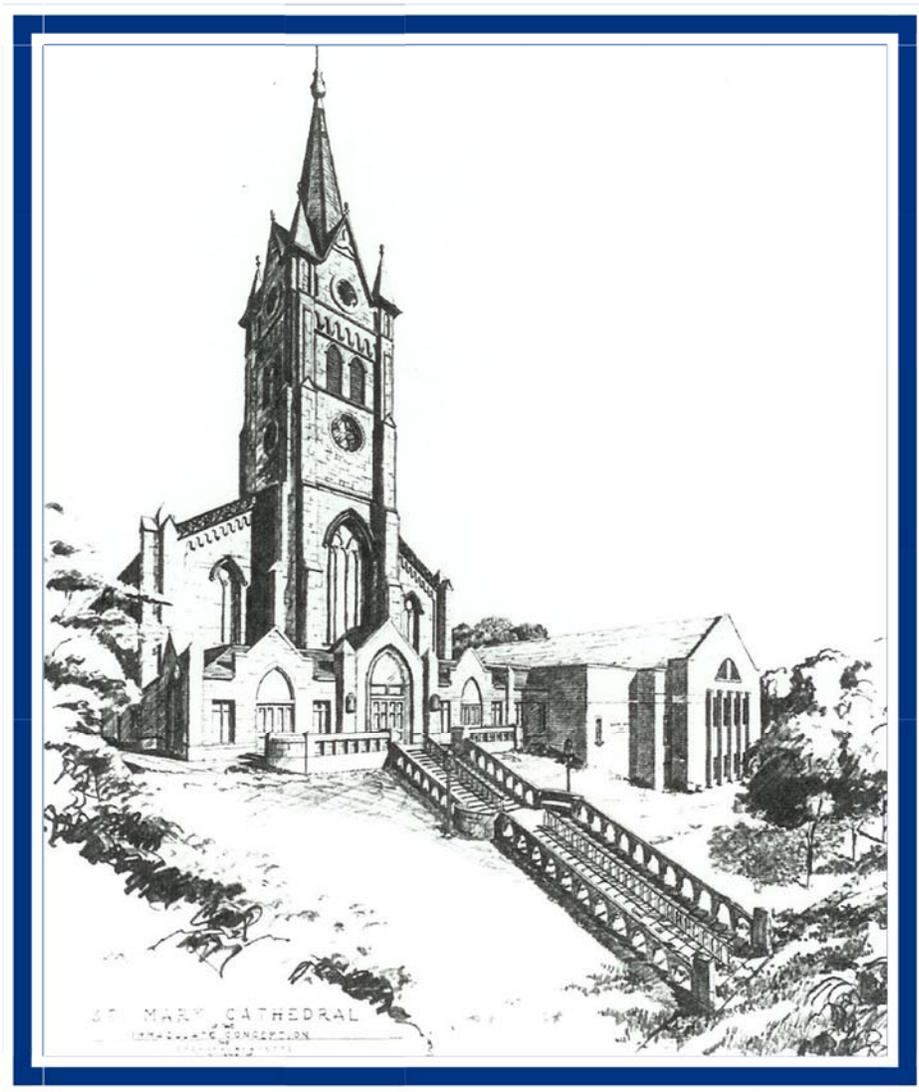


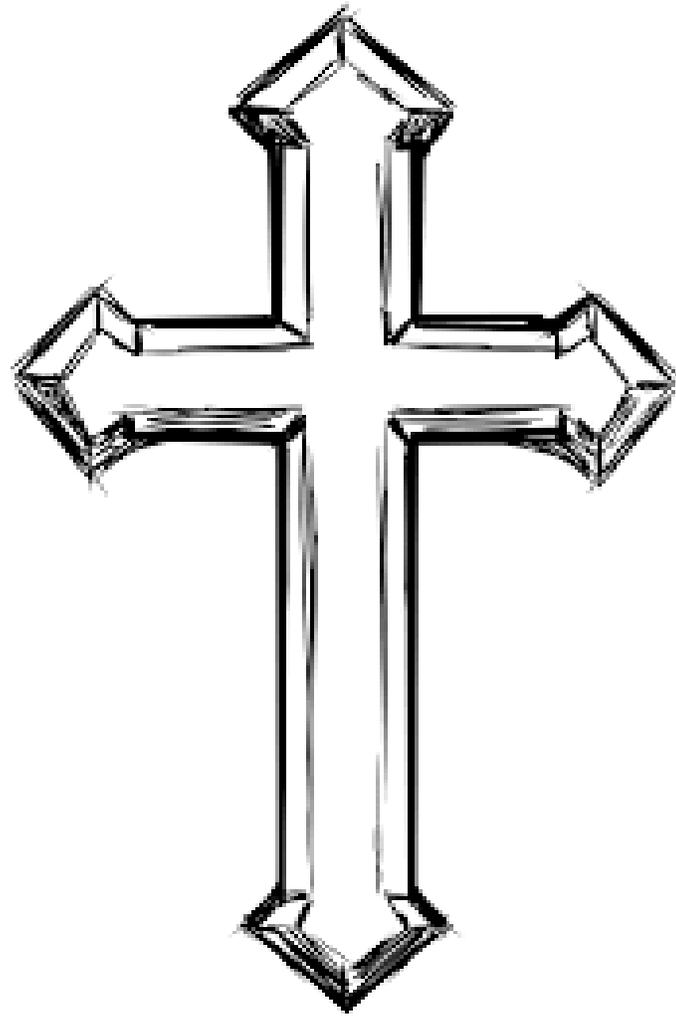
Catholic Funeral Planning

Frequently Asked Questions



#Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Lafayette, IN



Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Parish Office

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Catholic Funeral Planning Frequently Asked Questions

“You have been taught that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus we were baptized into his death.” Romans 6:3

Introduction

Death is inevitable, but if we remain committed to Jesus Christ, it is simply a passing from this life to the eternal glory of being with the God who loves and claims each of us as His son and daughter. Sometimes, children do not fulfill their parents’ desire to have a funeral Mass because they did not know their wishes or were unaware of what is involved in planning a Catholic Funeral. The funeral Mass is important because it gives the family and other Catholics an opportunity to honor the deceased, pray for their soul, and mourn their passing.

This document provides answers to many of the frequently asked questions regarding Catholic Funeral Planning. It also gives a short overview of the *Order of Catholic Funerals*. If you have further questions or concerns please contact the St. Mary Cathedral Parish Office at stmparish@lcss.org or 765-742-4440.

As Death Approaches

1. When should the priest be notified?

The preference is always to contact the priest before death, so that the priest can provide the Sacrament of Anointing while the person is still alive. If this is not possible, then the priest should be notified of a death as soon as possible. The priest can then gather with the family and pray for the repose of the soul of the newly deceased.

2. May a person donate organs?

