



Words of Remembrance

Only a priest or deacon may preach the homily at the funeral liturgy. A eulogy is not appropriate in the Funeral Mass where a homily is prescribed, although examples from the person's life of faith and love may be used in the homily.

The *Order of Christian Funerals* recognizes the need to reflect on the life of the loved one who has just died by providing an invitation in the vigil for a member or friend of the family to speak in remembrance of the deceased person just before the concluding rite.

The vigil is the most appropriate time for members of the family and friends to share remembrances of the deceased or to pay tribute to the deceased.

Additional Rites

Three brief rites may be used on occasions of prayer with the family:

1. Prayers after Death
2. Gathering in the Presence of the body
3. Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal

These rites help the minister and others pray with the family and close friends in the period soon after death. The compassionate presence of the minister and others can have the effect of reassuring the mourners and of providing a consoling and hopeful situation in which to pray and to express their grief.

*"If we have died with Christ,
we believe we shall also live with him."
Romans 6:8*

For more information about planning a Catholic Funeral:
<http://www.dioshpt.org/worship/worship.html>

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Diocese of Shreveport

Guidelines for Catholic Funerals



www.dioshpt.org



Guidelines for Planning a Funeral



The Catholic Funeral Rites in the *Order of Christian Funerals* are celebrations that enable the Christian community to mourn as well as hope by focusing on the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

“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.” OCF, 4

Three Rites

The *Order of Christian Funerals* has three rites to celebrate the journey of the deceased from this life to the next:

1. The Vigil
2. The Funeral Liturgy
3. The Rite of Committal

The Vigil

The vigil for the deceased is a short prayer service during the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. It usually takes place at the funeral home on the eve of the Funeral Mass. The vigil is usually centered around the Word of God and

other customary prayers of the family.

The Funeral Liturgy

The principal celebration is the funeral liturgy, which is typically a Mass with the body present. The Funeral Mass includes the reception of the body, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Final Commendation and Farewell.

The Funeral Mass should ordinarily be held in the parish where the deceased was a member. The Funeral Mass is a prayer for God’s mercy for the deceased and a solace for the living, including the entire faith community.

Rite of Committal (Graveside Service)

For the final disposition of the body, it is the ancient Christian custom to bury or entomb the bodies of the dead in a cemetery, which means a “resting place.” The Rite of Committal is the conclusion of the funeral rites, and may be celebrated beside the open grave or place of interment.

The faithful express the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection and passes into the welcoming company of those who see God face to face.

Cremation

Because of the sacred tradition of awaiting the resurrection of the body, the Church clearly prefers burial of the body. The Church does not encourage, but allows cremation. **Cremation is not to be seen as the norm:**

The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.” Canon 1176

If cremation is chosen, the Funeral Mass with the body present is to precede cremation. If this is not possible, then an urn containing the cremated remains of the body is present for the funeral rites. **The cremated remains of the body should then be reverently buried or entombed in a cemetery or columbarium rather than scattered.**

