

St. Mary Catholic Church Eulogy Guidelines

eu·lo·gy / 'yoʊləjē/ ORIGIN: late Middle English (in the sense 'high praise'): from medieval Latin **eulogium**: a speech or piece of writing that praises someone or something highly, typically someone who has just passed away.

Writing and delivering a eulogy is truly an honor. A eulogy (funeral speech) is a great way to relive the memories that the person brought into our lives. It's a joyous celebration of the life-chapters we've enjoyed with them. May we suggest a few key points while preparing your loved one's eulogy:

- Most eulogies begin with the departed person's birth and give a brief outline of his or her life. Do not go into details of the moments but mention the highlights of their lives.
- You may want to talk to the family of the deceased. Write down details of the person's life, major awards or recognition he or she received, names of family members, and special memories that family members share.
- Use your personal memories of the individual, if you have any. Did they have a saying or funny quip or maybe they always quoted someone? But again, mention broad strokes not detailed moments.
- Infuse your eulogy with a little humor, especially if the deceased was a jokester or had a good sense of humor. Keep all humor appropriate to the setting.
- Write and read through it and decide what to keep and what to toss out. You may want to read it to family or friends to get their feedback. Review it again the next day when it will be fresh again. Make any necessary revisions.
- Be as brief as you can while still doing justice to the life of the deceased. **Brevity is the key to a well-received eulogy. In full, the eulogy should be delivered in no more than 5-10 minutes.**
- Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Practice reading the eulogy several times to become familiar with it. You don't have to memorize it but be familiar with it.
- If you wish, you may choose to read a prayer, poem, letter, or lyrics to a song to help convey your message.
- Remember that it's OK to show emotion. If you become emotional and start to cry, that's perfectly normal. Take time to regain your composure, but if you're unable, defer to your back-up person for the sake of those listening. Even if you are comfortable speaking to large groups of people, a eulogy can be a difficult speech to deliver. So it might be good to have a back-up plan. If you can't continue, have someone else on hand and prepared to deliver the eulogy for you.
- It is perfectly appropriate to ask another person to give the eulogy on your behalf or to stand next to you for support as you give your presentation. You may also have multiple people present parts of the eulogy—however, each person's contribution should be added together and should not exceed the 10 minute maximum.

On the day of the funeral, remember that just as you wrote from the heart, deliver your eulogy from the heart! Your participation in the liturgy for your loved one will be a comfort to all those gathered together.

May God's peace and blessings be with you,

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