

Commonly asked Questions

- **Why do we celebrate the funeral rites?**
In the funeral rites we pray for the deceased, entrusting them to God's mercy and care. We honour the body. We comfort the living in their grief. We celebrate the funeral rites not only for the dead but also for the living.
- **Is cremation permitted by the Catholic Church?**
Since 1963, the Church has permitted cremation as long as the Church's teaching on the resurrection of the body is upheld.
- **How are the rites celebrated for someone who chooses cremation?**
The Church prefers that the body be present for the Funeral Liturgy and cremated following the Final Commendation of the Liturgy. If there is a serious reason, it may be possible to celebrate the Funeral Liturgy in the presence of cremated remains.
- **What rites can be used for miscarried or stillborn infants?**
"Funeral Rites may be celebrated for children whose parents intended them to be baptized but who died before Baptism. In these celebrations the Christian community entrusts the child to God's all-embracing love." (Order of Christian Funeral #237)
- **What rites can be used for a suicide victim?**
This person is entrusted to God's love and mercy and is therefore entitled to the usual Funeral Rites.
- **What is done for a lapsed Catholic?**
By virtue of Baptism this person is entitled to the prayers of the Church including the Funeral Rites.
- **What is the proper place for the Funeral Rites?**
The Vigil service is celebrated in the presence of the body either in the funeral home or the Parish Church the night before. The Funeral Mass is always celebrated in the Church. The Committal Rite is preferably celebrated at the grave or the tomb.

Commonly asked Questions about a Funeral Mass

1. **Will the parish contact us?** Yes. A member of the Funeral Ministry team will be in touch to offer support and help arrange the Funeral liturgies.
2. **What types of decisions will we have to make?** Generally, the family is asked to choose whether they would like a Mass or a Service, then readings, to choose family members or friends to proclaim the readings or Prayers of the Faithful, to choose Gift Bearers, to offer musical suggestions and to choose whether or not to have someone offer Words of Remembrance about the deceased. If at any time you would appreciate our assistance in making these decisions, we will gladly help.
3. **How do we let the priest know our choices?** Along with this booklet, you will receive a form to be completed. A member of the Parish Funeral Ministry team will arrange a time to meet with you to help arrange the funeral ministries and communicate your wishes with the Priest.
4. **Can we request a particular Parish Priest?** Certainly. We will try to honour such requests, but circumstances may not make this always possible.
5. **How do we choose the readings, who reads them and how many do we choose?** In this booklet, you will find the selections for readings, psalms, Gospels and Prayers of the Faithful. Along with these selections, you will also find helpful suggestions and guidelines about the use of Sacred Scripture during a Funeral Mass.
6. **Can someone bring up the gifts for Mass?** Yes. Up to four people can bring forth gifts. We will provide these on a table by the middle pew. If no one is available to bring up the gifts, the Funeral Ministry team will make other arrangements.
7. **How do we make suggestions for music?** In this booklet, we provide particular guidelines and offer helpful suggestions about music. Please refer to this section for further details.
8. **Can someone offer a Words of Remembrance?** This is certainly possible, but you should not feel obliged to do so since the priest will offer a homily during the Mass. Sometimes people choose to offer such words at the wake, reception or burial. If they are to occur during the Funeral Mass, one person, either a family member or friend, can speak towards the end. It should be no longer than five minutes in length. and it is helpful to have these remarks written out. If you wish to go over them with the priest, he will be happy to assist the speaker. We suggest that these remarks reflect as much as possible the family's gratitude for the witness of Christian Faith the deceased offered to them. Also, they should touch the hearts of all concerned, not merely the speaker. All remarks must maintain the dignity of the sacred ritual that we will participate in. Thus, remarks that are off-colour or tend to be long historical narratives are to be avoided.

9. **Can we bring flowers into the Church and leave them as a donation?** Certainly. However, we ask that no more than two floral pieces be brought in because of the number of funerals we have. Please let the Funeral Director know which floral pieces you want used. We thank you in advance for your generosity which helps to leave a memorial for us in the parish.
10. **Do we have to have a Mass?** Not necessarily, but it is a privilege. There are provisions for a Funeral Liturgy without the celebration of the Eucharist. Particular circumstances may lead your family to choose this option. We suggest that you discuss this issue with the priest and he can help sort out any concerns your family might have.
11. **What about the reception of Holy Communion?** As mentioned, it is a privilege to share in the gift of the Eucharist and to be able to receive Holy Communion. It is also a sign of our faith and an expression of our unity as a Church. If there are people attending the Mass not prepared or able to receive Holy Communion as practicing Catholics, we wish to make them feel welcome. As such, the priest will invite those not receiving to come forward for a blessing.
12. **Can you have a Funeral Mass for someone who has been cremated?** Yes. Recent adaptations in both Church teaching and liturgical practice allow for the celebration of a Funeral Mass after cremation has occurred. However, it is desirable for the cremation to occur after the Funeral Mass or Service. The ashes (known as cremans) can be present in the Church and are honoured with similar respect and dignity offered to a deceased body. If you have further concerns, please let the funeral team know.
13. **Are priests and deacons from outside the parish invited to participate?** Yes. If you are aware of one who will be attending, please let us know. If you know of a priest who wishes to be the principal celebrant of the Funeral Mass, please let us know and we will be in contact with him ahead of time. Please know that we ask all visiting priests to follow the customs and guidelines of our parish.
14. **Will the priest join us at the grave for the burial?** It is our custom to attend the burial. However, there are circumstances that might keep the priest from being there. He will inform you ahead of time if this is the case and will make arrangements with the Funeral Ministry team for someone to lead the prayers at the grave side.