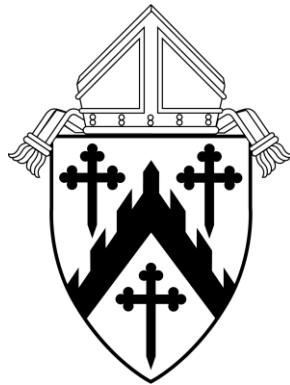


# DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT



## Policies and Pastoral Guidelines Relating to Funerals

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The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed

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Solemnity of Saint Joseph

Most Reverend ~~Martin Amos~~ Thomas Zinkula, JD, JCL

Bishop of Davenport

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## GENERAL

### INTRODUCTION

In this document, we offer both specific policy for the Diocese of Davenport (where so noted) as well as pastoral guidelines to assist priests, deacons, and lay ministers in their care of the dying, the dead, and the bereaved. The document answers specific questions that have been raised by the Presbyteral Council and Liturgical Commission of this diocese; it is not intended as a comprehensive review of the *Order of Christian Funerals* (OCF) and its pastoral application. In all things, ministers are referred back to the ritual text and corresponding legislation for guidance.

POLICY §500.1: The 1989 Edition of the *Order of Christian Funerals*, with the 1997 Appendix for Cremation, approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States, must be used.

The time surrounding the death of a loved one is not the most opportune time for formation in the Church's funeral rites and teaching surround the last things. Therefore, parishes ought to offer their members opportunities to reflect on the Church's care for the dead and on preparing their own funerals. For example, adult formation sessions could focus on such issues as: our Church's beliefs about death, the Church's funeral rites, end-of-life issues, and the preparation of health care directives and wills. Such catechesis ahead of time will help to avert misunderstanding and conflict later.

In order to assist ministers and families in preparing the funeral rites, preparation forms are available on the diocesan website (liturgy library page).

### Abbreviations

CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church

CCL Code of Canon Law (1983)

c. / cc. = canon / canons

[DAPNE Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism \(1993\)](#)

GIRM General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2002; retranslated 2011)

OCF Order of Christian Funerals (1989)

OE *Ordo Exsequiarum* (1969; Appendix to the OCF)

OCFA OCF Appendix – Cremation (1997)

STL Sing to the Lord (U.S. Bishops, 2009)

## **THEOLOGY**

The Church's funeral rites are, first and foremost, an act of worship. By our gathering as a faithful people in order to proclaim the scriptures and celebrate Eucharist, we give praise and thanks to God for the gift of the deceased person, we commend the person to God's merciful love, and we bring hope and consolation to the bereaved (OCF #4-7).

Rooted in Christ's Paschal Mystery, these rites remind us that "God has created each person for eternal life"—a life made possible because Jesus Christ has "broken the chains of sin and death" and redeemed us (OCF #1). Therefore, the focus of these rites is neither the deceased person nor the bereaved, but Christ.

This priority does not mean that the particularity of the deceased or the bereaved is ignored. While the Church's funeral rites proclaim Christian faith in the salvific will of God recounted in the Scriptures and in the resurrection promised through the Paschal Mystery of Christ, they do so in a way attentive to the particularity of those involved.<sup>1</sup> Using the analogy of a pair of glasses, the subjectivity of the life of the deceased and the experiences of the mourners are what help bring the "object" of God's salvific will and promise of resurrection into "focus" for the assembly. And, as with a pair of glasses, the "object" gets lost if attention is focused on the lenses.

In other words, Catholic Funeral rites are neither "celebration of life" services that focus on the deceased nor therapy sessions that emphasize the bereaved; and neither are they generic rituals in which the reality of the deceased and his or her relationships with the bereaved are set aside. Rather, the Paschal Mystery of Christ—evident in this life as well as in our promised resurrection—are brought into focus by the life being remembered and prayed for and by the assembly gathered in their grief.

## **MINISTERS**

The OCF reminds us that all members of the faithful—lay and ordained—are called "to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn" (OCF #8). Therefore, pastors should help to ensure that their parish community is both aware of this calling and prepared to carry out the various ministries that are required—whether visiting the bereaved and assisting them with their daily needs or serving as liturgical ministers (OCF #9-12, 15).

The OCF also reminds us that it is primarily the responsibility of priests—as ministers of reconciliation and comfort, as well as teachers of the faith—to preside at the funeral rites. In the absence of a priest, this ministry ought to be assigned to a deacon—who is a minister of the word, altar, and charity. In the absence of a cleric, a properly prepared lay minister may lead the rites (OCF #13-14).

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<sup>1</sup> To that end, ministers are encouraged to make full use of the adaptations allowed in the rites as well as the variable texts found in Part V of the OCF.

## OUTLINE OF RITES

### Terminology

Before delving into the rites themselves, it is good to recall the proper terminology that the Church uses to refer to these rites:

“Funeral Rites”	This term refers to all the rites contained in the <i>Order of Christian Funerals</i> .
“Vigil for the Deceased”	This term refers to the first of three rites usually celebrated for the deceased. The terms “Wake” or “Visitation” do not apply to the ritual itself. Likewise, it is not proper to refer to this liturgy as a “Wake Service.”
“Funeral Liturgy”	This term refers to the second rite, celebrated either within or outside of Mass. If celebrated within Mass, the term “Funeral Mass” is applied. Improper terms to be avoided include “Mass of the Resurrection” and “Mass of Christian Burial.” Outside of Mass, the proper term is “Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass” (not “Funeral Service.”)
“Rite of Committal”	This term refers to the third rite in the series, celebrated at the site where the deceased individual’s bodily remains are laid to rest. To refer to this rite simply as a “graveside service” or “burial” would not be proper.

