

## PLANNING A FUNERAL

Upon the death of a loved one, families are asked to contact their parish as soon as possible and certainly before any arrangements are made with a mortuary for liturgical services.

Once the times for the various services are arranged with the parish, the family (or representatives) of the deceased is to come to the parish at an arranged time to plan the services. At this meeting decisions will be made concerning the readings to be used during the Mass, participation by family members during the Mass, and decisions of the Music available to the family which will be provided exclusively by Light of the World's Pastoral Musicians with the exception of family.

The funeral ritual is made up of three principal parts:

1. Vigil for the Deceased
2. Funeral Liturgy
3. Rite of Committal

It is strongly encouraged that the Funeral Rites be conducted in the presence of the body of the deceased. This practice is most in accord with the sacred principles and rituals of the Christian Faith.

"The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation" (CCL Cn. 1176); Mass of Christian Burial may be celebrated with the cremains present in the church.



Care should be taken that the cremated remains of the deceased are accorded proper respect through interment in blessed cemetery ground, or in a mausoleum. Any scattering of the cremains is **not permitted**, because of the reverence due the bodies and remains of the bodies of those who have been baptized and have been temples of the Holy Spirit.

As a rule, the Funeral Mass for a Catholic is to be celebrated in his or her own parish church.

"The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. . . It may take the form either of a Liturgy of the Word or of some part of the office for the dead"(OCF 54). Although the vigil is recommended as a principal rite before the funeral liturgy, other forms of prayer (e.g., the Rosary) are allowed. If a liturgical vigil is celebrated, the proper minister is a deacon. The vigil is normally celebrated at the funeral home chapel.

The vigil service is the most appropriate time for a eulogy, sharing of stories, etc., as opposed to during the Funeral Mass. The deacon will facilitate this at the family's request.

The Funeral Mass is traditionally conducted in the morning. At Light of the World these are usually scheduled at 10:00am or 10:30am. The parish church is the proper place for the Mass of Christian Burial.

If the family of the deceased requests a viewing of the deceased at the time of the Funeral Mass, the viewing may be done in the gathering area of the church, but only before Mass. (The casket is closed before the Mass and remains closed).

Some families desire to place flowers and other objects on the casket during the Mass. **This is not appropriate.** Only the funeral pall, book of the Gospels and a cross are normally used. Flowers may be placed in a vase near the casket. Photos and other items are normally displayed in the gathering area.

The family may have one or two readers participate in the Liturgy of the Word. The readings are to be selected from the Order of Christian Funerals.

Family members may also participate in the liturgy by bringing forward the gifts (bread and wine) at the Offertory.

As mentioned earlier, the appropriate place for family and friends sharing, or the offering of a eulogy, is at the Vigil. If it is determined that a speaker is to be included at the Funeral Mass this will take place following Communion. **One person** may speak who will limit the comments to **three to four minutes**. Further sharing may take place at the cemetery during the Rite of Committal, and the deacon is the proper minister for the Rite of Committal.

It is customary to give a financial offering to the parish according to the wishes of the family. The inability to make an offering should not prevent a family from requesting the rites of the Church.

The musician's fees are discussed at the time of the planning. The normal stipend is \$125 for the Cantor and \$125 for the Accompanist. Funeral luncheons and the use of the Community Center for this purpose may be offered to registered and participating members of the parish. Questions regarding funeral luncheons, appropriate donations and number of people who can be served, should be discussed at the time of the liturgy planning for the funeral.



“The souls of  
the just  
are in the  
hands of God.”