

Funeral Planning: Practical and Prayerful Preparation

Sponsored by the SFA Adult Faith Formation Team





Funeral Planning: Practical and Prayerful Preparation

- **Hospitality**
- **Welcome**
- **Prayer**
- **Preparation Phase**
- **Funeral Rite**
- **Pastoral Concerns**
- **Conclude**

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Call to Prayer

Opening Song: *Praise to the Lord*

<https://youtu.be/wGTMqf2Jv2c?feature=shared>

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Scripture: *Romans 6:3-11*

Sharing Our Stories

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Death is Evocative

. . . Memories . . . Feelings

. . . Thoughts . . . Beliefs

Share a story . . .

Looking back past the raw emotions,
what beliefs were present for you or others?

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Litany

Leader: Let us turn to Christ Jesus with faith and confidence in the power of his cross and resurrection

Reader 1: Risen Lord, pattern of our life forever:
Lord, have mercy.

Rx: Lord, have mercy

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Reader 2: Promise and image of what we shall be:
Lord, have mercy.

***Rx*: Lord, have mercy**

Reader 3: Son of God who came to destroy
sin and death:
Lord, have mercy.

***Rx*: Lord, have mercy**

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Reader 4: Word of God who delivered us
from the fear of death:
Lord, have mercy.

Rx: Lord, have mercy

Reader 5: Crucified Lord, forsaken in death,
raised in glory:
Lord, have mercy.

Rx: Lord, have mercy

Life Has Changed, Not Ended

Reader 6: Lord Jesus, gentle Shepherd who brings rest to our souls, give us peace forever: Lord, have mercy.

Rx: Lord, have mercy

Closing Song: *Praise God from Whom
All Blessings Flow*

<https://youtu.be/i8xrtKbf4XE?feature=shared>

Preparation Phase: End of Life Decisions

ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVES

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services

"Effective management of pain in all its forms is critical in the compassionate care of the seriously ill and dying."

“Palliative care is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness—whatever the diagnosis—with the goal of improving quality of life for both the patient and the family.”

Cardinal Dolan Aug 2018 Letter to Congress

- How to make these difficult decisions?
- Who should be involved?
- Where do I get help?

Resource Review

Maryland Advanced Directives: Planning for Future Healthcare Decisions

(A Guide to Maryland Law on Health Care Decisions)

www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov

www.mhcc.maryland.gov

National Catholic Bioethics Center

“A Catholic Guide to End of Life Decisions” includes a Health Care Proxy form and Advance Medical Directive form.

More information found at www.usccb.org/prolife

- “Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future. ”

Catholic Advanced Medical Directives: Making Life Decisions
Catholic Dioceses of Arlington and Richmond 2018

- <https://www.cdrcmfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Advance-Medical-Directive-English-rev2018.pdf>

Five Wishes

- The person I want to make care decisions for me when I can't
- The kind of medical treatment I want or don't want
- How comfortable I want to be
- How I want people to treat me
- What I want my loved ones to know

www.fivewishes.org Can order booklet for \$5.00

***TAKE TIME TO REFLECT AND
THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ...***

***And CLEARLY WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU HAVE
DECIDED AND TO WHOM YOU NEED TO TALK***

WHO TO TALK WITH ...

- Family members and significant others
- Person you have assigned as your health care power of attorney
- Doctors and healthcare providers
- Have a copy put in your medical record
- Clergy
- Assure someone else has a copy

And assure that all previous living wills and advanced directives have been destroyed ...

Things to Consider:
*Funeral Homes, Cemeteries, and
Cremation*

- Is the funeral home or cremation service familiar with Catholic rites?
- Preference is to have the body at the funeral, however cremations are allowed.

- Caskets may be purchased from the funeral home or independently (*e.g.* Trappist Caskets)
- The body must be presented for cremation in a durable combustible container.
- If a viewing is desired, caskets may be rented, but it is more common to purchase a lighter casket that can then be used for cremation.