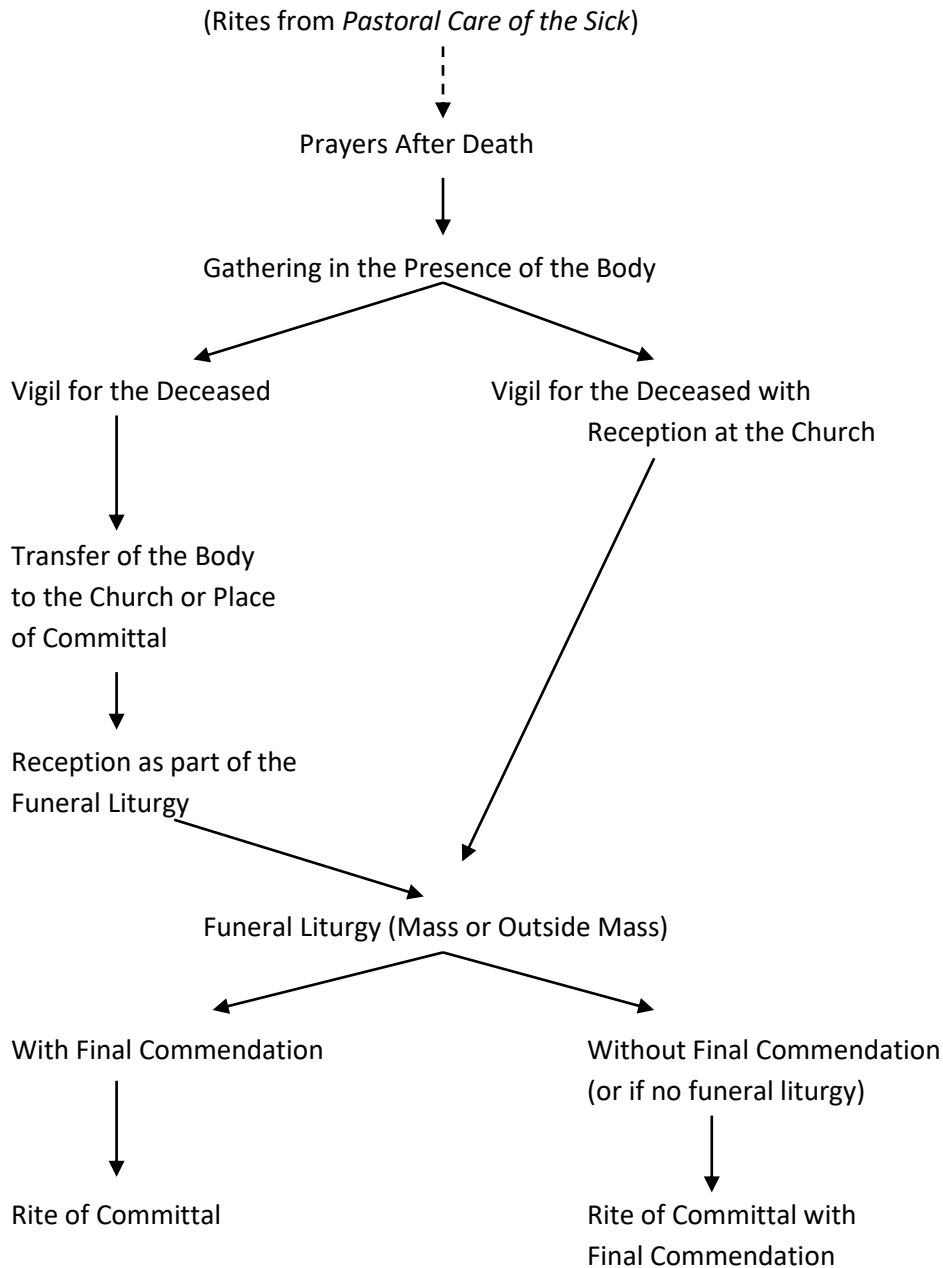
Unfortunately, the growing practice of cremation has led to inappropriate language. To begin with, the use of the word “cremains” seems to objectify and disrespect the bodily remains of the deceased person. Rather, “cremated remains” or “ashes of the deceased” ought to be used if specificity is desired. In addition, the phrase often seen in obituaries—“cremation rites were accorded”—is particularly erroneous: cremation is not a rite or ritual act.

POLICY §500.2: In all parish publications and announcements, including obituaries, only the proper terminology for the Church’s rites may be used.

### Structure

While the needs of families or local custom may suggest other arrangements, the normative structure of the OCF presumes three major rites—the Vigil, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of Committal—separated by processions and minor rites (OCF #43, OE #4-8). The processional structure of the OCF reveals the importance of movement as a symbol in the unfolding rites. The ordered sequence images the journey through grief as well makes present the paschal mystery to those in grief. The structure of the OCF also images the pilgrimage of the deceased through life and to the heavenly Jerusalem (OCF #42), a journey through which the community accompanies the deceased (see OCF #8-11, 64-65, 99, 110, 150, 213). The inter-relationship of the various rites is shown below:

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POLICY §500.3: The sequential celebration of the Vigil, Funeral Liturgy, and Rite of Committal is to be considered normative in the Diocese of Davenport.

## **Components**

### The Vigil for the Deceased

In the *praenotanda* (introduction) to the Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers, we are reminded that the ministry of the Church in the time after death is to accompany mourners in their bewilderment, shock, and grief. These rites are intended to help “mourners express their sorrow and to find strength and consolation” in the paschal mystery of Christ (OCF #52). The importance of the Christian community’s support to the mourners is stressed, as is the centrality of the word of God as source of consolation (OCF #51, 56, 59-60).

