



Our Mother Of Consolation Parish
Funeral Planning Guide

9 East Chestnut Hill Ave – Philadelphia, PA
215-247-0430 – www.omcparish.com

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Dear Friend in Christ,

The parish community at Our Mother of Consolation extends our prayers and sympathy to you at the death of your loved one. Since the earliest days of the church, bereaved families, close friends and parts of the larger community have gathered together, to support each other, share grief and express hope in the resurrection, based on our hope in Christ through ritual.

We have prepared this guide to assist you through the planning process for our Catholic funeral rituals. Please take some time to review the information. A member of the parish staff will be contacting you to assist you in finalizing your plans. In the mean time, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the parish office (215-247-0430).

Please be assured that your parish community is here to support you during this difficult time.

*Let God gather to himself
whatever he has planted in his garden,
for he takes nothing out of season.*

St. Francis de Sales

A Guide to the Catholic Funeral Mass

Remembrance of the Deceased

Although optional, *The Order of Christian Funerals* permits a member of the family, or a friend, to speak in remembrance of the deceased. Such remembrance may take place prior to Mass, the evening of the wake during the Vigil Service or at the graveside during the Rite of Committal.

The Remembrance of the Deceased is a way of placing the life of the deceased and the present experience of loss within the context of faith; it is also an opportunity to deepen the assembly's faith. It is important for the person giving the remembrance to be sensitive to the liturgical tone set by the ritual, and worship space, and not to speak at great length. It is requested that the remembrance be prepared and typed, so that the person giving a remembrance does not speak "off the cuff." The family may want to consider reproducing the remembrance of the dead for distribution to the assembly.

In a less formal way, the assembly might be invited to share memories, stories, or letters to the deceased at the funeral vigil, graveside or at a reception following the services.

The Opening Rites

The Rite of Reception of the Body at the Church: When the body of the deceased arrives at the Church for the first time, we celebrate a greeting ritual at the doors of the Church. This ancient ritual is similarly used when parents bring their child for baptism. By celebrating the Rite of Reception as the body of the deceased enters the Church we make the connection from our life with Christ through baptism, and our eternal life with Christ in death. When the viewing takes place in the Church your family is asked to be present before the body of your loved one is carried into the Church, as we celebrate this ritual. When the viewing takes place at the Funeral Home the Rite of Reception is celebrated at the beginning of the Funeral Mass

The Placing of the Pall: As the Funeral Mass begins, the casket is covered with a white cloth called a "pall" as a reminder of the deceased person's baptismal garment. Family members are invited to place the pall over the casket. The pall is not used with cremations.

The Placing of Christian Symbols (optional): The opening rituals in the Funeral Mass symbolize the return of the baptized to the place of beginnings and endings. For the Funeral Mass you may choose certain other Christian symbols in addition to the pall, to be placed on the coffin. This symbol might be a Book of the Gospels or Bible, a crucifix, a rosary or other meaningful religious object.

The Liturgy of the Word

In every celebration for the dead, the Church attaches great importance to the reading of the Word of God. The readings proclaimed to the assembly, teach the remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together again in God's kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life. Above all, the readings tell of God's design for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold in all whom God has called his own (*The Order of Christian Funerals* 22).

For the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word at Mass, the readings from Scripture may not be replaced by non-biblical readings. However, during prayer services outside of Mass, non-biblical readings may be used in addition to readings from Scriptures.

Selection of Scripture Readings: The family may choose two readings from the Lectionary for Mass, usually one reading from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. In addition the family is asked to choose the Gospel reading which will be proclaimed by the priest. The parish provides a book of Scripture readings for you to take home and read over in order to find selections that seem particularly appropriate for the one who has died.

