

The Church of Saint Margaret of Antioch

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Please accept our deepest sympathies and condolences and above all, our prayers for you and the family at this difficult time. By its nature, grief is certainly a private affair. The depth of love for the deceased is known to you alone. We all grieve in our unique ways. Yet, sorrow can be shared, as we will do together in the Mass of Christian Burial. When people share a common experience, they are united by a special bond. So we, the parish family of St. Margaret are united with you and your loved ones.

As Christians we believe that the Funeral Mass celebrates our belief that nothing, not even death, can separate us from the Love of God.

This booklet has been prepared for you. The readings from Sacred Scripture, chosen by the Church, must be used at the Mass; no substitutions may be used in the Mass. The readings enable us to pray the Mass of Christian Burial most effectively.

Please be assured that your other family at St. Margaret is praying for you and the happy rest of the soul of your loved one.

The Priests and the Parish Family of St. Margaret



The Readings at Mass

The Church attaches great importance to the reading of the word of God. The readings give us the opportunity to listen to God as He speaks to His people in their needs, sorrows, fears and hopes.

We ask that you please select an Old Testament reading and a New Testament reading. During the Easter Season both readings come from the New Testament, there is a special section for the second Easter Reading. If possible, we encourage someone from the family or friends, preferably someone who is familiar with reading in public, to proclaim the readings at Mass.

The Music at Mass

Music is integral to the praying of the Mass of Christian Burial. Music, especially Sacred Music has the power to strengthen the unity of the people, uplift the mourners, and console the sorrowful. Sacred hymns are prayers. There is a special place of honor for Gregorian chant. It is the music for the Mass. Music specifically written for the Liturgy must be used. Therefore, no secular music, Broadway or popular tunes can be used at the Mass.

The organist and soloist are professional and under contract with the Parish. A guest singer is welcomed to sing one piece of sacred music. Please inform the funeral director as soon as possible to make arrangements with the Music Director.

The Eulogy at the Funeral Home or Family Reception

For various reasons, the practice of a eulogy at the Mass of Christian Burial has gained popularity in the United States. Eulogies are not allowed by the Catholic Church. The Mass of Christian Burial is offered in prayer and intercession for the deceased person and for the forgiveness of their sins, and the consolation of the family and friends. The Mass of Christian Burial is NOT a celebration of the life of the deceased. There are more appropriate places for the remembrances of the life of the deceased person. It is more appropriate to speak the eulogy at the Funeral Home during the Vigil service. The funeral home is a more intimate setting with family and friends gathered together and around the speaker and allowing others to share in the life-stories. Another very appropriate place is at the family reception following the burial.

In light of this, a eulogy is not allowed within the Church of St. Margaret.

Cremation

For much of Her history, the Church banned cremation of Her faithful. However, in 1963 the Vatican lifted the ban. Although cremation is now permitted, Catholic teaching continues to stress the preference for burial or entombment of the body. This is done in imitation of the burial of our Lord's body.

The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body be present during the wake and Funeral Mass and that if cremation is to be used, it is take place **following the Mass**. When cremation is chosen for a good reason, the entire three rites of the Order of Christian Burial should be celebrated: the Vigil Service (Wake), the Mass of Christian Burial, and the Rite of Burial. This allows for the greater expression of our beliefs and values, especially, the sacredness of human life, the dignity of the individual person and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Church teaching insists that cremated remains must be given the same respect as the body, including the manner in which they are carried and the attention given to their appropriate transport and placement.

The cremated remains of a body are to be buried or entombed, preferable in a Catholic cemetery. The following are not considered to be reverent dispositions that the Church requires: scattering the remains, dividing cremated remains and keeping the cremated remains in the home, made into jewelry or kept in lockets.