The Vigil, as the “principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death” (OCF #54), serves as a rite of separation. The reality of death is formally acknowledged as the mourners are excused from the responsibilities of daily life and the one who was living comes to be recognized as the one who is dead.

### The Funeral Liturgy

While the Funeral Liturgy (within or outside of Mass) still remains attentive to the mourners, these rites focus primarily on giving “praise and thanks to God for Christ’s victory over sin and death” and on commending “the deceased to God’s tender mercy and compassion” (OCF #129). This latter aspect is especially evident in the Final Commendation (OCF #146).

At the funeral liturgy, a rite of transition, both the dead and the living are in a liminal space. The deceased is no longer living in this world and is not yet commended to the next or committed to the earth or the long-term memory of the community. For mourners, life before this death has ended; life after this death, the day-in and day-out routines that will need to be learned without this loved one physically present, is yet to begin. The funeral, with its emphasis on anamnesis, recalls the past in order to comfort in the present and open up a new future. By viewing the great deeds of God in the past through the lens of the life of the deceased, God’s promises can once again be appropriated. The Rite of Commendation, which may be celebrated at the end of the Funeral Liturgy or at the beginning of the Rite of Committal, begins the process of incorporation.

### The Rite of Committal

The emphasis in the Rite of Committal is on hope in the face of the stark and final reality of death (OCF #206, 209). This rite makes the faith professed in the Rite of Commendation concrete as farewell and welcome are simultaneously celebrated; grief and joy coexist and both are acknowledged. As transition moves to incorporation, ritual emphasis on present and past gives way to the eschatological future.

### The Processions

There are two key processions in the normative structure of the OCF: the first from the (funeral) home to the church, and the second from the church to the place of burial. The OCF notes that “[t]he procession to the church is a rite of initial separation from the deceased; the procession to the place of committal is the journey to the place of final separation of the mourners from the deceased” (OCF #120). As such, these times may be very difficult for mourners. Therefore, they are to be supported through these transitions by the pastoral presence of the church’s ministers as well as by prayer and song (OCF #120, 149).

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The laws regulating the celebration of Funeral Masses and other Masses for the Dead are found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, paragraphs 380-381, and are summarized in the “Table of Rubrics Governing Ritual Masses, Masses for Various Needs and Occasions, and Masses for the Dead” (found in the *Ceremonial of Bishops* Appendix III).

Funeral Masses may NOT be celebrated on the following days:

- Holy Thursday (all day) and the Triduum
- Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season
- Solemnities of Precept (Holy Days of Obligation)
  - December 8: Immaculate Conception
  - December 25: Nativity of the Lord
  - January 1: Mary, Mother of God\*
  - Ascension of the Lord
  - August 15: The Assumption of Mary\*
  - November 1: All Saints\*
  - \* = funeral Masses may be celebrated when the obligation is abrogated

### A Note on Sundays

Funeral Masses are permitted on Sundays in Ordinary Time and during the Christmas Season. Such a solution should be seen as exceptional, however. Such Funeral Masses may not replace the usual parish Mass and the priest-celebrant must not exceed the maximum number of Masses that he is allowed to celebrate on a Sunday. Since the obligation to assist at Mass is dependent on the Day and not on the texts used, assisting at a funeral Mass on Sunday fulfills the Sunday obligation.

### A Note on Funerals and Daily Mass

On days when a funeral Mass is celebrated, a daily Mass may be cancelled and parishioners encouraged to attend the ritual Mass. When possible, the Funeral Mass ought to be at the usual time of the daily Mass; if not possible, the change in time should be clearly communicated to the parish.

### A Note on the Liturgical Season

The liturgical norms governing liturgy in the various seasons are to be respected. For example, during Lent: the *Gloria* and *Alleluia* are not used (GIRM #53, 62), and the use of musical instruments is only allowed in order to support singing (that is, no instrumental music is allowed; GIRM #313). While flowers are not usually used during Lent (GIRM #305), if the family requests that they be allowed as a reminder of others’ condolences and a source of consolation, the pastor may allow their use during the funeral rites.



## FAMILY

### In planning the rites

The minister preparing the funeral rites should invite the family to take part in planning the liturgies to the extent possible (OCF #17). In any case, ministers are reminded that they “should keep in mind the life of the deceased and the circumstances of death... [and] take into consideration the spiritual and psychological needs of the family and friends of the deceased...” (OCF #16). Nothing is more contrary to the intentions of the Church than a minister who insists on the same readings, prayer, music, and homily for every funeral. It is recommended that the priest, deacon, or parish minister meet with the family of the deceased to initiate the planning for the funeral before making funeral arrangements with the funeral director.

### As liturgical ministers

The question of whether or not members of the family of the deceased should serve as liturgical ministers is not an easy one to answer. On the one hand, there may be a strong desire on the part of some family members to take on a particular liturgical ministry. On the other, they may be ill-prepared for such ministries or their grief may make their exercise of such a ministry too burdensome (OCF #15). Therefore, the following guidelines are recommended:

