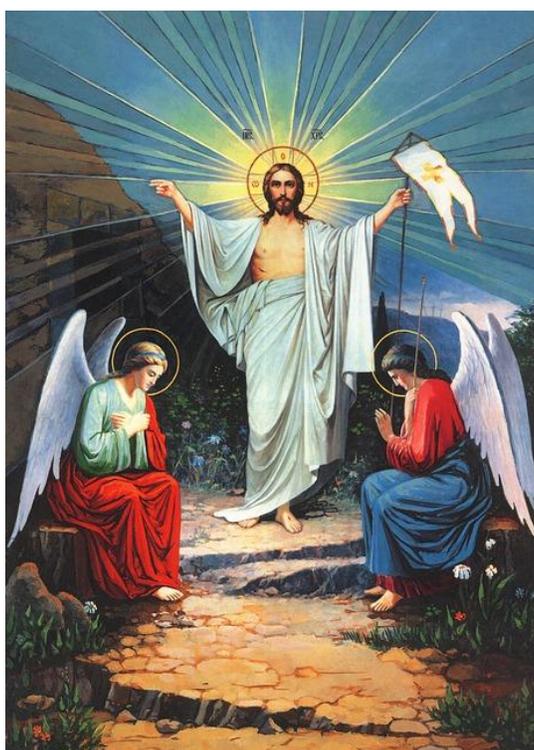




EPIPHANY
OF THE LORD
CATHOLIC PARISH

Funeral Planning Guide



“Into your hands, Father of mercies, we commend our loved ones, in the sure and certain hope that, together with all who have died in Christ, they will rise with Him on the last day.”

Last Revised September 2019

The death of a loved one is always sad and tragic for the human heart. This is a time flooded with emotions of all kinds that may include grief, sorrow, resentment, bitterness, hurt, anger, confusion, shock, loss, and emptiness. Grief can place a great burden on us and making the necessary plans can be both a struggle and a trial. Some of these arrangements include the planning of the Funeral Liturgy, also known as the Funeral Mass.

As Catholic Christians, the celebration of the funeral rites recalls for us God's incredible mercy and brings hope and consolation in a time of crisis. This planning guide has been put together to support and help you and your loved ones plan a Funeral – whether that be a Funeral Mass or a Funeral Outside of Mass. Along with Fr. Gilbert Mascarenhas (our Pastor), Fr. Melwin Dsouza (our Associate Pastor), Mrs. Shellee Murcko (our Liturgy Coordinator), and Mr. Tony Zsigray (our Director of Liturgical Music) our parish will work compassionately to assist you in planning and preparations.

We realize that most family members of the deceased may not be comfortable with the planning and participation in the Funeral Liturgy, especially during such a difficult time. If you do not wish to participate in the selection of music or family members offering the readings at Mass, please let us know. We will gladly have others assist from the parish with these roles. On behalf of the staff and parishioners of Epiphany of the Lord Parish, may the peace and consolation of Christ be yours in this difficult time. Please know that your parish community holds you in prayer and thought.

The Vigil Service/Visitation

The Vigil Service most often takes place at a funeral home at the conclusion of the visitation and consists of a Scripture Service and/or recitation of the Rosary. The Vigil Service is the appropriate time to share stories and eulogies about the deceased. It may be possible to incorporate favorite music, whether sacred or secular; the options should be discussed with your Funeral Director.

The Funeral Liturgy

The Funeral Liturgy will be celebrated at one of Epiphany of the Lord Parish's three church campuses: Sacred Heart, St. Stephen, or St. Thomas Aquinas. In some circumstances, a Funeral Service (not a Mass) may take place in the funeral home.

The Committal/Graveside Service

Most often, the committal/graveside service takes place immediately after the Mass. In unique situations, this may not be true if the burial is to take place in another city, or if the body is to be cremated after the Mass. On rare occasions and for a just cause, a Committal/Graveside Service may take place after the funeral luncheon.

Cremation

The Church permits Cremation in many situations. The Church requires the cremains to be interred in a gravesite or mausoleum just as a body would immediately after the Funeral Liturgy. The Church does not permit cremains to be placed in jewelry, stored as a personal belonging on a shelf, mantle, or area in a residence, scattered over a body of water, or a spread over a field or yard. In order to respectfully care for the cremains, they are to be interred immediately in a gravesite or other approved repository.

