

Funeral Liturgy Planning Aid

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

Irwin, Pennsylvania

The Funeral Home or family must make the selections for the Funeral Mass no later than 24 hours prior to the liturgy on the Parish website.

The funeral liturgy is one of the most beautiful and meaningful celebrations of the Church. Your family has the option of personalizing the Mass by choosing the Scripture readings and selecting a set of hymns. When choosing scripture, there should be one reading from the Old Testament and a reading from the New Testament. The Gospel reading will be chosen at the discretion of the priest.

Symbols of Our Catholic Faith

Easter Candle and Other Candles

The Easter Candle, which is located at the head of the casket during the funeral liturgy, is a reminder of Christ's undying presence among the faithful and of his victory over sin and death which the faithful departed share through their initiation with the church. The Paschal candle is blessed at the Easter Vigil, the night when the Church awaits the Lord's resurrection which now is a reminder of our hope of eternal salvation with the Risen Christ.

Holy Water

Blessed water reminds the assembly of the saving waters of baptism which destroys original sin and unites us with Christ as his children. During the Funeral Liturgy introductory rites, the priest says, "In the waters of baptism (name) died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May they now share with him in eternal glory." Holy water is used to remind us of our deceased's baptism and initiation into the community of faith and the life they now share with Christ in eternity.

Incense

Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honor and respect to the body of the deceased, which through baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also used as a sign of the community's prayers for the deceased which symbolize them rising to the throne of God.

Funeral Pall

A funeral pall is a white cloth that is placed over the coffin when it is received in the church for the funeral liturgy. This white cloth is a reminder of the baptismal garment that the deceased was clothed in after their Christian baptism.

A Cross

A cross is placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism and through Jesus' suffering on the cross is brought to the victory of his resurrection. This cross, which will be engraved with the name of the deceased, will hang in memoriam in the chapel area of the church until the All Souls Mass, after which it will be offered back to your family, for your own devotion.

Liturgical Color

During the funeral liturgy the priest wears white vestments which express Christian hope and the victory of Christ over sin and death through his glorious resurrection.

The Old Testament

(Please select one.)

A) HE ACCEPTED THEM AS A HOLOCAUST: WISDOM 3:1-9

A reading from the book of Wisdom

But 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. In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; they shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the LORD shall be their King forever. 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

B) A BLAMELESS LIFE IS A RIPE OLD AGE: WISDOM 4:7-15

(Death of a young person)

A reading from the book of Wisdom

But 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 this into account. Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

The Word of the Lord

C) OF THOSE WHO LIE SLEEPING IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH MANY WILL AWAKE: 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 nations 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

D) THE LORD GOD WILL DESTROY DEATH FOREVER: ISAIAH 25: 6. 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

The New Testament

(Please select one.)

3A) LET US WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE: ROMANS 6:3-9

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

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. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. 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

B) WHO CAN SEPARATE US AND THE LOVE OF CHRIST?: ROMANS 8:31-35, 37-39

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

What then shall we say to this? 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

C) DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-57

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

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

D) WE SHALL STAY WITH THE LORD FOREVER: 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, 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

Music for the Liturgy

If you would like, you may choose to have the Director of Music select the music.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23 - The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Psalm 25 - To you O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Psalm 27 - The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Psalm 103 - The Lord is kind and merciful.

Hymns *(four may be chosen)*

1 - **Amazing Grace**, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

2 - **At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing...** You have opened paradise and in you the saints shall rise.

3 - **Be Not Afraid**, I go before you always. Come follow me, and I will give you rest.

4 - **For All the Saints**, who from their labors rest... Alleluia!

5 - **Here I Am, Lord**, is it I Lord? ... I will hold your people in my heart.

6 - **I Am the Bread of Life...** and I will raise you up on the last day.

7 - **I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say**, "Come unto me and rest, lay down, O weary one, lay down..."

8 - **I Know That My Redeemer Lives**; He lives and I shall conquer death...