- As a general rule, family members should not serve as liturgical ministers. As the bereaved, it is theirs to be ministered *to* by the community.
  - Instead, family members should be offered the opportunity to assist with the placement of the pall and (when the option is exercised) the placement of Christian symbols. It is not appropriate for funeral directors to undertake these roles.
  - Catholic family members or friends may also present the gifts at Mass, recalling that only bread and wine (and gifts for the poor) are to be presented. Token items (for example, items which will be returned to ordinary use after the celebration) have no place in the procession.
- Should members of the family wish to serve as liturgical ministers:
  - They should already know how to serve in such a capacity (for example, already be a reader or altar server in their own Catholic parish).
    - According to the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, “the reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that Church. On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, ~~the Bishop~~ priests and deacons of the diocese ~~may~~ who have the faculty to do so may permit a member of another Church or ecclesial Community to take on the task of reader” (#133). ~~Outside of the Eucharist, the pastor may give such permission (#135). This norm applies to funeral rites outside of Mass as well.~~
    - Likewise, priests and deacons of the diocese who have the faculty to do so may permit a Christian minister from another church or ecclesial community to read from scripture, give a brief exhortation, or the like, always following the norms of the DAPNE.
  - The presiding minister should arrange for an alternative minister to step in should the family member be unable to fulfill the ministry.
  - In the case of those serving as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the diocesan norms contained in *Policies Relating to Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*. In particular, it should be

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recalled that in case of emergency, a Catholic layperson (not otherwise impeded) may be commissioned to assist with the distribution of communion for a single occasion, using the formula from *The Roman Missal, Appendix V* (and reproduced in the Policy). Priority should be given to temporarily commissioning those who are familiar with this ministry (have been EMHCs in the past or exercise that ministry elsewhere).

### VIGIL

#### GENERAL NORMS

- The usual presider for the Vigil is the parish priest. In his absence, a deacon may preside. In the absence of a cleric, a duly appointed lay minister may preside.
  - Other ministers, such as servers, readers, and cantors, should also assist.
- The Vigil may take place in the home, at the funeral home, or at the church.
  - If the Vigil takes place at the church, the Rite of Reception of the Body is also celebrated (see OCF #82-97) and then omitted as part of the Funeral Liturgy.
  - In addition, if the body will remain in the church overnight, proper arrangements to insure its security are required.
- If celebrated in the church, the presiding minister must wear the proper vestments: alb (or cassock/surplice) with stole for priests and deacons; alb for a lay minister. Outside of the church, while ministers should “vest according to local custom” (OCF #66), the use of the same liturgical vesture is encouraged.
  - The liturgical color may be white, purple, or (rarely in this country) black.
  - The Vigil’s emphasis on the immediacy of grief suggests purple as the color to use.
- The Vigil may be celebrated more than once if necessary (OCF #67).

#### OFFICE FOR THE DEAD

“The Vigil for the Deceased may be celebrated in the form of some part of the Office for the Dead” (OCF #348). The norms governing the use of Morning and Evening Prayer in this regard are found in Part IV of the OCF (#348-395). Recourse to the Liturgy of the Hours is especially suggested for the Vigils of clergy and religious, as well as for those occasions when the usual Vigil has already been celebrated and a second rite is desired.

#### THE ROSARY

The Vigil is the official prayer designated by the Church for this occasion and is found in the Order of Christian Funerals. It includes prayers for the deceased and recognizes the person’s Christian life. The recitation of the rosary and other private devotions are permitted but should be held at a time other than the Vigil and should never take the place of the official Vigil.

#### VIEWING THE DECEASED

The casket may be opened for viewing during the Vigil. As a general rule, once closed (for example, for the procession from funeral home to church) the casket should remain closed—as a way to point to and help the bereaved accept the reality of death. In those cases where the casket is brought to the church for a second viewing, it should be closed for

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the last time before the Funeral Liturgy begins. In these situations, a member/representative of the family should be present and candle(s) lit near the casket. An unattended casket should not be open in church.

### RELATED RITES AND PRAYERS

The rites “Prayers after Death,” “Gathering in the Presence of the Body,” and “Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal” (OCF 98 – 127) are a rich resource to use when praying with the family. These models can be adapted to be used in a variety of circumstances.

### FUNERAL LITURGY

The Funeral Liturgy may be celebrated within or outside of Mass. While the Funeral Mass is to be preferred, there are occasions when the liturgy outside of Mass may be preferred (OCF #178):

- When, according to the calendar, the Funeral Mass may not be celebrated.
- When, due to particular circumstances, it is not possible to celebrate the Funeral Mass (for example, if a priest is not available).
- When, for pastoral reasons, the pastor and family judge that the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass would be more appropriate (for example, if a large number of the mourners are not Catholic).

### FUNERAL LITURGY WITHIN MASS (FUNERAL MASS): GENERAL NORMS

- The Funeral Mass is presided over by the parish priest.
  - Other ministers, such as deacons, servers, readers, and cantors, should also assist.
- The Funeral Mass may only take place in a parish church, chapel, or oratory where the Catholic Mass is usually celebrated. To celebrate the Funeral Mass elsewhere requires just cause and the permission of the Bishop.
- The vestments proper for Mass (alb, stole, chasuble for the priest; alb, stole, dalmatic for the deacon; alb for other lay ministers in accord with local custom) are to be worn. While the liturgical color may be white, purple, or (rarely in this country) black, the Funeral Liturgy’s emphasis on thanksgiving, remembrance, and future hope suggests white as the proper color.
- In regards to Communion:
  - Pastoral leaders are to be mindful of those persons present who are not Catholic or who no longer practice the Catholic faith and for whom an explanation of the symbols may be necessary.
  - In the worship aid, or prior to communion, the presider should remind those who are not Catholic or who no longer practice the Catholic faith that they may not receive communion. For example:
    - “Those who are in full communion with the Catholic Church are invited to come forward to receive the Eucharist. Those who are separated from the Catholic Church are invited to join us in prayer at this time.”
    - A more full explanation, as found in missalettes, may also be reproduced in worship aids.
  - The purpose of the Communion Procession is to journey to the Table; therefore, the inviting of others forward to receive a blessing at this time is discouraged.

