

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN BURIAL
For the Grieving Families and Funeral Directors
St. Anthony of Padua Parish
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Dayton, OH 45410
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The Catholic funeral rites celebrate the mystery of our life, death and resurrection in Christ. Through Baptism we enter into this mystery. We live our lives in the hope of sharing eternal life with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when we complete our passage through death. For us Christians, death in Christ results in life in greater abundance. This new life, like a seed, was planted in us at Baptism, flowered during our lifetime, and at death yields a rich harvest. Faith in this mystery should motivate people arranging the funeral of a loved one. With this in mind, and praying with you in this time of grief, we present to you the funeral guidelines for our parish.

PLANNING THE FUNERAL SERVICES

WHO CAN BE BURIED WITH A FUNERAL MASS

The parish is open to celebrating funeral services for current or former parishioners and for their relatives. Our pastor, Rev. Chris Coleman will determine other requests having no parish connection. Non-parishioners will be accommodated if staff resources allow.

In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Catholic burial, including Mass is permitted for a baptized non-Catholic who might reasonably be presumed to desire or prefer Catholic burial services. Such a decision would be appropriate where the non-Catholic party worshiped regularly at the Catholic Church or identified with the Catholic Church more than any other. It would not be appropriate if the deceased were an active member of a non-Catholic Christian Church, except in cases where the minister of the deceased was unavailable. (Canon 1183.3)

TIMES

The Mass of Christian Burial is the primary service, customarily celebrated in the morning, reflecting the theme of resurrection. Procession to the cemetery and burial usually follows the Mass. An evening Mass of Christian Burial is an acceptable option, if more convenient for the family and mourners. In this case, the interment services would be held the following morning.

Funeral arrangements begin with a meeting with the funeral director. Next the parish is contacted by the funeral home where the pastor or the Pastoral Associate will confirm the time for the funeral Mass and one of them will contact the family to discuss the details of the Mass of Christian Burial.

At St. Anthony the normal time we schedule a funeral is 10 a.m., Monday through Thursday. Saturday funerals may be able to be schedule at 9:30 a.m. if staff resources allow. We are adamant that Mass of Christian Burial begin on time.

VIEWING AT THE FUNERAL HOME

This is a wonderful time for the family to gather on the night of the viewing to pray, read scripture passages, preferred poem of the deceased, listen to their favorite song, eulogize them or allow family members to share memories of their loved one. You should inquire with your funeral director about having a podium and microphone available for your use the evening of the viewing.

VIEWING THE BODY

This practice is highly encouraged, because it helps remove doubts that the loved one has truly died. If death occurs at home, hospital or nursing home, it is appropriate to gather the family together at the scene of death to pray before the body is removed. The body should also be viewed at the funeral home. At the time of the Mass of Christian Burial the casket is closed.

CREMATION

If the deceased is to be cremated, it is permissible to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial with the cremated remains present. ***Church law requires the cremains be laid to rest in consecrated ground, either buried or kept in a mausoleum.***

FLOWERS

Flowers are permitted for the Mass of Christian Burial. Parish staff will direct the placement of the flowers. Funeral Directors should take notice of flowers that are already in the sanctuary. Please be sure to remove, after Mass, only those flowers the family has brought in. The parish welcomes donation of flower arrangements should the family wish it. Flower arrangements are not to be carried in the recessional.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA

Memorial displays are encouraged at the wake at the funeral home. If some images are to be used in church, the display is to be kept simple. They are never to block the view of the tabernacle or the celebrant.

CELEBRATING THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

MUSIC

Because the Mass is a public act of worship of the church, the parish is ultimately responsible for the music in the liturgy. Hymns should reflect the idea of resurrection and hope. You may have in mind some specific religious music, which would be appropriate during the Mass. The parish staff can help you choose music that would be appropriate for the funeral Mass.

The entrance hymn, communion hymn and recessional hymn are music that the congregation should be encouraged to sing, as well as the usual service music and responses. Solos are more appropriate as a prelude, during the presentation of the gifts, and as a postlude after the recessional. Guest musicians must work through the parish Music Director. If they are not familiar with the Catholic liturgy, then the

Parish Music Director must be present at the funeral Mass. Use of recorded music in the liturgy is **not** permitted.

READINGS

The staff planner can assist in the selection of scriptural readings. One reading is from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament. The gospel reading is the choice of the celebrant. Non-scriptural readings are not permitted at Mass. [Click here for a list of Scriptural Readings appropriate to funerals.](#) It is often difficult for immediate family members to proclaim the readings at the funeral Mass. The **office of Lector is a skilled church ministry**. If the family cannot provide a trained, commissioned lector who is currently active in his/her parish, St. Anthony will see that the readings are proclaimed.

PALL AND CANDLE

The casket itself, though a center of reverence, is not the focus of attention at the Mass of Christian Burial. Rather, the focus is our hope of sharing eternal life and resurrection, promised at Baptism. During the entrance blessing, the casket is covered with a white cloth, a pall, as a reminder of the white garment used at Baptism. The Easter Candle, another symbol of Baptism will stand ahead of the casket. Usually immediate family members place the funeral pall on the casket. The American flag, a symbol of military service, never covers the casket in church during the Mass.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The order of the entrance is as follows: altar servers, presider, casket, followed by family members. The same order is used as we leave the Church. Musicians are not part of the procession. They are in the music ministry area leading the congregation in the entrance or recessional song.

HOMILY

The homily is the sermon by the priest or deacon after the Gospel. It is meant to be a reflection on Christian life, death, and resurrection. This is not a time for a eulogy on the life of the deceased. The Archdiocesan policy reads: "only an ordained priest or deacon is allowed to preach the homily at the funeral liturgy. A eulogy is never appropriate where a homily is prescribed (OCF#27), but examples from the person's life may be used in the homily."

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

We encourage members of the immediate family to bring the gifts of 1 bowl of bread and 1 wine chalice forward as a symbolic way of offering their loved one to God. No other items may be included in the Presentation of the Gifts. We encourage Catholics to receive communion under both species. If you have family members who are commissioned Eucharistic Ministers, (even from another parish) they are permitted to assist. Otherwise, the parish will provide Eucharistic Ministers.

EULOGY

The eulogy is not part of the Mass of Christian Burial. Eulogies by family members or friends are encouraged at the viewing and at the cemetery. **Eulogies by family members or friends are no longer permitted in the church at Mass of Christian Burial at St. Anthony Parish**

CHURCH STIPEND

Most funeral directors itemize all cost within their billings and make a check out to St. Anthony Parish. Our parish fee is \$200. This covers the cost of the Music Director and use of the church. The stipend does not belong to the priest. It is turned in as church income.

LUNCHEON

St. Anthony Parish regrets we do not have the space or staff resources to allow luncheons here at the parish.

Guidelines established 1/2011