Church of the Nativity

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Funeral Planning Guide

The death of a loved one is a very sad event. The purpose of this guide is spare the deceased's family unnecessary grief and distress. It provides information and suggestions which can be used to plan a Catholic funeral for a deceased loved one.

This guide can also be used to pre-plan one's own funeral. Making advanced funeral plans is very much like preparing a will. It is a gift of love to the survivors. Writing down and sharing your wishes for a Catholic funeral clearly tells your loved ones about your personal preferences and your faith in the promise of eternal salvation. For those who wish to make advanced plans, we have included a sheet of personal preferences and other information for you to entrust to a family member for safekeeping.

FUNERAL RITES

Vigil for the Deceased: Many chose to have an evening visitation in a funeral home with a Mass and burial the next day. The tradition is to have a Vigil service or Rosary during the visitation hours. The Vigil service includes prayers and scriptural passages that reflect our belief in life after death.

Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass: In the funeral liturgy outside of Mass the community gathers to hear the message of Easter hope proclaimed in the liturgy of the Word and to commend the deceased to God. This rite may be used on special holy days when a Funeral Mass is not permitted. It may also be used when for the pastoral reasons the pastor and the family judge that the funeral liturgy outside of Mass is a more suitable form of celebration.

Mass of Christian Burial: Many Catholics choose to have a Funeral Mass celebrated. The Mass is celebrated in the church. The earthly remains of the deceased, either the casket or the cremated remains, must be present in the church for a Funeral Mass. The priest may allow the family to pick suggested readings and hymns for the Funeral Mass. The readings for a Funeral Mass include one selection from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and a reading from the Gospel. The choices for those readings are included in this guide. The responsorial psalm is usually sung by the cantor.

All music for the Funeral Mass must be religious hymns. Secular songs are not allowed. Such songs may be part of the evening visitation at the funeral home. Music in the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass and the Mass of Christian Burial should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death.

Rite of Committal. The rite of committal concludes the funeral rites and is the final act of the community in caring for the body of the deceased. It may be celebrated at the open grave or place of internment.

About Cremation. The Catholic Church allows cremation as an acceptable alternative means of burial. It is preferred that the cremation occur after the Funeral Mass. However, the Funeral Mass may be celebrated with the cremated remains present.

PERSONAL PREFERENCES:

Name _____

Preferred funeral home _____

Church _____

Cemetery _____

Favorite charity/charities for donations:

Location of will:

Life insurance policy:

Bank and account numbers:

Location of military records for veterans (DD Form 214):

Other records, deeds, titles, and financial information:

Information for the obituary:

FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

Full Name of the Deceased:
Date of Birth:
Date of Death:
Family Point of Contact and Phone Number:

Name of Funeral Home:
Name and Address of family member for mass intentions and/or donation notice:

Rosary or Vigil Prayer Service

Date:
Start Time:
Location:

Funeral Mass

Casket or Cremated Remains:
Date:
Start Time:
Church:

Readings:

First Reading (Old Testament)*:
Second Reading (New Testament):
Gospel:

*****During the Easter Season between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday, reading number 1, 17, 18, or 19 from the New Testament is used as the First Reading.

Up to four hymns requested:

Note: The family is not required to pick out the readings and the hymns. The priest can pick out the readings and the music director can pick out the hymns.

Burial Information