The donation of one's organs or body is commendable. In these instances, the proper disposition of the body is to be done according to accepted practices.

3. How do we plan a funeral?

Family and friends may and should actively participate in planning a funeral. This planning can aid in the grieving process. We will work with you and your funeral director to schedule the funeral, based on the availability of our facilities and clergy. It is our policy that funerals take precedence of most other activities. Contact the Parish Office to schedule a time to meet.

4. May I preplan a funeral?

Yes, people may preplan their Funeral Liturgy and make their wishes clear ahead of time, the same way they do with a funeral home. You may contact the Parish Office to schedule an appointment with a priest to help with preplanning.

Practical Concerns

1. Should we contact the funeral director before contacting the parish?

Not necessarily, when the deceased is transferred to a funeral home, the funeral director will contact the parish to discuss funeral options. The standard procedure for a funeral at the Cathedral is that the funeral director work with the Cathedral parish staff to set up the details of the visitation, funeral Mass or liturgy, luncheon and interment. Funeral directors are very helpful to the parish in that they arrange for the times of the events, assist in setting up for the visitation if it is held at the Cathedral, and help the family in coordinating the funeral meal and the interment.

2. May the deceased be cremated?

The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.

3. When is the appropriate time for the family to share memories of the deceased?

The Vigil and the visitation are the appropriate times for family and friends to share stories and remembrances of the deceased.

