

# Preparation for FUNERALS



*“Eternal rest,  
grant unto him O Lord  
and let perpetual light  
shine upon him.”*



## **Message from the Pastor**

The Paschal or Easter Candle stands both beside the baptismal font and the casket. What God begins, he brings to completion. While the funeral rites do not constitute a sacrament, they are an expression of the Church's profound faith in Christ and trust in the Gospel.

Christian funeral rites both respect the sadness of loss and the joy that comes with trust in the promise of Christ. We give God praise and thanksgiving for the gift of life which we surrender back to the Creator of all. We trust that whatever this world takes away, Christ can restore. It is in Jesus that love conquers death. The Mass offers us a representation of the one-time passion and death of Christ. It also offers us the risen Lord who comes to us in the Eucharist and in saving grace.

*“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, #4).*

Speaking for the staff of Holy Family and myself, please know that we grieve with family and friends over their loss. We want to help in any way we can. As a priest, I

keep the beloved dead in my prayers and remember them at Mass. God bless you!

*Father Joe Jenkins*

### **How is a Catholic funeral different from a Protestant funeral?**

Protestant theology often disavows purgatory and praying for the dead. Prayers stress the need for confidence and faith from mourners. A funeral in the Catholic Church seeks “spiritual support” for the dead, honors the body (as having contained a soul and made a temple of the Holy Spirit) and brings “the solace of hope” to the grieving. At the same time, the homily and prayers for the deceased should not normally imply that the deceased is already in heaven. Rather, we seek to illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ. The Catholic doctrines regarding purgatory and indulgences must be respected, and mention can be made of the propriety of offering Masses and other prayers and good works as intercessions for the departed.

The priest normally presides at the funeral rites, especially the Mass. If no priest is available, a deacon may preside at funeral rites. White vestments are usually worn, but violet and the traditional black are also permitted.

### **Who may have their funeral at Holy Family?**

A funeral for any deceased member of the faithful must generally be celebrated in his or her parish church. A

funeral Mass is never to be celebrated at a funeral home or in the chapel of a cemetery. Parishioners are those who are registered and/or live within the physical jurisdiction of the parish boundaries.

Any member of the faithful or those competent to take care of the funeral of a deceased member of the faithful are permitted to choose another church for the funeral rite with the consent of the person who governs it and after notification of the proper pastor of the deceased.

While the funeral rites are directed toward baptized Catholics, non-Catholics might also be granted the Catholic funeral rites if such was not contrary to their wishes and if their own minister is unavailable. Only Catholic funeral rites are permitted at Holy Family Catholic Church and non-Catholic ministers may neither preside nor preach. Those who expressed the desire to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church would be permitted our funeral rites.

Unbaptized persons who were not catechumens and who wished burial from the Church are not eligible for ecclesiastical funerals. However, it is permitted for a Catholic minister to offer graveside prayers for them.

Unless there was some sign of repentance, notorious apostates, heretics and schismatics who have incurred a “*latae sententiae*” excommunication must be deprived of an ecclesiastical funeral.

## **What happens after the parish is notified of a death?**

The priest and if available, a bereavement ministry group, as soon as notified, offers consolation and prayer for the family and friends of the departed. Usually after contacting the funeral parlor, those responsible for arrangements will come to the rectory to schedule and to plan the funeral rites.

## **What are the planning elements for the funeral?**

### **READINGS & READERS**

Lectors or Readers designated to proclaim the Word of God should be prepared to exercise this ministry correctly. The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done only by Catholics. The Word of God should be read from approved books and translations.

A booklet with the pattern of service and potential Scripture readings will be made available.

### **MUSIC**

Music for the celebration of funeral rites should be chosen with great care, so that it will support, console, and uplift the participants. The texts of songs should be related to the readings from Scripture, and should express the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and victory over the grave. They should also speak to the Christian's share in that victory.

Parish musicians or those offered by a funeral parlor may be used. Costs must be arranged directly with them.

