



# St. Bartholomew Parish Funeral Liturgy Planning Guide

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**ST. BARTHOLOMEW  
PARISH & ACADEMY**  
BUILDING UP MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

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The death of a loved one can be a very difficult time for many. We want you to know that all of us here at St. Bartholomew Parish offer you our prayerful support and deepest sympathy at this time of loss in your life. We wish to share with you our hope in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Life He has promised to those who believe. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Hope will bring you comfort and peace in this difficult time.

As a parish family, we at St. Bartholomew Parish constantly pray for our beloved dead and minister to those who are bereaved. If we can be of any assistance to your family now or in the future, please call us at the Parish Office at 440-842-5400.

The information contained in this guide is meant to assist you and help you understand the rites of the Catholic Church surrounding the Mass of Christian Burial for your loved one. Please read it carefully and feel free to contact a Parish Staff member with any questions. Feel free to bring this guide with you at the time of your appointment with a Parish Staff member as you plan the Funeral Liturgy.

Under the Mercy,

Fr. Patrick Schultz,  
Administrator

*"At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of Baptism and strengthened at the Eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end, nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting Word of God and the Sacrament of the Eucharist." (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 4).*



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## **The Rites of the Church**

The Rite of Christian Burial has distinct and important parts in a Funeral Liturgy. The parts of this liturgy and the various rites are explained below: Please note, these are not specific to St. Bartholomew Parish or Fr. Patrick Schultz, our Administrator. These are the directives set forth from the Church itself and our diocese.

1. THE WAKE/VIGIL SERVICE: *"At the vigil, the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence" (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 56).* The Vigil Service usually takes place during the period of visitation and viewing at the funeral home. It is a time to remember the life of the deceased and to commend him/her to God. In prayer we ask God to console us in our grief and give us strength to support one another.
2. The Vigil Service can take the form of a Service of the Word with readings from Sacred Scripture accompanied by reflection and prayers. It can also take the form of one of the prayers of the Office for the Dead from the *Liturgy of the Hours*. The clergy and your funeral director can assist in planning this service.
3. *It is most appropriate, when family and friends are gathered for visitation, to offer time for recalling the life of the deceased. For this reason, eulogies are encouraged to be made at the funeral home during visitation or at the Vigil Service. \**
4. THE FUNERAL LITURGY: This is the centerpiece of the celebration of Christian Burial. *At the funeral liturgy, the Church gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery. The funeral liturgy, therefore, is an act of worship, and not merely an expression of grief. \**
5. THE COMMITAL: *The Rite of Committal, the conclusion of the funeral rite, is the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of its deceased member. It should normally be celebrated at the place of committal, that is, beside the open grave or place of interment. In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The Rite of Committal is an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven: the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the*

welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face-to-face.\* A member of the clergy, normally the Priest celebrant, will accompany the remains and the family to the cemetery where the Rite of Christian Burial will conclude with a brief graveside service.

### **The time and place of the Funeral Liturgy**

A funeral may be celebrated on any day of the week except Sundays and Holy Days. There are also some restrictions concerning funerals during Holy Week. The priest will discuss these restrictions as they apply. Our Administrator Fr. Patrick Schultz will in most cases be the priest-celebrant for the funeral. Should you desire another priest to preside or concelebrate you will need to contact Fr. Patrick directly at the Parish Offices (440) 842-5400 ext. 13.

The funeral liturgies are to be celebrated in the parish church. As stated above, if cremation is to take place, it is preferred that it be done **after** the funeral liturgy. If a funeral liturgy outside the context of Mass would be more appropriate for your circumstances, this should be discussed with the parish administrator.

### **Some Advice we like to Share**

In recent years, many families have chosen to reduce the Funeral Rites for a variety of reasons. During the time of grief, they have, upon occasion, eliminated the wake or chosen to have a Funeral outside of Mass instead of a Funeral Mass. We must caution against this attitude of reduction especially with regards to the wake. Grieving is a process that requires time and company. Eliminating the visiting hours or not celebrating a Mass is more likely to make your family's grief more difficult to bear in the long term due to a lack of closure. Therefore, we strongly encourage that traditional rites be observed. Just as we come to church for Baptism, we come to church to commend our loved ones to God. If you are in doubt about what to do, please consult with us here at the Parish. We are more than happy to discuss your circumstances.

Of late, here at St. Bartholomew we have encountered families who have a desire for eulogies during Mass. Fr. Patrick our current administrator wants to celebrate the funeral mass according to the Church's ritual, and the ritual indicates that eulogies are not to be given during the funeral mass. If you'd like to share words of remembrance, there are other times that are more appropriate such as at the wake, committal or even the luncheon afterwards. In these more intimate circumstances, we find that family and friends are more comfortable sharing stories about the deceased. Refer to page 2 of this guide for specific information.