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- The possibility of intercommunion is regulated by the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* [see also CCL c.844] [and by diocesan faculties](#).
  - 125. Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and the anointing of the sick to members of the Eastern Churches, who ask for these sacraments of their own free will and are properly disposed.
  - 131. The conditions under which a Catholic minister may administer the sacraments of the Eucharist, of penance and of the anointing of the sick to a baptized person [of another ecclesial community] are that the person be unable to have recourse for the sacrament desired to a minister of his or her own Church or ecclesial Community, ask for the sacrament of his or her own initiative [therefore, the minister may not issue an invitation for an individual, or for non-Catholics in general, to approach for communion], manifest Catholic faith in this sacrament and be properly disposed.

### **FUNERAL LITURGY OUTSIDE MASS: GENERAL NORMS**

- The usual presider for the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass is the parish priest. In his absence, a deacon may preside. In the absence of a cleric, a duly appointed lay minister may preside. Other ministers, such as servers, readers, and cantors, should also assist.
- While usually celebrated at the parish church, the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may take place in the home, at the funeral home, or at the cemetery chapel (OCF #179).
- The presiding minister must wear the proper vestments: alb (or cassock/surplice) with stole for priests and deacons; alb for a lay minister. While the liturgical color may be white, purple, or (rarely in this country) black, the Funeral Liturgy's emphasis on thanksgiving, remembrance, and future hope suggests white as the proper color.
- The option for distributing communion as part of the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass should be exercised only if a priest was not available to celebrate a Funeral Mass.

### **IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BODY...**

The funeral rites in the OCF presume the presence of the body (or cremated remains). In the absence of the body/remains, the Funeral Liturgy is celebrated as prescribed, with the following modifications:

- The reception of the body is not celebrated.
- The Rite of Final Commendation is not celebrated.
- Prayers that make reference to honoring or burying the body of the deceased are not used.

### **Donation of the Body to Science**

In Iowa, it is possible to request to celebrate funeral rites prior to the body being donated. In such cases, the Vigil and Funeral Liturgy (without Commendation) is celebrated and then the body released. When the body is returned, then the Rite of Committal with Final Commendation is celebrated.

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However, if the body is not available, the funeral rites may be celebrated in the absence of the body as above. Provisions should be made to ensure that the remains are returned to the family after the scientific study is concluded so that they may be properly buried. The Rite of Committal (with Final Commendation, if not celebrated earlier) is celebrated at that time.

### **RITE OF COMMITTAL**

- The usual presider for the Rite of Committal is the parish priest. In his absence, a deacon may preside. In the absence of a cleric, a duly appointed lay minister may preside.
  - Other ministers, such as servers, readers, and cantors, should also assist.
  - If a parish minister is not available, a family member or friend may lead the rite (OCF #215).
- The Rite of Committal takes place at the grave, tomb, crematorium/columbarium, and may be used for burials at sea; it is preferred that the rite not be celebrated apart from the place of interment (such as a cemetery chapel; OCF #204).
  - If the final commendation was not celebrated as part of the funeral liturgy, or if the funeral liturgy was omitted, the commendation is celebrated as part of this rite (OCF #205).
  - “The rite of committal may be celebrated in circumstances in which the final disposition of the body will not take place for some time.... The rite of committal may then be repeated on the later occasion when the actual burial or interment takes place. On the second occasion the rite may include a longer Scripture reading as well as a homily” (OCF #212).
- The act of committal is an integral part of the rite, and may take place after the words of committal or at the conclusion of the rite. To the extent possible, the committal should take place with the community present, rather than waiting for all to depart (OCF #209).
- While ministers should “vest according to local custom” (OCF #215), the use of the same liturgical vesture is encouraged.
  - The liturgical color may be white, purple, or (rarely in this country) black.
  - The Committal’s emphasis on future hope and the resurrection recommends white as the preferred color.

### **MILITARY HONORS**

The OCF is structured as a single rite with three stations (Vigil, Funeral Liturgy, Committal). Therefore, because that sequence should not be interrupted, military honors are offered after the conclusion of the Rite of Committal.

### **SPECIFIC ISSUES**

#### **CREMATION**

The celebration of the Church’s funeral rites in the context of cremation is governed by the 1997 Appendix to the OCF. The Appendix makes clear that, while cremation is permitted, “it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body” (OCFA #413; see CCL c. 1176 §3). It is important to note that cremated remains are to “be treated with the same respect

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given to the human body from which they come” (OCFA #417). Therefore, the cremated remains may not be scattered, subdivided, crafted into jewelry, pottery, or other objects, mixed with cremated remains of other individuals or pets, or kept at home. Because of our belief in the resurrection of the body, and the respect that the body is to be accorded, we find such practices repulsive. Cremated remains are to be buried or placed in a mausoleum or columbarium; burial at sea is also permitted as long as the cremated remains are placed in an appropriate container (and not simply scattered).

### **Cremation after the Funeral Liturgy (OCFA #418-421)**

“The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites (OCF #413). Therefore, if at all possible, cremations should take place after the Vigil and Funeral Liturgy have been celebrated. At the conclusion of the Funeral Liturgy, the alternate form of dismissal is used (# 437). At the Rite of Committal, the cremated remains are buried or entombed using the alternate wording (#438).

### **Cremation and Committal before the Funeral Liturgy (OCFA #422-425)**

There may be occasions when the cremation of the body, and the committal of the remains, must precede the funeral liturgy. In those cases, the Prayers after Death and the Vigil may be adapted and the Rite of Committal with Final Commendation may be used. The alternate form of words of committal (#438) is used in those cases. The Funeral Liturgy takes place without the reception of the body and the final commendation; prayers that make reference to honoring or burying the body of the deceased are not used.