- Cemeteries have upright markers; Memorial Gardens are designed more like a park (no upright markers).
- Cremains should be interred in a columbarium or sacred ground.

Natural or Green Burial

- No embalming,
- biodegradable shroud
- Biodegradable casket
- No concrete vault
- EG: Serenity Ridge, Windsor Mills, MD

(Catholic Review, November 2024)

<https://catholicreview.org/baltimore-county-cemetery-offers-green-burials/>



The Funeral Liturgy



The Funeral Liturgy

- **What happens at a Catholic Funeral Mass?**
- **What If I Do Not Want a Mass?**
- **Music and Readings**
- **Other Considerations**

What Happens at a Catholic Funeral Mass?

The funeral Mass is similar to a normal weekend Mass with a few extra elements:

- Blessing the remains with Holy Water
- Placing of the Funeral Pall (Not done for cremains)
- Presence of the Paschal Candle
- Use of incense after communion/Final Commendation
- Two additional prayers follow the Prayer after Communion

What about the Eulogy?

- The Eulogy is not considered part of the Mass, so It is given 5-10 minutes prior to the beginning of Mass
- If more than one person would like to speak on behalf of the deceased, it is appropriate to do this at the funeral home or at the reception after the funeral
- This is not to limit remembering the deceased, but to ensure that our focus at Mass is on God and his promise of eternal life

The Funeral Mass

(Priest or Bishop presides)

- Opening Hymn/Procession
- Sign of the cross/greeting
- blessing of remains/placing the pall
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Prayer after Communion
- Invitation to Prayer/Blessing with Incense
- Prayer of Commendation
- Dismissal

The Funeral Liturgy without Mass

(Deacon or Priest presides)

- Opening Hymn/Procession
- Sign of the cross/greeting
- blessing of remains/placing the pall
- Liturgy of the Word
- Invitation to Prayer/Blessing with Incense
- Prayer of Commendation
- Dismissal

Blessing of Remains & Placing the Pall

- After the Sign of the Cross and greeting
- Presider will bless the remains with Holy Water
- After the remains have been blessed, the presider will invite those designated to place the pall
 - Funeral directors will usually assist with this
 - If the remains have been cremated this step is omitted
- This calls to mind our baptism and reminds us that we have died with Christ and will rise with him

Liturgy of the Word & Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Similar to what you experience at a normal weekend Mass
- Readings are specially selected by family members from the lectionary for Christian Funerals
- The 1st and 2nd readings are read by friends or family members. The Psalm is sung by the cantor and the Gospel is proclaimed by a deacon or priest
- The prayer of the faithful is read by a friend or family member
- Bread and Wine are brought up by friends or family

Concluding Rites

- Prayer after Communion as normal
- Invitation to Prayer/Blessing with Incense
 - The remains are blessed with incense as are all things that are precious to the Lord
- Prayer of Commendation
 - The presider and faithful join their prayers to pray for the repose of the soul of the deceased
- Dismissal
 - “In peace, let us take our brother/sister to his/her place of rest”
 - There is no final blessing. This is done at the graveside.

Music and Readings

- There are specially selected readings approved by the Church for use in the Funeral liturgy
- Music selections
 - There is a list of frequently selected hymns available in the funeral planning booklet
 - If the music would not be appropriate for use at Mass, it is not appropriate for use in the funeral liturgy
 - (example: Danny boy is a perfectly acceptable song for a wake or reception, but not for Mass)
 - The music director can help you make your selections if you are having difficulty deciding on music

Other Considerations

- If you are choosing cremation, please do not store your loved one's ashes in your home
 - Remains should be interred or placed in a columbarium
 - There is concern that Cremains can end up being passed on to other family members and eventually end up as an unidentified urn in someone's basement (yes, this really happens)



Pastoral Considerations

Resources

<http://adultfaith.instrumentofpeace.org/funeralplanning/>

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