Recently, cremating the remains has become a more common practice. The **Church does allow cremation; however, the preference is that this happens after the**

**wake and the funeral liturgy.\*** There are certain occasions or circumstances that do occur that prohibit this, e.g. when the body is being transported a long distance. Nevertheless, cremation is not a reason to reduce or omit the Funeral Rites. Lastly, *“the cremated remains, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place: a cemetery, or in a church or another area which has been set aside and dedicated by the bishop for this purpose.”\** The church is very clear on this directive. **“A simple but worthy funeral urn is most appropriate for containing the ashes after cremation. Keeping the ashes of the deceased in a domestic residence is not permitted. The ashes may not be divided among various family members. It is not permitted to scatter the ashes in the air, on land, at sea. It is not permitted to [preserve the ashes] in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects.”\***

### **Offering for funerals at St. Bartholomew Parish**

The stipend for a funeral, *which includes most expenses incurred by the parish*, is \$400. Inability to meet this offering is never a determining factor for burial in the Catholic Church. Masses are not bought and sold, and so, in that sense, a funeral Mass does not “cost” anything. The inability of an individual or family to donate to the parish church should never be a reason for a parish not to provide a funeral Mass for a practicing Catholic. Parish churches do incur costs for the use of the building, the time invested by the parish staff, and for the skills of parish musicians, altar servers, and others involved in celebrating your loved ones’ funeral Mass. A donation from the family to offset these costs, while not required, is greatly appreciated. \*

### **Planning the Funeral Liturgy and Family Participation**

The funeral liturgy is one of the most beautiful and meaningful celebrations of the Church. During the liturgy family and friends are encouraged to participate to the degree with which they feel comfortable. Members of the family are encouraged to place the white funeral pall on the casket, a gesture which recalls the deceased’s Baptism.

Family and friends who are, ideally, practicing Roman Catholics may proclaim the readings, and Universal Prayers (formerly the petitions) if doing so may not be an emotional burden. By choosing the readings this is a way you as a family can personalize the Mass. ***The Universal Prayers at St. Bartholomew are pre-written for you coming directly from the Funeral Rite and are available to you at your liturgy planning appointment with a Parish Staff member. If you choose to add a few of your own those MUST be preapproved by the Priest celebrant prior to the Funeral Liturgy.*** You may also choose hymns for the liturgy; however, you must keep in mind these hymns should be liturgically appropriate Catholic hymns that would be

found in the current hymnal used at St. Bartholomew Parish. Use of non-liturgical or secular mainstream songs or music is against Diocesan Liturgical norms set forth by our diocesan Bishop.

Your family can also participate in the Funeral Liturgy by having two to four people bring forward the gifts of bread and wine for the Mass. Please notify us at the time of your liturgy planning appointment how many you wish to have fulfill this role.

The priest who gives the homily will highlight elements of the deceased's life but will minimally proclaim the hope we have in Christ's victory over sin and death or say a few words of remembrance, during the funeral liturgy. **Please refer to page 2 of this guide for further clarification.**

If you have any questions concerning your involvement in the funeral please ask the Priest Celebrant, the Funeral Director or a member of the Parish staff during your planning appointment.

### **Readings and Music for the Funeral Liturgy**

Readings for the funeral liturgy must always be from Sacred Scripture. When choosing the readings there should be one reading from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament and a Gospel reading. At your Liturgy Planning Appointment we will offer suggestions of appropriate passages that may be selected to be proclaimed at the Funeral Liturgy. If you prefer, the Parish Staff can make the choices for you. Regarding the musical selections, we regret that we cannot accommodate any musical choices that are not in one of our approved hymnals or the directives set forth by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. The directives clearly state: *"sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. But the Church approves of all forms of true art having the needed qualities and admits them into divine worship."* \*

The use of pre-recorded music is not permitted. If there is a particular non-Catholic song that is meaningful to you or your family or music that is found in our modern world, or other musical selections, we recommend playing it at the visitation at the Funeral home or funeral luncheon.

### **What we at St. Bartholomew Parish provide for you**

At St. Bartholomew we offer to our families at your liturgy planning appointment some resources to help you navigate these difficult moments. We provide at no cost a worship aid with scriptural references and the music and lyrics to the hymns

selected for your loved ones' Funeral Liturgy. It is often a very emotional time during the Mass, and it can be hard to follow along with the various components and the music. Please let us know if there is a particular photograph of your loved one you would like us to use, otherwise we typically use the one from the obituary from the funeral home. We do display these images on the TV monitors located at the main and side entrances to the church as you come in for the Funeral Liturgy. In addition, we can provide a livestream of your loved ones' Mass for those who may be out of town and unable to attend. Please let us know in advance or during your liturgy planning appointment with a member of the Parish Staff if this is something that you desire.

### **Our Deepest Sympathies**

We know what an incredibly difficult time this is for you and your family. Please know that the entire parish family of St. Bartholomew is with you during this difficult time and that our Parish Staff is here to assist you in any way needed. Know of our love, thoughts and prayers for you and your loved ones at this difficult time.

May God Bless You Always,

*St. Bartholomew Parish Staff*

The St. Bartholomew Parish Staff

*\*Please note: All references in this guide come from the Order of Christian Funerals with Cremation Rite ritual book ©2019, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland Office of Worship website (<https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/offices/worship/funerals>), or the website for the United State Conference of Catholic Bishops (<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/bereavement-and-funerals>).*

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