### **Funeral Liturgy in the Presence of Cremated Remains (OCFA #426-431)**

Universal law does not allow for the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy (within or outside of Mass) in the presence of cremated remains. However, the United States enjoys an indult which allows individual bishops to judge if such a practice is appropriate in his diocese as long as cremation was not “inspired by motives contrary to Christian teaching” (OCFA #426a). According to the indult, “each diocesan bishop will judge whether it is pastorally appropriate to celebrate” the funeral liturgy with cremated remains present, taking into account both the particular situation and the concrete norms of the Church (OCFA #426b).

If the Funeral Liturgy is to be celebrated in the presence of cremated remains, the following norms apply:

- Cremated remains are to be in a worthy vessel; a small table or stand is prepared. The remains may be placed there before the liturgy or be carried in procession.
- The vessel may be sprinkled with holy water, using the alternative words (OCFA #433); the pall is not used. The Paschal Candle may be used.
- Prayers that make reference to honoring or burying the body of the deceased are not used. The Rite of Final Commendation uses the alternate dismissal (OCFA #437); incense may be used.
- The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the cemetery or columbarium; the alternate words of committal are used (OCFA #438).

POLICY §500.4: In the Diocese of Davenport, ~~the Bishop grants the following faculty to priests of the diocese (in the absence of a priest-president, the same faculty is granted to deacons of the diocese and to lay parish life administrators);~~ the following have the faculty to permit the celebration of funeral rites in the presence of cremated remains: pastors, parochial administrators, parochial vicars, priest moderators, sacramental ministers, university and health care chaplains, deacons assigned to a parish, and parish life coordinators. The following norms are to be followed:

You may celebrate the funeral liturgy in the presence of the cremated remains of a deceased person, taking into account the concrete circumstances in each individual case, and always observing the following conditions: (1) There is no anti-Christian motive for choosing cremation (c. 1176, §3). (2) The cremated remains will be handled with respect and buried or entombed in a place reserved for this purpose. (3) There is no other canonical prohibition of a funeral liturgy, namely, for notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics and other manifest sinners for whom ecclesiastical funerals cannot be granted without public scandal to the faithful (c. 1184). Doubtful cases are to be referred to the Bishop.

POLICY §500.5:

- (1) If cremation is to take place, the minister is to advise the family that a burial place in a grave or entombment in a mausoleum or columbarium is to be established in advance of celebrating the Funeral Liturgy.
- (2) A priest, deacon, or lay minister may not preside at or attend a “service” where ashes are scattered or

## Music

The place of music in the Church’s funeral rites is summarized in the U.S. Bishop’s document, *Sing to the Lord* (#246-248):

Sacred music has an integral role in the funeral rites, since it can console and uplift mourners while, at the same time, uniting the assembly in faith and love (OCF #30). Funeral music should express the Paschal Mystery and the Christian’s share in it (OCF #30). Since music can evoke strong feelings, it should be chosen with care. It should console the participants and “help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory” (OCF #31). Secular music, even though it may reflect on the background, character, interests, or personal preferences of the deceased or mourners, is not appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy.

Music should be provided for the Vigil and Funeral [Liturgy]. Whenever possible, music should accompany the funeral processions and the rite of committal (OCF #32, 41). For the processions, preference should be given to “settings of psalms and songs that are responsorial or litanic in style and that allow the people to respond to the verses with an invariable refrain” (#41). Music should never be used to memorialize the deceased, but rather to give praise to the Lord, whose Paschal Sacrifice has freed us from the bonds of death.

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In other words, secular music is not to be included as part of the liturgy. Rather than adopting popular secular songs which are inappropriate to a liturgical setting, we should seek out good liturgical music on a paschal theme which can “support, console, and uplift participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory” (OCF #31).<sup>2</sup>

In preparing liturgical music for the funeral rites, the basic principles of good liturgical music apply. For example, the assembly should be able to participate in the music chosen; solos are out of place. Likewise, the use of recorded music is not in keeping with Catholic liturgy, and therefore may not be used in the celebration of the Church's funeral rites (STL #93):

Recorded music lacks the authenticity provided by a living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy. While recorded music might be used advantageously outside the Liturgy as an aid in the teaching of new music, it should not, as a general norm, be used within the Liturgy.

### **THE CENTRALITY OF THE WORD**

The proclamation of the word of God is central to the Church's funeral rites (OCF #22); such readings when called for may not be replaced by non-biblical readings (OCF #23). The readings are to come from the OCF (Part III) or Volume IV of the Lectionary (Masses for the Dead). The psalms, especially, are emphasized for they “are rich in imagery, feeling, and symbolism” and powerfully express “the suffering and pain, the hope and trust of people of every age and culture” (OCF #25). As songs, they should be sung whenever possible (OCF #26).

### **Preaching (OCF #27)**

A brief homily (by priest or deacon; or reflection if the lay leader of prayer has faculties to preach) is called for after the gospel reading at the Funeral Liturgy and is strongly encouraged at the Vigil. The focus of such preaching is the paschal mystery of Christ and God's compassionate love as revealed in the readings. While a eulogy (a commendation that focuses on the praise of the deceased person) is forbidden, the preacher should help the assembly see the mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection in the life of the deceased and in their own lives. As appropriate, the preacher can include elements of gratitude and praise for a life that has been blessed by God. While speaking in terms of hope, the preacher should use “eschatological restraint” and refrain from commenting on that of which he has no knowledge: the will of God and the state of the deceased person's soul.