4. Who will help choose the readings and music for the Funeral Mass?

The priest or parish staff will assist you in choosing the readings and music for the Funeral Mass. Please contact the Parish Office to schedule an appointment or ask the funeral director to schedule it for you.

5.Are there fees associated with a Catholic Funeral?

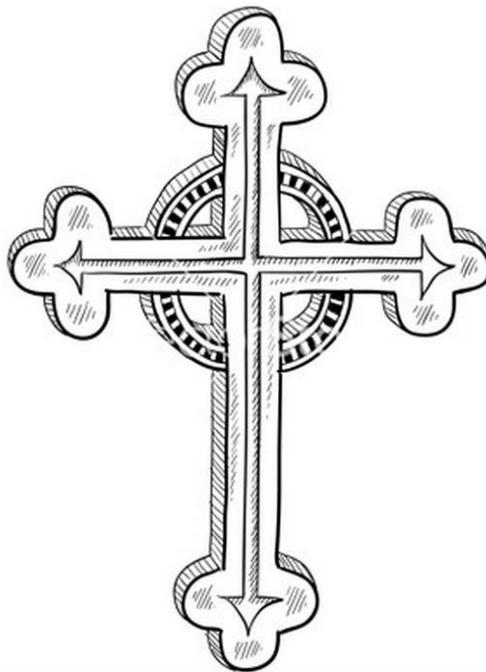
There is never a cost associated with the funeral. A voluntary donation may be made to the parish and the musicians. A stipend may also be given to the priest or deacon. Such a donation / stipend is at the will of the family and never required. All stipends and fees for the clergy, musicians, and funeral meal are determined by the funeral home / director.

6.May we hold the visitation / wake at the Church?

Depending what events have been scheduled at the Cathedral, the visitation / wake may be held there. Consult the Parish Office about this possibility.

7.Is it customary to hold a meal after the funeral?

Many families host a meal immediately following the funeral rites. Check with the Parish Office to inquire if the Altar and Rosary Society is available to prepare and serve the funeral meal.



Funeral

1. May we have a Catholic funeral for our unbaptized child?

Permission is given to have funeral rites in the church for an unbaptized child if the parents are known to have intended baptism.

2. May we have a Catholic funeral for a baptized non-Catholic?

Permission is given to have funeral rites in church for a baptized non-Catholic for a good cause provided it is not clearly against the wishes of the deceased.

3. May Catholics who have been divorced and remarried outside the Church or who have committed suicide be buried with a Catholic ceremony?

Yes, these circumstances themselves do not exclude the possibility of a Catholic burial.

4. May we have the funeral Mass at the funeral home?

Funeral Masses are to be celebrated at the Cathedral Church only.

5. What is the difference between a Funeral Mass and a Memorial Mass?

A Funeral Mass is celebrated with the body of the deceased present and a Memorial Mass is celebrated without the body present.

6. Which Church is most appropriate for the Funeral Mass?

The home parish church of the deceased is the most appropriate church for the Funeral Mass. However, in certain circumstances it is possible to celebrate the Mass at the home parish of relatives.

7. Who will lead the funeral rites?

The priest or deacon will usually conduct the various services including the Vigil, Funeral Liturgy, and Rite of Committal. A lay person may conduct the Vigil and Rite of Committal.

8. How can we make the Funeral Mass more personal?

In planning the Funeral Mass, the wishes of the family and the final wishes of the deceased should be respected. Personalizing the Funeral Mass will include: selecting the readings; selecting appropriate music; and choosing friends and relatives to serve as liturgical ministers. Please contact the Parish Office to meet with the priest, coordinator of music, and sacristan.

9. Who may give the homily at the Funeral Mass?

A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the Gospel reading at the Funeral Mass and may also be given after the readings at the vigil service by the priest or deacon but there is never to be a eulogy.

10. When may a eulogy or eulogies be given during the funeral rites?

A family member or friend of the deceased may speak in remembrance of the deceased during the Vigil for the deceased and may be included after the prayers of intercession and before the final blessing.

11. Are there any times during the Liturgical Year that a Funeral Mass may not be celebrated?

Yes, a Funeral Mass may be celebrated any day except: Solemnities that are holy days of obligation; the Easter Triduum; and Sundays. The funeral director will contact the Rector of the Cathedral to check on the dates and times that are available.