***Carol Wolfe-Ralph*** – 301-385-4796

***Deacon Tyrone Johnson*** – 301-385-3594

Secular songs and music of any kind, whether classical, popular, or patriotic, even if they were favorites of or requested by the deceased, are not to be used in ecclesiastical funeral rites. Secular music can be offered at a wake service, at the graveside and at a repast.

### **WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE**

The pastor may permit one family member or friend to speak in remembrance of the deceased at a funeral liturgy, following the Prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation. Generally speaking obituaries and eulogies should be reserved to vigils, viewings and repasts. They have no officially designated place in the Catholic funeral Mass.

Words of Remembrance should be written in advance and the given by the person chosen to offer them. Nothing scandalous or vulgar should be shared, even if some might find certain details humorous or endearing. Causing scandal at a funeral can place the Church under ridicule and bring embarrassment to family members. The talk should be no longer than five minutes, solely address how the deceased's life related to his or her Catholic faith and

values, and reaffirm the Catholic practice of praying for the dead so as to speed them on their journey to God.

## **SERVERS**

We will try to arrange servers, usually adult men, but sometimes they are not available because of school or job commitments. Those who serve at other Catholic parishes are permitted at the pastor's discretion.

## **What is the customary donation to the Church?**

We do not have an established price list. The gifts of God are free. However, donations are accepted to help defray costs incurred by the parish for facility usage and staff. A typical gift to the parish might be \$150. Families may also wish to make a donation to the priest who celebrates the funeral Mass. These donations are not expected but are highly appreciated. Inability to make a donation would never prevent a parishioner from having the funeral Mass celebrated at the parish.

## **May we have the wake in the Church?**

Evening viewings or wakes in the Church are sometimes permitted but general discouraged for security reasons. More common are viewings in the funeral home the day before the funeral or in the church immediately prior to the funeral Mass. While formal prayers and/or the Rosary might be offered at a wake in a funeral parlor the night before a funeral, viewings the same morning as the Mass

are usually conducted by family and/or organizations like the Knights of St. John or the Knights of Columbus.

### **Is cremation permitted?**

Yes, but cremated remains should be reverently buried or entombed in a cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium; they may also be buried in a common grave in a cemetery. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent types of disposition that the Church requires.

### **May we have a repast in the Parish Hall?**

If the hall is available then a repast in the hall is possible. We will need a copy of the caterer's license. Our hall manager has a food license and must also be present. Given the costs inherent with this usage, we ask for a donation of \$350 (parishioners) / \$450 (non-parishioners) to help defray the expenses. Repasts usually last no longer than three hours and alcohol may NOT be served. A facility usage agreement must be signed with the pastor.

The time immediately after the death of a loved one can be very emotional and difficult. Many people do not know what to do? Because of this, and the fact that most have family members who have fallen away from the Church, growing numbers of believers are planning their own funerals while they are still alive. These instructions are placed with the will and other important documents. The

parish can also keep a record of the wishes of congregants for the day of their funeral.

### **What are some of the things to be considered when planning a funeral?**

- How much money is available to cover costs? Is there death insurance?
- Which funeral home and director will be used?
- Will the body be buried or cremated?
- What cemetery will be used? How will remains be interred?
- Who will be in charge of most of the funeral planning with the director, pastor and cemetery?
- Which priest will preside and what church will be notified? When will the funeral take place?
- Will there be a wake or vigil? Where and when?
- Who will contact family and friends? Is there a contact list?
- Who will read the Scriptures at the Funeral Mass?
- Who will do the responsorial? Will it be sung?
- Who will do the Prayers of the Faithful or bidding prayers?
- Will there be altar servers for the Mass?
- Will the priest have a deacon or extraordinary ministers to assist with Holy Communion?
- Who will be chosen to bring forward the gifts?
- Is there a need for ushers? Who will be the pall bearers?
- Who will perform the music?