### **Speaking in Memory of the Deceased**

Both the Vigil and the Funeral Liturgy allow for a single individual to speak in memory of the deceased (at the Vigil, after the concluding prayer; at the Funeral Liturgy, before the Final Commendation). As with the preaching, such remembrance is not to be a eulogy. Instead, this remembrance is to express appreciation for the life of the deceased (that is, particularize the praise and gratitude to God for God's gifts to the deceased, especially the gift of the Christian life), or take the form of a prayer or other inspirational text. Given the emotion of the moment, and to ensure that the

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<sup>2</sup> Such “favorite songs” are more appropriate at the visitation/wake (outside of the Vigil) or at the funeral meal/reception.



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words are in harmony with the celebration, any comments which will be made during the rites ought to be put down in writing and be reviewed by the presiding minister. The speaker should limit his or her remarks to no more than 3-4 minutes.

Of the two options, it is preferred that such speaking take place at the Vigil rather than at the Funeral Liturgy if at all possible.

If multiple persons wish to speak in remembrance of the deceased, such sharing best takes place after the conclusion of the Vigil or after the conclusion of the Rite of Committal. However, if pastorally necessary, more than one person may speak in the context of the Vigil (but not the Funeral Liturgy).

### **FOR WHOM MAY THESE RITES BE CELEBRATED?**

Unless specifically impeded, all Catholics “are to be given ecclesiastical funeral rites according to the norm of law” (CCL c. 1176 §1). As far as funeral rites are concerned, Catechumens are to be treated as members of the faithful (c. 1183 §1). Under specific conditions, Catholic funeral rites may be celebrated for children who died before baptism as well as baptized non-Catholics (c. 1183 §§2-3).

POLICY §500.6: In the Diocese of Davenport, priests (as listed in 500.4) and parish life ~~administrators~~ coordinators ~~are granted~~ have the faculty to permit church funeral rites for children who have died before baptism, provided their parents had intended to have them baptized (OCF #237). Such permission extends to the fetus or stillborn children (see OCF #318).

POLICY §500.7: In the Diocese of Davenport, priests (as listed in 500.4) and parish life ~~coordinators~~ ~~administrators~~ ~~are granted~~ have the faculty to permit the celebration of the Church’s funeral rites for a validly baptized member of another church or ecclesial community, provided that (a) this would not be contrary to the wishes of the deceased person and (b) provided the minister of the deceased person is unavailable (physically or morally). The name of a non-Catholic may not be mentioned during the Eucharistic Prayer. In doubtful cases, the Bishop is to be consulted.

### **Denial of Funeral Rites**

According to the Code of Canon Law (c. 1184 §1):

Unless they have given some signs of repentance before their death, the following are to be deprived of ecclesiastical funeral rites: (1) notorious apostates, heretics and schismatics; (2) persons who had chosen the cremation of their own bodies for reasons opposed to the Christian faith; (3) other manifest sinners for whom ecclesiastical funeral rites cannot be granted without public scandal to the faithful.

Lack of registration in a parish, inability to pay parish fees or the like, death by suicide (CCC §2282; see OCF §398.44/45), or being in an irregular union are not reasons for refusing to celebrate the Church’s funeral rites.

POLICY §500.8: A priest or other minister may not refuse funeral rites for a Catholic without the permission of the Bishop. The Bishop’s judgment must be followed.

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Even if one is denied ecclesiastical funeral rites, the bereaved are still entitled to the pastoral care of the Church. Such pastoral care might include an informal service of prayer and scripture for the dead at the cemetery or funeral home. Parish ministers must approach these situations with special sensitivity to both those grieving the loss of a loved one and the rest of the community which might be scandalized.

### **PLACE & DOCUMENTATION (CCL c. 1177)**

Funerals are usually to be celebrated in the person's parish. However, any member of the faithful or those responsible for making their funeral arrangements may choose another church with the consent of that pastor (or parish life administrator). As a courtesy, the proper pastor ought to be notified. Should death take place outside of the proper parish, and the body has not been transferred to it or another church, the rites are to be celebrated in the parish church where the death occurred. Again, in such instances, the proper pastor ought to be notified.

Parish clergy should make a reasonable effort to respond to the request of any family requesting a funeral even if they are not members of the parish. He may inform the proper pastor when appropriate. When it is not possible to respond to a family's request, the priest/deacon should assist them in contacting their proper parish or a priest able to assist the family.

According to CCL c. 1182, "[a]fter the interment an entry is to be made in the death register in accord with the norm of particular law."

#### **POLICY §500.9:**

1. The death of a parishioner is recorded in the sacramental record book of the parish where the Funeral Liturgy is celebrated (or, in the absence of such a liturgy, where the primary funeral rite is celebrated).
2. If funeral rites are celebrated for one who is not a parishioner, the parish of the deceased is to be notified. If no such parish is known, then the death is recorded as in (1) above.
3. The following are to be included in the parish's death record:
  - Full name of the deceased; date of death; name of presider; date and place of burial
  - If the person was a catechumen, that fact is recorded (and cross-referenced with the Register of Catechumens)
  - Notations may include additional information such as next of kin, cause of death, or the name of the funeral home. The fact of cremation should be noted.
  - In the case of a non-Catholic, the death is recorded in the parish book with a notation of the religion of the deceased and the rites celebrated.
  - The parish of baptism does not need to (but, out of courtesy, may) be informed.