Funeral Luncheons

Our liturgical coordinator, Mrs. Shellee Murcko, can discuss the availability and guidelines for a funeral luncheon during the planning period.

Scripture Selections for a Funeral Mass

You will need to choose **two** Sacred Scripture readings for the Funeral Mass. The presider will choose the Gospel Reading. Shellee Murcko will assist you in selecting Scripture readings.

- First Reading from the Old Testament
- Second Reading from the New Testament Epistles
- Gospel Reading (Father or Deacon will choose and proclaim)

Music Guidelines for Catholic Funerals

Music is an important part of Catholic funeral rites. Funeral music should support, console, and uplift those present and help create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory.

Secular songs (popular/non-religious songs), even though they may have been meaningful to the deceased or the family, do not capture the Gospel message of hope nor the sacred quality of Christian worship, and so secular songs are not appropriate and not permitted for funeral services.

Suggested Hymns

Amazing Grace

Blest Are They

Eat This Bread

Ave Maria

Christ Be Our Light

Eye Has Not Seen

Be Not Afraid

Come to the Water

Hail Mary Gentle Woman

Hosea Come Back to Me	Lead Me Lord	Shelter Me O God
How Great Thou Art	Like A Shepherd	The Lord Is My Light
I Am the Bread of Life	Lord of All Hopefulness	We Will Rise Again
I Know That My Redeemer Lives	On Eagle's Wings	Yes, I Shall Arise
Precious Lord Take My Hand	Only in God	You Are Mine
	Prayer of St. Francis	You Are Near

Use of Pre-Recorded Music

The playing of pre-recorded music (CD's, tapes, DVD's, etc.) may take place during the visitation, at the Vigil, or at the Committal/Graveside Service. Pre-recorded music is not permitted during Mass.

Use of Secular or Popular Music

Secular or popular music can sometimes be meaningful and may be included at the Vigil or during the Committal Service. It may not be included at the Funeral Mass.

Homily

You will have the opportunity to share important memories and details about your loved one's life with the priests and Shellee Murcko, Liturgy Coordinator, who will meet with you to assist in the planning of the Funeral Liturgy.

Prayer of the Faithful

The general intercessions, also known as petitions, come after the homily. In the general intercessions, we pray not only for the deceased and his or her family and friends but also for all the dead and those who mourn them, and for the needs of the wider community. One or more family members should read the general intercessions.

Gift Bearers

Choose family members or friends of the deceased to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. You should keep in mind, though, that the presentation of the gifts is not the time to carry up personal memorabilia or symbols of the life of the deceased.

Military Honors

If there will be military honors taking place at the cemetery, your funeral director will assist with necessary arrangements. If the casket comes to the church draped in a flag, the flag is removed before the liturgy begins and then put back on the coffin after the pall has been removed at the end of the liturgy.

Eulogies from Family Members or Loved Ones

The Rite of Christian Funerals does not include the addition of personal eulogies at a funeral Mass. The rite reads, "A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the gospel reading at the funeral liturgy and may also be given after the readings at the vigil service, but there is never to be a eulogy." (Order of Christian Funerals # 141) The custom of the eulogy comes from Protestant funeral services that may not have the rich ritual and prayers that are ours.

The Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass

It is the custom in the United States for a priest or deacon to preside at the funeral liturgy when it is celebrated outside of Mass. The Funeral Liturgy outside Mass is celebrated when a Mass is not possible or deemed appropriate. It can be celebrated in one of our church campuses, or in the funeral home, or cemetery.

Offerings for Funeral

It is customary for the family to make a financial offering to Epiphany of the Lord Parish if able. This is typically collected by the funeral home and distributed accordingly. This offering covers the costs of the use of the Church facility. This is not required if there is significant financial need.

Can Non-Catholics Receive Communion at a Catholic Mass?

Unfortunately, those who are not Catholic are not permitted to receive the Holy Eucharist. Non-Catholics and those not receiving Holy Communion may come forward during to receive a blessing, rather than Holy Communion. As they come forward, it is suggested that they cross their hands over their chest as they approach the priest or deacon. This indicates that they are coming forward for a blessing, and not for Communion.