12. If a Funeral Mass is not celebrated for pastoral reason what other options are there for a funeral liturgy?

Various reasons may lead a priest to decide to celebrate a funeral without a Mass. A Vigil Service and Rite of Committal may be held. The family always has the option to celebrate a funeral Mass later.

13. May the American flag remain on the coffin during the Funeral Mass?

No, any flag or organization insignia should be removed from the coffin when the body is received at Church. It may be replaced once the coffin is removed from Church.

14. May non-Catholic family members participate in the Funeral Mass as a liturgical minister?

Family members can serve as readers, ushers, pall bearers, musicians or cantors, gift bearers, and as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Non-Catholic family members may serve in all those roles except the role of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, readers, or cantor of the Psalm.

15. May non-Catholic family members and friends receive Holy Communion at the Funeral Mass?

No, as with any other Catholic Mass, all non-Catholics are welcome to attend and pray with the community. However, because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of that oneness of faith, life and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion.

16. Is it permissible to use secular music or favorite musical selections during the Funeral Mass?

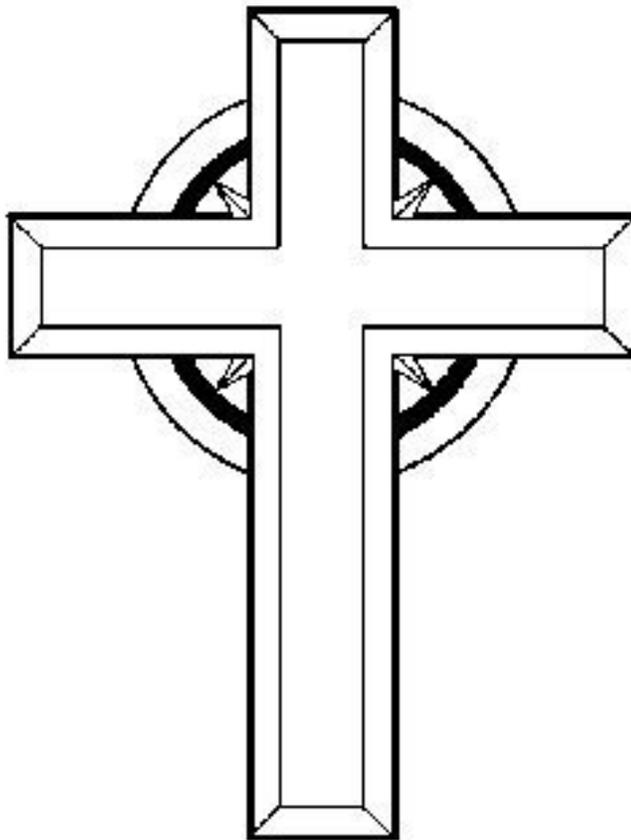
No, according to the *Order of Christian Funerals* “music at funerals should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christians’ share in that victory.” Songs and music are to be chosen with the Scripture readings for the liturgy in mind. Because of this secular music is not appropriate at a funeral liturgy.

17. May musicians from other churches be used for the funeral liturgy?

Because music has such a dignified place within the liturgies, at the Cathedral we presume that our musicians and cantors will be assisting at each funeral. However, with prior permission other musicians may participate.

18. Must the body of the deceased who has chosen to be cremated be present at the Funeral Liturgy?

Funeral rites stress the fact that the Church prefers and strongly encourages that the body be present for both the Vigil Service and the Funeral Mass. Cremation may take place after the Funeral Mass with interment or burial scheduled at a later date.



At the Cemetery

1. Must a Catholic be buried at a Catholic cemetery?

Normally Catholics are buried at a Catholic cemetery, however, a Catholic may be buried in another cemetery according to circumstances.

2. May non-Catholics be buried at a Catholic cemetery?

Yes, non-Catholics may be buried in a Catholic cemetery with Catholic family members, relatives, or friends.

3. May we have a 'green' burial?

A 'green' burial is consistent with Catholic beliefs. Catholics are able to participate in all of the traditional funeral rites without embalming provided there is careful planning by the family and cooperation from the local funeral director.

