

Order of Christian Funerals

The following practical information is provided to help the family and friends of the deceased make the most suitable and helpful arrangements.

- The norm for scheduling Funeral Masses is 11 a.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. all other days.
- The body of the deceased—with the casket open or closed—may lie in state for 30 minutes in the viewing area of the church before the Mass begins. The procession begins at the Gathering Space with the ministers and the body of the deceased. Family and friends then follow. The funeral liturgy begins at the Baptismal Font by the Altar with the sprinkling with holy water, and the placing of the pall.
- An opportunity for prayer is usually scheduled at the funeral home on the day before the funeral. A vigil service (which is a simple service of prayers, a scripture reading, intercessions, the Lord's Prayer and a blessing) is the church's preference; or a rosary may be planned and will be led by a member of the Parish Pastoral Team.
- The appropriate time for family and friends to share stories and memories is at the funeral home following the vigil service or rosary, and it may be led by the staff from the funeral home or a family member. Family may also speak at the luncheon. These settings allow enough time for all who wish to speak.
- With regard to cremation, while Catholic teaching continues to stress the preference for burial or entombment of the body of the deceased, cremation is now permitted. The church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites and that cremation take place after the full funeral liturgy with the body present.
- The celebration of the Catholic funeral liturgy may take place in the presence of the cremated remains when the body is cremated before the funeral. In that case, the Order of Christian Funerals, No. 417, clearly states that an appropriate, worthy container such as a classic urn is proper for the cremated remains. The remains are to be properly buried in a cemetery or a columbarium (a permanent place of reposition intended specifically for cremated remains). The practice of scattering cremated remains on the seas or on the ground, keeping them in the home or dividing them among people or places is not the reverent disposition that the church requires.
- In some cases, a service in the funeral home or the church, in lieu of a Funeral Mass in the church, may be an appropriate choice. Mass may not be celebrated in the funeral home.