholic Hymnals may be sung. Popular music and show music, regardless of how much they meant to the deceased, are not permitted. The music chosen should be appropriate for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. A cantor will also be supplied by the parish. Guest organists are permitted. The organist and cantors are under contract with the parish to furnish all music for all our funerals. Guest organists and/or cantors must be familiar with the music for Christian Funeral Masses including the Introductory Rites and the Final Commendation. The fee for Music is \$150.00 per musician.
 - a. A guide for choosing music can be found on pages 5 and 6 of this guide.
9. **Booklets:** Booklets are permitted. However, copyright laws must be observed. The duplication of copyrighted materials (music and/or text) without permission of the proper publisher is both illegal and immoral. Each publisher stipulates his own procedures and regulations for allowing copyrighted materials to be used. These regulations must be observed with accuracy in order to make a funeral booklet legal. Neither Holy Family Parish nor the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will assume responsibility, financial or otherwise, for any individual(s) or group(s) that is found to be in violation of any copyright law(s).
10. **Livestream:** Depending on the availability of a livestream operator, a livestream can be provided by the parish if you would like. Please make your request for a livestream known when discussing the music with the Director of Music. The fee for a livestream operator is \$150.00.

III. RITE of COMMITMENT

Permission can now be obtained for cremation. However, there must be sufficient reason for doing so, and in no way can the reason reflect a denial (even implicitly) of the resurrection of the body or the immortality of the soul. The cremated remains must be buried, a definite date and time must be set for the burial of the ashes.

Music for a Catholic Funeral

The Mass is a public act of worship. The parish church is ultimately responsible for the music in the liturgy, but it is encouraged that you assist in deciding on the music for the Mass. Music should be sacred and should reflect the idea of the resurrection.

Choosing the Music

A list of suggested selections can be found on the back of this sheet. There are four necessary hymns that are used during the Catholic Mass. These are the entrance hymn, the offertory hymn, the communion hymn, and the recessional hymn. A meditation song, or solo, is optional as well. In addition, the responsorial psalm is sung. Common psalms are psalms 23, 27, and 103.

If you wish to have other hymns or songs not listed, please contact the Music Director for approval.

While there are many hymns and songs appropriate for the funeral Mass, there are many that are not. If you would like a song that is not appropriate for the funeral Mass, in order to ensure the Mass is accompanied by only sacred music, it may be better to have this song played at a reception or luncheon.

Church Musicians

The musicians at the church are well trained and capable of providing music for the funeral Mass. It is preferred that the Music Director coordinates the musicians of the funeral Mass. If you have chosen your songs already, or need help in doing so, reach out to the Music Director at the contact number or email on the back of this sheet.

Organist

The Music Director is given the right of first refusal in deciding whether or not to play a funeral Mass. The Music Director also may arrange for a substitute to play, if need be. The fee for an organist is \$150.00.

Guest Organist

If you wish to have a guest organist play, they must be approved by the church Music Director. It is preferred that guest organists are not used, but exceptions may be made. In the event a guest organist plays, the church Music Director still must receive their fee.

Cantor

In addition, a cantor is required for all funeral Masses and the Music Director will furnish a vocalist. Unless you wish to have a guest sing, the fee for the cantor is \$150.00.

If you would like for a guest to sing part, or all, of the funeral Mass, please reach out to the Music Director as soon as possible in order for details to be worked out. A guest cantor should be familiar with the Catholic Mass, a trained vocalist, and able to lead a congregation. Only trained

singers should serve as cantors in the funeral Mass. If the Music Director must rehearse with a guest cantor on a separate day from the funeral Mass, a \$75.00 fee will need to be paid to the Music Director. This is only to ensure that things run smoothly and effectively.

Suggested Music

Common Hymns

Be Not Afraid
Blest Are They
Eye Has Not Seen
Hail Mary: Gentle Woman
Here I Am, Lord
Hosea
Jesus, Remember Me
Like A Shepherd
On Eagle's Wings
We Will Rise Again
You Are Mine
You Are Near

Communion Hymns

Eat This Bread
Gift of Finest Wheat
I Am the Bread of Life
Taste and See
The Supper of the Lord

Meditation Songs

Ave Maria (Schubert)
Panis Angelicus

Traditional

Abide with Me
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus
Amazing Grace
Be Still My Soul
Day is Done
For All the Saints
Holy, Holy, Holy
Holy God We Praise Thy Name
How Great Thou Art
I Know that My Redeemer Lives
Jerusalem, My Happy Home
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Let There Be Peace on Earth
Lord of All Hopefulness
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
Prayer of St. Francis
Precious Lord, Take My Hand
Sing with All the Saints in Glory
Soon and Very Soon
Soul of My Savior
The King of Love my Shepherd Is
The Strife is O'er

Approved Responsorial Psalms

Psalms 23, 25, 27, 42 and 43, 63, 103, 116, 122, 130

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