#### **OTHER QUESTIONS**

**May symbols other than Christian symbols (for example, the American flag) be used in the funeral rites?**

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“Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, have no place in the funeral liturgy” (OCF #38). “Any national flags or the flags or insignia of associations to which the deceased belonged are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church. They may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church” (OCF # 132). If a symbol of Christian life is to be placed on the coffin, it may be carried in the opening procession and placed on the coffin by a family member, friend, or the minister at the proper time (OCF #133).

### **Who determines the times for a funeral?**

The date and time of the funeral rites is to be decided upon with the family and in consideration of parish schedules. The funeral home should not preemptively make such determinations. To that end, pastors should work with local funeral homes and cemeteries to ensure that they are familiar with Catholic funeral rites, customs, and practices.

### **When there is a conflict in funeral planning, who makes the final decision?**

When conflicts among family members occur, the surviving spouse should be consulted first. In the absence of a surviving spouse, adult children are to be consulted. Finally, the executor of the estate is to be consulted. Priests, as ministers of reconciliation (OCF #13), should be sure to extend sensitive pastoral care to former spouses, estranged family members, step-families, and others whose grief might be marginalized.

### **What are policies regarding donations, honoraria, and parish fees in regards to funerals?**

#### Offerings for Mass Intentions

Guests at the visitation and funeral service may choose to make a monetary offering for the celebration of Holy Mass for the intention of the deceased. Following the funeral rites, the parish clergy will obtain from the funeral home the Mass offerings. The envelopes will be opened, the offerings removed, and the amount of the offering marked on each envelope. The envelopes should be given to the family for their use in sending acknowledgements and thank-yous. Families may request Mass stipends be forwarded to a Catholic parish, mission, or religious house of their choice.

#### Memorial Gifts

Guests at the visitation may wish to make a donation in memory of the deceased to an appropriate charity. It may be helpful for guests who come for visitation if the family specifies an appropriate charity as the designated memorial for the deceased.

#### Honoraria (“stole fee”)

The funeral home staff will usually assist the family in determining appropriate honoraria for those who assisted with the funeral service such as clergy, musicians, altar servers, etc.

**Rarely, and certainly not ideally, there are times when the Vigil at the funeral home is omitted and the casket is simply brought to the church an hour or so before the funeral liturgy (for example, in the case of someone who might have been quite advanced in years and have little family left). Should the Vigil be celebrated at that time?**

As a general rule, no: The sense of “waiting” with the family would be absent, and the addition of a rite before the funeral liturgy itself could be more of a burden than a help for some.

**APPENDIX : SUGGESTED MUSIC**

**Processional Hymns**

All Creatures of Our God and King  
All the Ends of the Earth (Dufford)  
All the Ends of the Earth (Haas/Haugen)  
Amazing Grace  
As the Deer Longs  
Be Not Afraid  
Canticle of the Sun  
Christ, Be Our Light  
Crown Him With Many Crowns  
Gather The People  
Gather Your People  
Glory and Praise to Our God  
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name  
Holy, Holy, Holy  
How Great Thou Art  
Humbly, Lord, We Worship You  
I Am the Bread of Life  
I Know That My Redeemer Lives  
Keep in Mind  
Morning Has Broken  
Praise to the Lord  
Rain Down  
River of Glory  
The King of Love, My Shepherd Is  
This Day God Gives Me  
To Jesus Christ, Our Sovereign King  
Where Charity and Love Prevail

**Hymns at Preparation of Altar/Gifts**

Amazing Grace  
Beatitudes  
Be Still, My Soul

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Blest Are They  
Here I Am, Lord  
Hosea  
How Can I Keep From Singing  
I Am the Bread of Life  
I Have Loved You  
I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say  
I Know My Redeemer Lives  
I, The Lord  
I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light  
On Eagle's Wings  
Only This I Want  
Parable  
Prayer of St. Francis  
Precious Lord, Take My Hand  
Psalm 42  
Seek Ye First  
Shepherd Me, O God  
The King of Love My Shepherd Is  
The Lord is My Hope  
There is a Longing  
These Alone Are Enough  
This Alone  
We Have Been Told  
You Alone  
You Are Mine  
Your Words Are Spirit and Life

### **Hymns at Communion**

Behold the Lamb  
Come to Me  
Eat This Bread  
Gift of Finest Wheat  
I Am the Bread of Life  
I, the Lord  
On Eagle's Wings  
One Bread, One Body  
One Lord  
Servant Song  
Table of Plenty  
Taste and See  
The Lord is My Hope

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The Lord is My Light  
The Supper of the Lord  
Ubi Caritas  
We Praise You  
We Shall Rise Again  
We Will Rise Again  
You Alone  
You Are Mine  
Your Words Are Spirit and Life

### **Songs of Farewell**

Saints of God (Janco)  
This Day in New Jerusalem (Haas)  
Song of Farewell (Old Hundredth)  
Celtic Song of Farewell (O Danny Boy)  
O Loving God (O Danny Boy)  
Song of Farewell (Sands)

### **Recessional Hymns**

All Creatures of Our God and King  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the Holy Anthem Rise  
All Praise and Glad Thanksgiving  
Blest Be the Lord  
City of God  
For All the Saints  
For You Are My God  
Go In Peace  
Hail, Holy Queen  
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name  
How Great Thou Art  
I Know That My Redeemer Lives  
I Sing the Mighty Power of God  
Jerusalem, My Happy Home  
Jesus, Remember Me  
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee  
Lead Me, Lord  
Litany for a Funeral Procession (Becker)  
Only This I Want  
Shall We Gather at the River?  
Sing a New Song (do not use verse one)  
Sing to the Mountains  
Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

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Soon and Very Soon  
The Strife is O'er  
Though the Mountains May Fall  
We Are the Light of the World  
We Walk By Faith  
Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones