FUNERAL GUIDELINES



"We have loved them in life. Let us never forget them… and let us conduct them, by our prayers, into the house of the Lord." - St. Ambrose

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FUNERAL GUIDELINES

Presented below are general guidelines to consider and/or adhere to when planning a funeral for a loved one. Final decisions and selections should be discussed and coordinated through the funeral home handling the final arrangements.

WHAT IS A CATHOLIC FUNERAL MASS?

This life is short, and the life to come is eternal. When a Catholic Christian departs this world for eternity, the Church commends him or her to the love and mercy of God. The Funeral Mass is a time to remember the deceased and to give thanks to God for the gift of his or her life. Even more so, it is a very privileged and sacred time to pray for the deceased, asking God to grant them a merciful judgment, and to grant peace and consolation to their family and friends.

PLANNING FOR THE FUNERAL:

The family of the deceased is welcome and encouraged to actively participate in planning the Funeral Rites. Members of the parish staff, together with the priest celebrant, will assist the family in choosing appropriate Scripture readings, gift-bearers, readers, and the appropriate music, so that the Funeral Mass itself can be a truly prayerful and beautiful opportunity to pray for the deceased, as the Church commends him or her to the love and mercy of God.

THE FUNERAL PALL:

The Funeral Pall (a large white cloth which covers the entire casket) recalls the white garment with which the deceased was clothed on the day of his or her Baptism. At the beginning of the Funeral Liturgy, the casket is sprinkled with Holy Water, which recalls the water of Baptism. Then the Funeral Pall is draped over the casket prior to the procession into church and remains on the casket throughout the Funeral Liturgy.

READERS and GIFT BEARERS:

The readings ordinarily will be proclaimed by the Funeral Coordinator and, in her absence, by the priest celebrant. Should the family wish to invite a family member or close friend to proclaim a reading, please discuss this with the Funeral Director.

MUSIC:

Music is an especially important part of the Funeral Liturgy. There are many beautiful hymns which come to us from all the centuries of the Church's life of prayer and worship. These are available to be played and sung at the Funeral Liturgy. A sample list follows at the end of these Guidelines. By its very nature, the Church's Liturgy is sacred. It is a time set apart, in a

sacred place, specifically for the worship of God. Thus, it is possible only for sacred music to be used during the Funeral Liturgy. Any non-sacred, or "secular" music which may hold a particular significance to the family of the deceased would be more appropriate to be played either at the wake, or at the reception following the Funeral Liturgy. Our parish priests and Director of Music will be happy to guide you in the planning of a prayerful, tasteful, and reverent Liturgy.

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE:

The practice of giving "Words of Remembrance," also known as a eulogy, is actually not a part of the Catholic funeral liturgy. Since eulogies are often seen at funerals, however, families sometimes think that they are obligated to designate someone to offer a remembrance of the deceased, or to express thanks on behalf of the family. While this is understandable, no such obligation exists. Yet some families, as part of the grieving and healing process, have a desire for loved ones to share stories and memories of the deceased. It should be remembered that the Funeral Liturgy is a time of very intense emotions, and it is often more difficult than people realize to retain their composure while offering words of remembrance in church.

Due to our experiences with Words of Remembrance in the past, it has become clear to us that it is best for everyone that Words of Remembrance not take place in church. If the family does wish that Words of Remembrance be offered, **they would take place at the wake, at the cemetery, or at the luncheon following the burial,** rather than at the Funeral Liturgy itself.

CREMATION:

"Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites." (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 413).

For various reasons, some families choose the option of cremation. While intact burial is clearly preferred, in imitation of Jesus' own burial after His Crucifixion and before His Resurrection, cremation is permitted by the Church by way of exception, as long as it is not carried out so as to deny the Church's unchanging faith in the resurrection of each person's mortal body when Christ comes again at the end of time, to judge the living and the dead.

If cremation is chosen and takes place before the Funeral Mass, the urn is brought to church, and placed on a table in the sanctuary. A photograph of the deceased, as well as flowers, may be placed beside the urn on the table, should the family wish this.

Following the Mass, the cremated remains must be buried, just like a body, in a cemetery, crypt, or other in an appropriate burial place. Out of respect for the remains of the deceased, whose body was once a temple of the Holy Spirit and which will be raised up again on the Last Day, scattering ashes, dividing them up, or keeping them at home, is not permissible because it does not express appropriate respect for the dignity of the person's remains.

PRIESTS OR DEACONS FROM OTHER PARISHES:

If a family would like to invite a Priest or Deacon from elsewhere to celebrate or concelebrate any of the Funeral Liturgies, they would be welcome to do so, provided that the invited Priest or Deacon is currently in good standing in his Diocese or Religious Order. If an invited Priest or Deacon is from another Diocese, or from a Religious Order outside the Diocese of Bridgeport, he must send to the Diocesan Vicar for Clergy (well in advance) a document called a Testimonial of Ministerial Suitability from his Bishop or Religious Superior, for presentation to the Office for Clergy and Religious, here in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

(New Testament readings begin on page 8)

Old Testament (C1) - 2 Maccabees 12:43-46

A Reading from the Second Book of Maccabees

Judas**,** the ruler of Israel] then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C2) - Job 19:1, 23-27a

A Reading from the Book of Job

Then Job answered and said: Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: that with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever! As for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust. Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another’s, will behold him: And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing.

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C3) - Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom

The Word of the Lord. The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C4) - Wisdom 4:7-15

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age. He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported — Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul; For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the LORD, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take that consideration into account.

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C5) - Isaiah 25: 6a, 7-9

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations. He will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken. On that day it will be said: “Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the LORD for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C6) - Lamentations 3:17-26

A Reading from the Book of Lamentations

My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the LORD. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall; Remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me. But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the LORD are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the LORD, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the LORD.

The Word of the Lord

Old Testament (C7) - Daniel 12: 1-3

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

[I, Daniel, mourned and I heard this word of the Lord:] "At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since the nation began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; Some shall live forever, others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace. But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, And those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever."

The Word of the Lord

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS

New Testament (E1) - Romans 5:5-11

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E2) - Romans 5: 17-21

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: If, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous. The law entered in so that transgression might increase but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E3) - Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E4) - Romans 8:14-23

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord, but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E5) - Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E6) - Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Brothers and Sisters: None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E8) - 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and Sisters: Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E9) - 2 Corinthians 4: 14–5:1

A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and Sisters: We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence. Everything indeed is for you, so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God. Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E10) - 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and Sisters: We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E11) - Philippians 3:20-21

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters: Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E12) - Thessalonians 4:13-18

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E13) - 2 Timothy 2:8-13

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

Beloved: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David: such is my Gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for the cannot deny himself.

The Word of the Lord

New Testament (E14) - 1 John 3: 1-2

Reading from the First Letter of St. John

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

The Word of the Lord

MUSIC CHOICES FOR FUNERAL MASSES

Below is a list of hymns that are recommended for funeral Masses at St. Joseph. Sacred Music is an important part of the liturgy, especially at these four places. We welcome your suggestions for ***sacred music/hymns*** if there is something you or your family would like that is not listed here.

Entrance Hymn
Amazing Grace (New Britain)
Immaculate Mary (Lourdes Hymn)
Here I Am, Lord (D. Schutte)
How Great Thou Art (S. Hine)
I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say (Kingsfold)
O God, Our Help in Ages Past (St. Anne)

Offertory Hymn
As A Mother Cares (B. Bridge)
Ave Maria (F. Schubert)
May the Road Rise Up to Meet You (T. Kendzia)
Shepherd Me, O God (M. Haugen)
The Lord is My Light (C. Walker)
The King of Love My Shepherd Is (St. Columba)
These Alone Are Enough (D. Schutte)

Communion Hymn
Behold The Lamb (M. Willett)
Bread of Angels (C. Stephan)
Christ, Be Our Light (B. Farrell)
On Eagle's Wings (J. M. Joncas)
One Bread, One Body (J. Foley, SJ)
Our Blessing Cup (B. Hurd)
Worthy Is The Lamb (R. Manalo, CSP)

Closing Hymn
Amazing Grace (New Britain)
Be Not Afraid (B. Dufford)
Here I Am, Lord (D. Schutte)
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name (Grosser Gott)
How Great Thou Art (S. Hine)
I Know that My Redeemer Lives (Duke Street)
Sing With All The Saints in Glory (Hymn to Joy)