The Prayer of the Faithful: *The Order of Christian Funerals* provides sample prayers for the petition, which are included in this guide. These prayers or petitions are a way of seeking God's help and assistance for all people. You may adapt these prayers to the circumstances and needs, perhaps mentioning other family members or close friends who have died.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Preparation of the Gifts: When a Funeral Mass is celebrated you are encouraged to select family members or friends to bring the gifts of bread and wine forward. This occurs after the prayer of the faithful, at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Others may also accompany the gift bearers, even though they do not actually carry the bread and wine. The bread, the wine, and offerings for the poor, are the only gifts to be brought forward during the Preparation of the Gifts.

The Concluding Rites

Order of Worship for the Catholic Funeral Mass

Remembrance of the Deceased (optional)

Opening Rites

Placing of the Pall

♪ Opening Hymn

Opening prayer

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading – Old Testament

♪ Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading – New Testament

♪ Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Reading

Homily

Prayer of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

♪ Offertory Hymn or Instrumental

♪ Eucharistic Acclamations

The Lord's Prayer

Communion Rite

♪ Communion Hymn

♪ Song of Praise

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

Final Commendation & Farewell

♪ Closing Hymn

♪ The music minister will contact the family to assist with the selection of appropriate music

Additional Considerations

Selection of Music: The selection of music is very important for worship during the funeral Mass. Many different forms of music and musical accompaniment can be worthy of this task. The parish employs several liturgical musicians & cantors; therefore, ordinarily, no outside musicians are permitted to play for funerals. Instrumentalists (trumpet, harp, violin, flute, etc.) are also available for hire through the Parish Director of Worship (215-247-0430).

The Church keeps no official list of “approved” music for a Funeral Mass, but it does offer three criteria for liturgical music that can be applied to your choice of music.

Is it prayerful? The purpose of a Funeral Mass is to offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life, which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. The celebration of the Christian funeral also brings hope and consolation to the living. Music for the Funeral Mass should reflect this purpose; in other words, it should help the assembly to pray and to give thanks to God. The criterion of prayerfulness is one reason why popular music—including some of the “classics” taken from secular operas—is often not permitted.

Is it accessible? In other words, will the assembly be able to sing? In Catholic worship, the assembly (everyone attending the funeral) is not an audience, passively watching events unfold at the altar. Catholic liturgy calls on the assembly to actively participate in the prayer of the Church, including its sung prayer. Doing so is one of the most powerful ways your friends and family can express their love for the deceased.

Is it beautiful? Beauty is a window onto the divine (*Catechism #32*), so it is not surprising that the Church calls for the music used in its worship to be beautiful. This criterion is obviously somewhat subjective, depending on personal tastes and local culture. Whether your music is beautiful or not may depend less on the particular selection than on the skill of the musicians who sing or play it.

Guest Priest:/Presiders: Members of your family or friends, who are priests or deacons, are welcomed to preside, preach or concelebrate at the Funeral Mass. Please have the priest or deacon contact the parish directly to make arrangements.

Choosing Lectors: The lector is the person who proclaims the readings at the Funeral Mass. The ministry of lector has a special role in the Catholic liturgy. The proclamation of the Word of God is a symbol of God’s presence in the believing community. You are asked to select lectors for the Mass in consultation with the parish staff. When two Scripture readings (Old Testament & New Testament) proceed the Gospel at the Funeral Mass there may be two lectors. You may also choose a reader for the prayer of the faithful, which takes place after the homily.

Ministers of the Eucharist: At the Funeral Mass there may be visiting priests or deacons, and often there will be extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist who can assist in the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ. In addition to the clergy, there is a natural desire to invite family or friends to serve as ministers of the Eucharist. It is important that people you choose for this ministry are Eucharistic Ministers and that they are comfortable ministering at the Funeral Mass.

Altar Servers: If members of your family, or friends, are Altar Servers in the Catholic Church, they may be invited to serve for the Funeral Mass.

Flowers: Flowers are coordinates with eh Funeral Director.

Funeral Booklets: Some families wish to prepare a worship aid for Mass, or a funeral memorial book. We ask that you be sensitive to all copyright laws when preparing such booklets. Samples are available at the parish for your review.