

In addition to Archbishop Vigneron's pastoral letter "In Union With Christ's Dying and Rising", the archdiocese has prepared an FAQ guide available at <http://www.aod.org/being-catholic/prayer-and-worship/christian-funerals/directives-for-catholic-funerals-questions-and-answers/> Some common questions and answers are summarized here.

Who can be buried from the Church?

Any baptized Catholic can be buried from the Church, those who have been most faithful in the practice and those who have been less faithful or separated from the Church, through illness, distance or special circumstances. Non-Catholic members of a parishioner's family may be buried from the Church unless it was contrary to their wishes and will during their life. Children are honored with Christian burial if the parents intended for the child to be baptized but the child died prior to baptism.

Can those who have died as a result of suicide be buried from the Church?

Yes, previous laws forbidding such have been changed. There are prayers included in the **Order of Christian Funerals (OCF)** for this circumstance.

May someone who has not been able to attend Church for a few years because of living in a nursing home still be buried from a parish church?

Yes. Absence from their parish due to such circumstances does not separate them from the community of the Church and a Funeral Liturgy.

Why does the Church not sacramentally anoint bodies after death?

One purpose of the Sacrament of the Sick and its anointing of the living person is to instill hope and healing before death. After death, when healing can no longer take place, the Church has other prayers but does not anoint the dead body.

The Anointing of the Sick can be received many times by a Catholic. Pastors often remind their parishioners that the sick are to be anointed at the beginning of a serious illness as well as through the various stages of the illness as it progresses. The sacrament is not reserved to be celebrated only within the last hours of one's life. **Please do not wait to celebrate this sacrament. Unfortunately due to the shortage of priests, Father may not be available at a moment's notice.**

Are Catholics allowed to be cremated?

The Church still recommends, and prefers, the pious custom of burying the bodies of the Faithful, out of respect for the body that has given evidence of God's spirit enlivening our souls which are destined to be raised on the great Day of Resurrection. Nonetheless, the Church allows cremation as long as it is not an intentional denial of the Church's teaching regarding the Resurrection of the body. **Note: the Church greatly prefers that the cremation take place *after* the funeral liturgy.** However, when this is not possible, the cremated remains are expected to be present for the Funeral Liturgy. We will not offer a funeral liturgy without the remains of the deceased. This may require a delay until the ashes are available.

What music is allowed?

“Music is integral to the Funeral rites. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord’s suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (OCF 30) Popular non-liturgical songs are **not** be used in the Funeral Liturgy.

Can we have a eulogy?

A eulogy is not allowed during the Funeral Liturgy. Family or friends may be invited to share such a testimony at the **Vigil** or at the memorial luncheon or reception that often follows the funeral.

What do we do with the cremated remains after the funeral?

The cremated remains must always be treated with respect, the same respect we attribute to the body. After the funeral they are to be interred or entombed, preferably in a Catholic cemetery, mausoleum or columbarium. **They should never be separated or scattered or disposed in any way other than a dignified interment or entombment.**

Are Funeral Masses allowed in funeral homes?

Funeral Masses are not allowed in funeral homes. A simple scripture service in the funeral home is possible when no church liturgy is chosen.

Why can’t we schedule the funeral in the parish when we want it?

Funerals are certainly important in the life of a family and also to the parish. Each parish is unique, however, in the capabilities of schedule, procedures and availability of ministers. Many parishes have set times for funerals mindful that two funerals are possible in one day in addition to the celebration of other Masses and weddings. Parishes might also have some planned activities or events that would not be suitable in providing the best or most appropriate environment for a Funeral Mass to be celebrated at the same time.

Are there some days where funerals are not allowed by the Church?

A Funeral Mass can be celebrated any day except on Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter and the Sundays of the Advent, Lent and Easter seasons.

Is there a fee to the church?

There is not a fee for a church funeral. If the family has the means and wishes to make a donation to the parish, it would be appropriate and welcome, considering the parish resources that are used for the staff, building, etc. You may choose to make a gift to the priest, lay ministers, musician or others involved with the funeral rites.