4. If the deceased has chosen to be cremated how should the ashes or cremains be disposed?

The Church stresses the need to inter or properly bury the ashes of the deceased in keeping with our Christian tradition and practice. It is not appropriate to scatter the ashes or divide the ashes in any way nor should the ashes of the deceased be kept at home. Ashes must be placed in a grave or niche in a columbarium.

5. What type of container is appropriate for the ashes or cremains?

The ashes should be placed in a worthy container such as a classic funeral urn. Keeping ashes in pieces of jewelry, statuary, or other objects are unacceptable.

6. May the ashes be mixed with cremated remains of other individuals, pets, or objects?

No, this practice is not acceptable.

In the Months to Come

1. What are good ways to memorialize the deceased?

There are a number of ways to memorialize the deceased. Traditional ways include having a Mass offered for the deceased or giving something to the parish memorial / endowment fund. An offering for the poor or another worthy cause in memory of the deceased is also appropriate.

2. How can we arrange Masses for the deceased?

Praying for the deceased is an important act of faith. Simply contact the parish office and request a Mass be offered for the deceased or go to the Cathedral website: saintmarycathedral.org and fill out the form. A suggested donation of \$10 is generally made to cover the Mass.

3. May bequests be made to benefit a parish in memory of the deceased?

Because of their commitment to a parish, many people choose to request donations be made to the parish in memory of the deceased. Some individuals even choose to name the Cathedral with a bequest in their will. Funeral homes will provide cards for monetary donations. The family should send acknowledgment for donations or Masses said for the deceased. The parish office will assist the family in scheduling the Masses and determining how the memorial funds are used.

4. How can we find bereavement support in our area?

The Cathedral has a bereavement ministry that actively assists in planning funerals and providing support in the months following a death. Please contact the Parish Office if the Bereavement Committee has not contacted you.

Information on the Order of Christian Funerals

Vigil

The vigil is a time to pray for the soul of the faithful departed and all the other souls of the family members. The vigil is held either at the funeral home or in parish church. The Church provides a Liturgy of the Word for comfort of family and friends. It is also traditional to have a priest, deacon, nun, family member or friend lead the mourners in the Rosary. Depending on the family's wishes, the vigil can be held for one or two days.

“At the vigil, the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence. It is the first occasion among the funeral rites for the solemn reading of the Word of God. In this time of loss, the family and community turn to God's word as the source of faith and hope, as light and life in the face of darkness and death.”

Order of Christian Funerals, #56

Funeral Liturgy

The Mass of Christian Burial with the presence of the body of the deceased in the church provides the full meaning of the Eucharistic sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The family is reminded that this individual who was baptized in Christ, and nourished at the altar, still lives on, and shares in the hope of the Resurrection of the body.

The Memorial Mass for the Dead takes place without the presence of the body. A Memorial service of prayers is another option with the Liturgy of the Word, although the Church most highly encourages the Eucharistic celebration.

“At the funeral liturgy, the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ’s victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God’s tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery. Through the Holy Spirit, the community is joined together in faith as one Body in Christ to reaffirm in sign and symbol, word and gesture, that each believer through baptism shares in Christ’s death and resurrection and can look to the day when all the elect will be raised up and united in the kingdom of light and peace.”

Order of Christian Funerals, #129

Rite of Committal

The Church asks that the burial of the body take place after the Funeral, preferably in the sacred ground of a Catholic cemetery. Catholic cemeteries call to mind our faith in the Risen Christ as the faithful wait together in joyful hope for the resurrection of their bodies. At the graveside, the priest or deacon leads a service of prayers, blessing the grave and praying for the soul of the deceased and all the other souls buried in the cemetery.

“The rite (of committal) marks the separation in this life of the mourners from the deceased, and through it the community assists them as they complete their care for the deceased and lay the body to rest. The act of committal is a stark and powerful expression of this separation. When carried out in the midst of the community of faith, the committal can help the mourners to face the end of one relationship with the deceased and to begin a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude and the hope of resurrection and reunion.”

Order of Christian Funerals, #213