- Who will make the selection of readings and music?
- Will there be a funeral program? Will photos be shown?
- How will everyone get to the cemetery? Who will be in the limousine? Will the priest or deacon be coming with the funeral director or in his own car?
- Has an announcement been requested in a local newspaper?
- Who will make the remarks of remembrance at the end of the service? Is it known what he or she will say?
- Will the parish hall be used for a repast? Will it be held somewhere else? Who will be in charge of preparing the facility? What caterer will be used?
- Will there be a need to have someone house-sit for security reasons? (Unfortunately, homes are sometimes burglarized when funerals have been publicly announced.)

If there is no viewing before the Funeral Mass then the crucifer and priest lead the procession with the casket. If there is a viewing before the Mass then the casket is left up front and there is no procession. The priest makes the sign of the cross, greets the people and blesses the casket with holy water. The pall is then placed on the casket. If the person was cremated then the cremains are kept on a side stand, often adorned with flowers and maybe a picture.

The family is pre-seated up front on the pulpit or ambo side of the church. Pall-bearers are on the opposite or chair side. The family may place Christian symbols upon the casket, like a crucifix or bible. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, are to be removed from the coffin and may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church.

### **When can funeral Masses be conducted?**

The funeral Mass has first place among the Masses for the dead and may be celebrated on any day except solemnities of obligation, on Holy Thursday and the Easter Triduum, and on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter Season. In the United States, the Holy Days of Obligation are the following feasts:

- *Mary, the Mother of God* (January 1)
- *Ascension Thursday* (Moved to Sunday in ADW)
- *Assumption of Mary* (August 15)
- *All Saints* (November 1)
- *Immaculate Conception* (December 8)
- *Christmas* (December 25)

We try to keep funerals at Holy Family to Monday through Friday and in the morning.

### **Mixed Congregation for Funerals**

While most who attend Sunday Mass are practicing Catholics, it often happens that many if not most who come to a funeral Mass may be fallen away, from other

faith traditions or from none. The priest will make some effort at guidance during the funeral liturgy to assist people unaccustomed to Catholic practices. Chief among these is a notion of sacred silence. Given the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and humbled by the mystery of death, Catholics show their respect with a prayerful silence. Obviously, there will be some dialogue prior to the liturgy— words of comfort and expressions of pain. But we should do all we can to keep the volume down, especially in the moments prior to the start of the celebration.

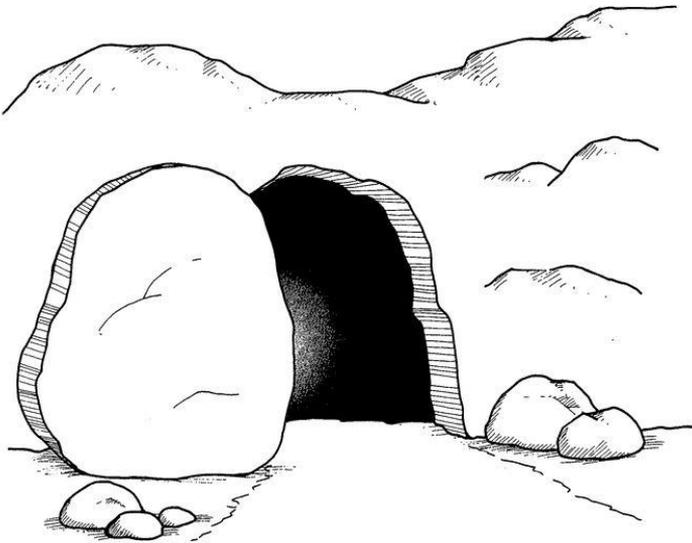
*“Prayerful silence is an element important to the celebration of the funeral rites. Intervals of silence should be observed, for example, after each reading and during the final commendation and farewell, to permit the assembly to reflect upon the word of God and the meaning of the celebration” (OCF #34).*

Another giveaway about Church membership is in regard to what some jokingly call Catholic gymnastics— when to stand, sit and kneel. If Catholic friends and family sit up front, it is likely that those in the pews behind will follow their example. Another telltale sign of demarcation between the Catholics and Protestants comes at the end of the Lord’s Prayer. The Catholic congregants will stop for the priest’s embolism and Protestants will add the ancient doxology that they routinely attach to the Our Father: “For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.” A particularly difficult element can be the

sign of peace or handshake. It is a liturgical gesture that expresses our unity in Christ. However, visitors often misinterpret it in a secular way, start talking and even move toward the doors as if the service is over— which it is not. We need to do all we can to maintain proper church decorum.