9 - **I Received the Living God**, and my heart is full of joy.

10 - **Jerusalem, My Happy Home**, when shall I with you be? ... Your joys when shall I see?

11 - **Keep in Mind** that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen from the dead. He is our saving Lord...

12 - **Lord of All Hopefulness...** be there at our sleeping, and give us peace, at the end of the day.

13 - **Make Me a Channel of Your Peace**, ... and in dying ... born to eternal life. *(Prayer of St. Francis)*

14 - **O God, Our Help In Ages Past...** and our eternal home.

15 - And he will raise you up **On Eagle's Wings...** and hold you in the palm of his hand.

16 - **Shepherd of Souls**, refresh and bless.. in strength of which we travel on, to our abiding place.

17 - **Sing with All the Saints in Glory**, ... in God's likeness we awaken, knowing everlasting peace.

18 - **The King of Love My Shepherd Is...** may I sing your praise within your house forever.

19 - **The Strife is O'er** the battle done; now is the victors triumph won... Alleluia!

20 - **We Walk by Faith...** when our life of faith is done... we may behold you... in full and endless sight.

21 - **You Satisfy the Hungry Heart**, with gift of finest wheat, come give to ... the bread of life to eat.

Song of Farewell

(default) Song of Farewell - *(Old Hundredth Tune)*

Celtic Song of Farewell - *(O Danny Boy)*

May the Choirs of Angels - *(Ernest Sands)*

Principles Regarding Cremation

This prayer of committal brings about the closure that is necessary for those who grieve the physical death of their beloved! The prayer represents the reality that from which we were created we return. The proper internment assures us of God's watching eye and blessing until He raised us up again in the Resurrection. Whether we intern the body or cremains it is our sure and certain hope that the baptized belong to Christ and sacredness of the tomb and grave must be emphasized.

The proper internment of the body has never been an issue but since cremation has become a more common practice, questions and concerns have arisen. The following are principles given to us by the Church, taken from the *Order of Christian Funerals*, Appendix: Cremation; 1997.

Reverence for the Sacredness of the Human Body

Because the human body is integral to the human person, it is difficult to think of a person apart from their body. "Thus, the Roman Catholic Church's reverence and care for the body grows out of a reverence and concern for the person whom the Church now commends to the care of God." The long-standing practice of burying the body of the deceased in a grave or tomb **continues to be encouraged as a sign of Christian faith**. However, the Church does not forbid cremation as a means of dispositions of the body, unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Church teaching.

Preference for the Presence of the Body

The body of a deceased loved one forcefully brings to mind the mystery of life and death. As Christians, the body of the deceased speaks also to our belief that we are destined for future glory at the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, "the Church **clearly prefers and urges** that the body of the deceased be present for its funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expressed the values which the Church affirms in its rites."

Funeral Rites

When cremation is chosen, the Church prefers that the body be cremated after the Funeral. When circumstances require it, however, cremation and committal may take place even before the funeral liturgy. All the usual rites which are celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased may also be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains.

The primary symbols of the Roman Catholic funeral liturgy are retained even when the funeral liturgy is celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains. The **cremains must be treated with the same dignity and respect as the body**. They may be carried in procession and/or placed on a table where the coffin would normally be. The Paschal Candle and the sprinkling with holy water are primary symbols of baptism and should be used during the funeral Mass. However the pall is not used. *Photographs and other mementos may be used at the vigil, but are not appropriate for the Mass.*

Final Disposition and Memorialization of the Cremated Remains

"Cremated remains may be buried in a grave, entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium or even buried at sea." The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground is not permitted. Likewise, "keeping cremated remains in the house of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." The principle of respect for the cremated remains of a deceased Christian mirrors the respect afforded their body. The body is always laid to rest with solemnity and dignity.

Note: If you are aware of members of your family who have not properly interned the cremains of your beloved, please share with them the above. It is out of respect for the relationship of the deceased with their eternal design that proper internment (burial) should be realized.