

The Catholic funeral rite is divided into several stations, or parts, each with its own purpose. For this reason we recommend following the complete structure and making use of each station.

Vigil Service (Wake)

"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.

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 such service.

It is most appropriate, when family and friends are gathered together for visitation, to offer time for recalling the life of the deceased. For this reason, eulogies are usually encouraged to be done at the funeral home during visitation or at the Vigil Service.

Funeral Liturgy

The funeral liturgy is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased. When one of its members dies, the Church encourages the celebration of the funeral liturgy at a Mass. When Mass cannot be celebrated, a funeral liturgy outside Mass can be celebrated at the church or in the funeral home.

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.

Rite of Committal (Burial or Interment)

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.

Funeral Liturgy

Name:

Date of Funeral:

Contact/relationship/phone/
text number/email address:

Requested songs:

Entrance:

Reading 1: (Old Testament)

Psalm:

Reading 2: (New Testament)

Presentation of Gifts:

Communion:

Commendation:

Recessional:

READINGS FOR THE FUNERAL LITURGY

FIRST READING:

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Please choose one of the following readings

Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

A reading from the Book of Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

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 in the eyes of 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.

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.

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

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.

Lamentations 3:17-26

A reading from the Book of Lamentations 3:17-26

My soul is deprived of peace,
I have forgotten what happiness is;
I tell myself my future is lost,
all that I hoped for from the Lord.
The thought of my homeless poverty
is wormwood and gall;
Remembering it over and over
leaves my soul downcast within me.
But I will call this to mind,
as my reason to have hope:
The favors of the Lord are not exhausted,
his mercies are not spent;
They are renewed each morning,
so great is his faithfulness.
My portion is the Lord, says my soul;
therefore will I hope in him.
Good is the Lord to one who waits for him,
to the soul that seeks him;
It is good to hope in silence
for the saving help of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

There is an appointed time for everything,
and a time for every thing under the heavens.
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to tear down, and a time to build.
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them;
a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away.
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to be silent, and a time to speak.
A time to love, and a time to hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.

The word of the Lord.

Isaiah 49:13-16a

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 49:13-16a

Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth,
break forth into song, you mountains.
For the Lord comforts his people
and shows mercy to his afflicted.
But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me;
my Lord has forgotten me."
Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget,
I will never forget you.
See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name.

The word of the Lord.

Wisdom 4:7-15

A reading from the Book of Wisdom 4:7-15

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.

The word of the Lord.

Proverbs

A reading from the Book of Proverbs.

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls.
Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize.
She brings him good all the days of her life.
She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands.
She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household.
She enjoys the success of her dealings; at night, her lamp is undimmed.
She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle.
She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy.
She fears not the snow for her household, all her charges are doubly
clothed.
She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at days to come.
She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel.
She watches the conduct of her household.
Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her:
“Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all.”
Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the Lord is to
be praised.
Give her a reward for her labors, and let her works praise her at the city
gates.

The word of the Lord.

SECOND READING:

A READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Please choose one of the following options

Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

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.

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.

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He did not spare his own Son

but handed him over for us all,

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.

2 Corinthians 4:14--5:1

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Knowing that the One who raised the Lord Jesus
will raise us also with Jesus
and place us with you in his presence.

Everything indeed is for you,
so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people
may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God.

Therefore, we are not discouraged;
rather, although our outer self is wasting away,
our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this momentary light affliction
is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,
as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen;
for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent,
should be destroyed,
we have a building from God,
a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

The word of the Lord.

John 3:1-2

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us
that we may be called the children of God.

Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us
is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.

The word of the Lord.

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.
The former heaven and the former earth had passed away,
and the sea was no more.
I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
“Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people
and God himself will always be with them as their God.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes,
and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain,
for the old order has passed away.”
The One who sat on the throne said,
“Behold, I make all things new.”
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give a gift
from the spring of life-giving water.
The victor will inherit these gifts,
and I shall be his God,
and he will be my son.”

The word of the Lord.

Philippians. [2:1-5a]

A reading from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians. [2:1-5a]

If there is any encouragement in Christ,
and solace in love,
any participation in the Spirit,
any compassion and mercy,
complete my joy by being of the same mind,
with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.
Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory;
rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves,
each looking out not for his own interests,
but, also, everyone for those of others.
Your attitude must be that of Christ.

The word of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

But I shall show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in human and angelic tongues,
but do not have love,

I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy,
and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge;

if I have all faith so as to move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away everything I own,
and if I hand my body over so that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.

It is not jealous, it is not pompous,

It is not inflated, it is not rude,

it does not seek its own interests,

it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,

it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.

The word of the Lord.

Guidelines for readers at a funeral liturgy.

Thank you for being a reader. You have been entrusted with proclaiming God's word. Here are a few guidelines to help ensure that you will be comfortable and that God's word will be proclaimed according to the guidelines of the Catholic Church.

There is no specific place for you to sit in the church. You can remain with your family and friends until it is time for your reading to be proclaimed.

Please take some time to go over your reading before the funeral. If possible, record yourself to make sure you are speaking slowly and clearly.

When it is time for your reading to be proclaimed, the presider may ask the assembly to be seated (if this is the first reading) and invite the reader to come forward. The second reading takes place after the responsorial psalm is sung. Again, the presider may invite you to come forward.

There will be copies of the readings on the ambo (the podium by the holy family) The Ambo is a sacred place reserved for the proclamation of Scripture readings. If you will be reading from a copy that you have marked up for yourself in some way, please bring it to the ambo before the funeral begins.

As you approach the altar, please stop at the front, make a brief head bow to the altar, then proceed to the ambo.

Adjust the microphone so that it is slightly below your nose. If it makes a "popping" sound as you read, please adjust it a little lower.

You will read only what is on the page – starting with, "A reading from..." and ending with, "The word of the Lord"

Once your reading is finished, please make another head bow to the altar once you have come down the steps. You may then return to your seat.

Guidelines for eulogies.

It is recommended that the Vigil (Wake) is the most appropriate time for members of the family and friends to share memories of the deceased or to pay tribute to the deceased through vocal remembrances, photographs, favorite songs, etc.

The reception after the burial is another appropriate time for the remembrances because there is less of an emotional burden and the context is looking toward the future in a more positive manner.

Eulogies are not permitted during the Funeral Mass.

Is cremation allowed in the Catholic Church?

Yes. Although the Church now permits cremation, burial of the body is still preferred. The physical presence of the body reflects the values affirmed in these rites. After the final commendation at the end of the Mass of Christian Burial, the body is transported to the crematorium for cremation.

Cremated human remains are always to be treated with respect and placed in a worthy vessel. Once burial rites have been held and the cremation has occurred, the cremated remains are to be brought to the cemetery for final disposition. Scattering cremated remains or keeping them at home is not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.