### **Funeral Planning Booklet**

We use the booklet *THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE* by Fr. Joseph M. Champlin for funeral planning. We would ask that those planning funerals use this book and the New American Bible Translation for all Scripture readings pertaining to the funeral.



## READINGS FOR THE FUNERAL LITURGY

### ***Old Testament***

#### *During Ordinary Time:*

- C01 - 2 Maccabees 12:43-46 He made atonement for the dead.
- C02 - Job 19: 1, 23-27 I know that my vindicator lives.
- C03 - Wisdom 3:1-9 The souls of the just are in the hand of God.
- C04 - Wisdom 4:7-14 The Righteous One, though he die early, shall be at rest.
- C55 - Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9 He will destroy death forever.
- C06 - Lamentations 3:17-26 My portion is the Lord, says my soul.
- C07 - Daniel 12:1-3 The wise shall shine brightly.

#### *During the Easter Season:*

- C08 - Acts 10:34-43 He is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.
- C09 - Revelation 14:13 Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.
- C10 - The dead were judged according to their deeds.
- C11 - Revelation 21:1-5a,6b-7 There shall be no more death.

### ***Responsorial Psalm***

- D01 - Psalm 23:1-3, 4, 5, 6 The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
- D02 - Psalm 25:6-7bc, 17-18, 20-21 To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
- D03 - Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8b-9a, 13-14 The Lord is my light and my salvation.
- D04 - Psalm 42:2, 3, 5cdef; 43:3, 4, 5 My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?
- D05 - Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
- D06 - Psalm 103:8+10, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 The Lord is kind and merciful.
- D07 - Psalm 116:5, 6, 10-11, 15-16ac I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.
- D08 - Psalm 122 I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.
- D09 - Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8 Out of the depths, I cry to

you, Lord.

D10 - Psalm 143:1-2, 5-6, 7ab-8ab, 10 O Lord, hear my prayer.

### ***New Testament***

E01 - Romans 5:1,5-11 We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son.

E02 - Romans 5:17-21 Through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all.

E03 - Romans 6:3-9 If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall live with him.

E04 - Romans 8:14-23 Those who are led by the Spirit of God are Children of God.

E05 - Romans 8:31-35,37-39 If God is for us, who can be against us?

E06 - Romans 14:7-9,10-12 This is why Christ died and came to life.

E07 - 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 In Adam all die, so too if Christ shall all be brought to life.

E08 - 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 Death where is your victory?

E09 - 2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1 The one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us.

E10 - 2 Corinthians 5:1,6-10 We would rather leave the body and go home.

E11 - Philippians 3:20-21 He will change our lowly body.

E12 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 If we believe that Jesus died and rose.

E13 - Timothy 2:8-13 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.

E14 - 1 John 3:1-2 Beloved, we are God's children now.

E15 - 1 John 3:14-16 We know that we have passed from death to life.

F1-F11 – Various Alleluia Verses or Verses before the Gospel

### ***Gospel***

G01 - Matthew 5:1-12a The Eight Beatitudes.

G02 - Matthew 11:25-30 Come to me ... and I will give you rest.

G03 - Matthew 25:1-13 Look, the bridegroom comes. Go out to meet him.

G04 - Matthew 25:31-46 Come, you whom my Father has blessed.

