



**Parish Funeral Planning
and Guidelines
for you and your loved ones**



Order of Christian Funerals, General Introduction

In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. Christ ‘achieved his task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension.’

“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.

Christians celebrate the funeral rites 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 Mass, the memorial of Christ’s death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.

The Church through the funeral rites commends the dead to God’s merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of the saints. Though separated from the living, the dead are still at one with the community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession. At the rite of the final commendation and farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of the separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way, it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heavens and a new earth, where death will be no more.

The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God’s mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.”

If you have a loved one who is terminally ill....

Call a priest. The best situation is to have a priest come while the person is aware of what is happening. In this way, you and your loved one can be consoled by the Church's prayers, scriptural readings, and sacraments.

If the time of consciousness has already passed, still call a priest to administer the sacraments before your loved one has died. **The sacraments are for the living, not the dead.**

The three sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and the Anointing of the Sick are ideally administered during this time. The last reception of Holy Communion is called "Viaticum" and means that it is the spiritual food that you take with you on the way to heaven. If a person is unable to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation or Holy Communion, the priest will still administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

If you have a loved one who has died....

Call the Funeral Home – They will send someone to take charge of the body until the funeral.

Meet with the Funeral Director: Even if your loved one pre-planned and pre-paid, you still need to make many decisions about the date and time of the funeral.

- You might want to bring pictures to be displayed and want to bring burial clothes.
- Be prepared to help the funeral director develop an obituary to be published in the newspaper and on the website.
- Know if you want a Mass in the Church or a service at the funeral home. The normal liturgy for a baptized Catholic is a Mass in the Church.
- Know whether you would want a rosary or a scriptural "Vigil for the Deceased" at the funeral home the night before the funeral.
- The funeral director should call the church office to finalize the date and time of the funeral, making sure the priest and church are available.

Please call the Pastor at the Parish Office: We would like to sit down with you to plan the funeral liturgy. At this time, you can pick out scripture readings that will be read and songs that will be sung during the funeral Mass. You can also choose family members to do the scripture readings, but it is important to note that they should be able to proclaim the readings. Family members can also help place the pall at the beginning of the liturgy and carry the gifts in the offertory procession. This is, of course, optional. The priest or deacon will also have questions for the funeral homily about important spiritual and moral values of the deceased, favorite scripture, songs, or prayers that might be included in the homily.

Cemetery: Catholic Cemeteries of New Albany includes three cemeteries: Holy Trinity, St. Mary's, and Leyden Family Cemetery.

Holy Trinity Cemetery is on Green Valley Road just off Daisy Lane in the west end of New Albany. Burials at Holy Trinity date back to the 1830s. A Columbarium for cremated remains is available.

Leyden Family Cemetery is located adjacent to Holy Trinity Cemetery to the south of the first entrance off Green Valley Road. This is a family cemetery dating back to the mid-1800s.

St. Mary's Cemetery, located on the corner of Charlestown Road and Silver Street in the east end of New Albany, dates to the 1850s. A mausoleum with crypts and niches is located at St. Mary's. There is also a "Rachel" section especially set aside for the burial of infants and children at St. Mary's. Mausoleum spaces at St. Mary's and burial plots in both cemeteries are still available for purchase.

Visitation – This usually takes place in the funeral home.

The Vigil for the Deceased: This is an optional service that takes place at the same location as the visitation, usually the night before the funeral Mass. The normal liturgy for a baptized Catholic is a scripture service, or a rosary may be prayed instead. This is the preferred time for a eulogy if the family wishes to give one.

The Funeral Liturgy: The preferred liturgy is a Mass with the body present in church. The Church also offers a "Liturgy outside of Mass." It is a scriptural service, usually held at the funeral home on the day of burial.

Burial at the Cemetery: Although a Catholic cemetery with consecrated ground is preferred, the Church has always allowed its members to be buried in public cemeteries. If it is a public cemetery, the priest will bless the grave. At a Catholic or public cemetery, we will offer a brief service of Scripture and prayers.

The Funeral Meal: If the family wishes, a comfort meal can be provided. All would be invited to join us in our parish center to refresh themselves and console one another. You will be asked to estimate the number of guests there might be so that we can prepare enough food.

Masses offered for the deceased: It is a custom of the Catholic Church to offer Masses on behalf of the deceased. Normal times are on the anniversaries of death, birth anniversaries, on anniversaries of marriage or ordination. Since the effects of the Mass are infinite, one Mass can be offered for multiple people with the same intention, e.g., "For the repose of the soul of Mary Smith or for the repose of the souls of Mary and John Smith or for the repose of the souls of the Smith Family." In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, a \$10.00 stipend per Mass intention is given to the parish. The priest is personally paid through the Archdiocesan Payroll System.

Cremation: "Although the Catholic Church now permits cremation, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites... When the choice has been made

to cremate a body, it is recommended that the cremation take place after the Funeral liturgy...By virtue of an indult granted by the Congregations of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (Prot.1589/LO), the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy, including Mass, in the presence of the cremated remains of the body of a deceased person is permitted in the dioceses of the United States of America..." (Roman Ritual Order of Christian Funerals, 1998).

Financial Note for the parish: Many people ask whether there is a charge for the use of the parish and for the services of the priest and organist at the funeral. The norm in the New Albany deanery is that there is a gift of \$400.00 for a funeral. This is usually paid to the funeral home, and they pay the church.

Pre-Plan Your Funeral:

Make your wishes known: Tell your relatives and health care providers that you wish to receive the sacraments of the Church and to call a priest while you are still conscious enough to know what is happening.

Pre-Plan your funeral: There may be financial advantages to making a contract with a funeral home far in advance of your death. In addition to these financial advantages, doing this is an act of kindness to those who would otherwise be left to make lots of decisions upon your death. Furthermore, leaving funeral directives for your relatives ensures that they know your desires; there will be no need for them to guess what you wanted. The following suggestions might be helpful:

- If you have not already done so, see a lawyer to make out a will, taking care of the temporal treasure that God entrusted to you.
- See a lawyer to make out a "Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care" so that someone can speak for you if you should become incapacitated to the point that you can no longer speak for yourself. This is different from a regular "Power of Attorney."
- Make plans for your funeral: which funeral home, cemetery, church, casket, clothes, grave marker, etc. Leave written plans where they can be easily found with other records.
- Plan the funeral liturgy: readings, songs, etc. A list of suggested readings and songs can be found in this document. [Bereavement and Funerals | USCCB](#)
- If you like, you can leave a "Testament" about the important things you want people to remember about you. The type of spiritual and moral values that guided your life. This is a suitable time to leave important advice to your relatives or friends. These are things a family member can include in a eulogy at the funeral home, or the priest can say in the funeral homily.