

Celebrating a Catholic Funeral 2021-2022

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May God bless you at this time of grief and give you peace.

It will always be helpful to speak to and be guided by a catechist, deacon or priest when organising the funeral service. We'll be in touch with you soon.

Jesus says: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Let us pray: Lord God we commend into your hands our brother/sister. Welcome him/her into eternal life where there will be no sorrow, but the fullness of peace and joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

What is a Catholic funeral?

There are three options:

- 1) Celebrating a funeral service at the crematorium lasting about 25-30 minutes.
- 2) Celebrating a funeral service in Church lasting about 30 minutes followed by committal at the crematorium or cemetery.
- 3) A requiem Mass in the Church followed by committal at the crematorium or cemetery. This would be appropriate if the deceased and family members practice the Catholic faith through regular Sunday worship. The family would therefore be able to understand and participate in the responses of the Mass.

The Purpose of a Catholic funeral

It is common in our culture for a funeral to be mainly about a celebration of life for the deceased. The Catholic funeral is more profound than this. The Catholic funeral lays the greater emphasis on giving thanks to God for the life of the deceased, praying for them as we commend the deceased into the arms of a God of compassion, and praying for one another that we may know peace and consolation at this time of grief.

It is appropriate to use only religious hymns or music in the Church. However at the crematorium there is wider choice of music available, but there are many beautiful Christian songs to choose from sung by the likes of Aled Jones, Katherine Jenkins, Russell Watson, etc. Occasionally a poem is requested. If so, this should be read at the crematorium or cemetery.

The Catholic funeral is calm and dignified. The prayers and Bible readings powerfully speak for themselves. Through the prayers of the funeral we pray that you will receive and know the consolation of faith.

A Tribute

You may wish that someone will give a short tribute in honour of the deceased near the beginning of the funeral.

If a tribute is chosen, it should be no more than five minutes in total. It is nearly always helpful to have it written or typed out on one side of A4.

Long eulogies do not have a place in the Catholic funeral. However it is entirely appropriate for stories about the deceased to be shared at the reception after the funeral.

Hymns

If the funeral is in Church, it is often appropriate to sing (or listen to) one, two or three hymns. Instrumental music can also be played. Please consider whether people are likely to know and join in by singing the hymns you may choose, otherwise recorded or instrumental music would be a better choice. We can book an organist (and possibly a cantor) for you.

Examples of popular hymns for a funeral in Church:

Abide with me, Amazing Grace, Be thou my vision, Do not be afraid, Hail Queen of Heaven, Here I am Lord, How great thou art, I watch the sunrise, Make me a channel of your peace.

At Communion (requiem Mass only): The Lord's my shepherd, Soul of my Saviour, Be still for the presence of the Lord, This is my body.

Order of Service for a Christian funeral service
at the Crematorium or Church

The service usually takes about 25-30 minutes.

- Entrance Procession with **Music**
- Introduction & Welcome
- ***Optional tribute (5 minutes maximum)***
- Opening Prayer
- *Optional* first Reading
- Gospel Reading
- Homily - a short sermon given by the celebrant
- Intercessions – The response is: Hear our prayer
- The Lord's Prayer
- ***Optional song for reflection***
- Final Commendation
- Concluding Rite & Blessing
- **Exit music**

Order of Service for a Requiem Mass

The Requiem Mass usually takes about 35-40 minutes.

- Entrance procession **to music**
- Introduction & Welcome
- ***Optional tribute (5 minutes maximum)***
- Opening Prayer
- First Reading
- Psalm
- Gospel Reading
- Homily – a short sermon given by the celebrant
- Intercessions – The response is: Hear our prayer
- Liturgy of the Eucharist & Holy Communion
- ***Optional hymn/music at Communion***
- Prayer after Communion
- Final Commendation
- ***Recessional hymn/music***