G05 - Mark 15:33 -39;16:1-6 Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

- G06 - Luke 7:11-17 Young man, I say to you, arise.
- G07 - Luke 12:35-40 Be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect.
- G08 - Luke 23:33-43 Today you will be with me in paradise.
- G09 - Luke 23:44-46,50,52-53;24:1-6a Father, I put my life in your hands.
- G10 - Luke 24:13-35 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer.
- G11 - John 5:24-29 Whoever hears my word and believes has passed from....
- G12 - John 6:37-40 All who believe in the Son will have eternal life.
- G13 - John 6:51-59 All who eat this bread will live for ever.
- G14 - John 11:17-27 I am the resurrection and the life.
- G15 - John 11:32-45 Lazarus, come out.
- G16 - John 12:23-28 If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies....
- G17 - John 14:1-6 There are many rooms in my Father's house.
- G18 - John 17:24-26 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me.
- G19 - John 19:17-30 Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirits.

H1-H7 – Various General Intercessions

### **Twelve Easter Insights**

1. A new day has dawned.
2. The promise of old has been fulfilled.
3. The breach is healed.
4. The salvific work of Christ has redeemed us from the devil.
5. While the primordial trespass brought suffering and death into the world– Christ's fidelity ushers forth healing and life.
6. Nothing will ever be the same again.
7. Death is conquered if not entirely undone.
8. We no longer need fear the specter of death.
9. The grave will not consume us.
10. No one need live in vain.
11. Like the apostles we are called as witnesses to the saving truth.
12. Christ becomes the pattern of our discipleship: we must die with Christ if we hope to live with him.

## THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP

- Greeting/Sprinkling/Placing of the Pall
- Entrance Procession (HYMN)
- Opening Prayer
- First Reading [C]
- Responsorial Psalm [D]
- Second Reading [E]
- Verse before Gospel [F]
- Gospel Reading [G]
- General Intercessions [H]
- Offertory, Preparation of the Gifts & Incensing of Body/Ashes (HYMN)
- Eucharistic Prayer
- The Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Holy Communion (HYMN)
- Prayer after Communion
- Eulogy/Obituary/Acknowledgments
- Final Commendation Prayers
- Recessional (HYMN)



**LIMBO** by Sister Mary Ada

The ancient greyness shifted  
Suddenly and thinned  
Like mist upon the moors  
Before a wind.  
An old, old prophet lifted  
A shining face and said :  
“He will be coming soon.  
The Son of God is dead;  
He died this afternoon.”

A murmurous excitement  
stirred  
All souls.  
They wondered if they  
dreamed—  
Save one old man who seemed  
Not even to have heard.

And Moses standing,  
Hushed them all to ask  
If any had a welcome song  
prepared.  
If not, would David take the  
task?  
And if they cared  
Could not the three young  
children sing  
The Benedicite, the canticle of  
praise  
They made when God kept  
them from perishing  
In the fiery blaze?

A breath of spring surprised  
them,  
Stilling Moses' words.  
No one could speak,  
remembering

The first fresh flowers,  
The little singing birds.  
Still others thought of fields new  
ploughed  
Or apple trees  
All blossom-boughed.  
Or some, the way a dried bed  
fills  
With water  
Laughing down green hills.  
The fisherfolk dreamed of the  
foam  
On bright blue seas.  
The one old man who had not  
stirred  
Remembered home.

And there He was  
Splendid as the morning sun  
and fair  
As only God is fair.  
And they, confused with joy,  
Knelled to adore  
Seeing that he wore  
Five crimson stars  
He never had before.

No canticle at all was sung.  
None toned a psalm, or raised a  
greeting song.  
A silent man alone  
Of all that throng  
Found tongue—  
Not any other.  
Close to His heart  
When the embrace was done,  
Old Joseph said,  
“How is Your Mother,  
How is Your Mother, Son?”



**This booklet is prepared as an aid to assist with the bereavement ministry and funeral liturgies at Holy Family Catholic Parish, Mitchellville, MD. We pray that mourners will find closure and peace in Christ Jesus.**

**12010 Woodmore Road  
Mitchellville, MD 20721**

**301-249-2266**