



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
CATHOLIC CHURCH

Funeral Policy for Nativity of Our Lord during COVID-19 Safer-At-Home Order

May 2020

For Christians, gathering to mourn the dead, celebrate their life and proclaim the hope of Resurrection are essential practices of our faith. During the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID19 outbreak, our usual mourning rituals have been interrupted. We think of those women on that first Easter, who went to follow their familiar mourning ritual to anoint Jesus's body, to find it disrupted. We remember their initial shock and confusion and feel it too. We're waiting to feel the hope of resurrection. In times of trial like the death of a loved one, we turn to the familiar practices and rituals of our faith and ancestors. And so we know that this disruption for a grieving community is doubly hard. We grieve this disruption with you.

During the COVID19 outbreak, on March 13, 2020 Minnesota's Governor Tim Walz declared a State of Emergency and then limited gatherings to no more than ten people. The Centers for Disease Control has recommended no gatherings larger than ten people with at least six feet in social distancing.

While we are committed to serving your family during this time of grief, we also will be following the guidelines of our local authorities as well as the guidance of the CDC, other medical professionals and the Archdiocese during this unprecedented time. We will be updating our policy based on their guidelines.

When a loved one dies, we ask that you contact the funeral home of your choice at an appropriate time for your family. They generally notify us of your loved ones death but also feel free to contact us at the parish office, (651) 696-5401. The funeral home will set up a time to meet with you in to begin the funeral planning of your loved ones. During that meeting, they will contact Nativity about the availability of dates and times for the funeral mass and confirm that and if hospitality for a luncheon is available. Nativity staff will contact your family about setting a time to plan your loved ones mass to choose Scripture, music, mass program details, etc. This can be done in person with appropriate measures or by a virtual meeting. We recognize that it can feel overwhelming to plan your loved ones funeral but we along with the funeral directors are here to assist you.

Until the restrictions for faith communities are lifted in Minnesota, we will be limited in our funeral practices in the following ways:

Viewing/Wake:

Unfortunately at this time we are unable to accommodate a traditional wake due to the health considerations of others and logistics. However, a gathering of less than 10 people with social distancing would be permitted before the liturgy began.

Funeral:

We are able to host a funeral liturgy with a total of ten people in the church, including the priest and funeral director. We can provide adequate spacing for members from different households.

We would work with the funeral home to provide a live stream and recording of the service. We will require a funeral director to be present for the funeral service.

Parish Funeral Lunch:

For a variety of reasons we are not able to host a meal at the time.

Graveside services:

We are able to be present for a graveside service outdoors. Again this would require that all ten people practice social distancing of six feet between one another from different households. The funeral home staff may be able live stream it.

Graveside at one of The Catholic Cemeteries

For your protection as well as funeral directors and cemetery staff, it is necessary to ask that everyone who visits Resurrection, Gethsemane, St. Mary's, St. Anthony's or Calvary Cemetery follow these rules:

- We strongly recommend and ask anyone with underlying COVID-19 health symptoms NOT to attend burial services.
- Graveside burial services may be attended by immediate family members; however, only ten persons will be allowed at the graveside.
- While on Cemetery grounds, we ask all attendees and staff to observe proper social distancing, always maintaining six feet between each other.
- Because we have limited field staff, most of the full body burials will have set ups at the roadside, as close to where the actual burial will take place as we can get. The body or cremated remains will be carried from the funeral coach to where the grave liner is located and placed on top of it. Those gathering may remain in their cars or may stand in the area, limited to ten individuals, maintaining a six feet distancing from each other. Prayers will be done at this site and lowering of the body into the grave will not occur until all family members have returned to their cars. Families can remain in their cars if they wish to see the body placed in the grave.

Your options may vary depending on the cemetery you are using for burial.

Please feel free to contact Nativity's Pastoral Care Coordinator, Nancy Shatek-Suek, with any questions or concerns. She is available at (651) 696-5444 or nshatek-suek@nativity-mn.org.

Be assured of our prayers and support during this time of grief.

The Lord bless you and keep you!

The Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!

The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace! Num 6:24-26