

Cathedral of Saint Peter the Apostle Funeral Guidelines

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26)

The Cathedral staff offer their sincere condolences on the passing of your loved one. May God give you the grace you need as you prepare to say farewell.

The Cathedral Rector and the pastoral staff will meet with family members to assist them in planning for the funeral Liturgy [and/or wake service] of their loved one. Planning includes assistance with choosing readings, music, and as well as assistance with logistics for the funeral Mass. The Cathedral Bereavement Committee offers hospitality of a light meal following the service or it can be delivered to their home.

WHO CAN BE BURIED WITH A FUNERAL MASS

The Cathedral parish celebrates funeral services for current or former Cathedral parishioners and their relatives. The rector will make a determination about other requests having no Cathedral parish connection. Catholic burial, including the funeral Mass, is permitted for a baptized non-Catholic who might reasonably be presumed to desire or prefer Catholic burial services. Such a decision would be appropriate where the non-Catholic party worshiped regularly at the Catholic Church or identified with the Catholic Church more than any other. It would not be appropriate if the deceased were an active member of a non-Catholic Christian Church, except in cases where the minister of the deceased was unavailable. (Canon 1183.3) There is no cost for the use of the Cathedral but a family may wish to make a donation in memory of a loved one to the parish.

FUNERAL TIMES

Depending on the availability of the Cathedral, the Mass of Christian burial is celebrated either 10:00 am or 2:00 pm. Please be advised that everyday mass is celebrated at 12:05 p.m. Procession to the cemetery and burial usually follows the Mass.

A VIGIL OR WAKE SERVICE

A vigil service of prayer and scripture at the wake is optional. The Cathedral Rector leads the wake service. This service should be held at the funeral home.

VIEWING THE BODY

This practice is highly encouraged, because it helps remove doubts that the loved one has truly died. The body should also be viewed at the funeral home. During the Mass of Christian Burial the casket is closed. If visitation should be desired at the church before mass it is held at the Cathedral Parish Center in order to maintain the reverence and prayerful atmosphere of the Cathedral.

CREMATION

If the deceased is to be cremated, it is permissible to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial with the cremated remains present. Church law requires the cremated remains be laid to rest in consecrated ground, either buried or kept in a mausoleum.

FLOWERS

Flowers are permitted in the foyer of the Cathedral. Cathedral parish staff will direct the placement of the flowers. Please be sure to remove, after Mass, only the flowers brought in. The Cathedral parish welcomes donations of flower arrangements should the family wish it.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA

Memorial displays are encouraged at the wake at the funeral home or in the Cathedral Parish Center during the visitation.

CELEBRATING THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Liturgical signs and symbols affirm our Christian belief during the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial. The Easter candle reminds us of Christ's presence among the Christian community, His victory over sin and death, and our share in the victory by virtue of our baptism. The casket is sprinkled with holy water reminding us of the saving waters of baptism. The funeral pall reminds us of the white garment worn at baptism when we were born into eternal life. Incense is used during funerals as a sign of honoring the body of the deceased and is a symbol of our prayers rising to heaven before God.

MUSIC

Because the Mass is a public act of worship of the church, the Cathedral parish is ultimately responsible for the music in the liturgy. Hymns should reflect the idea of resurrection and hope. The Cathedral parish music director will help you choose music and the cantor that would be appropriate for the funeral Mass.

READINGS

The Cathedral staff can assist in the selection of scripture readings. One reading from the Old Testament, one from the epistles, and a gospel reading. Non-scriptural readings are not permitted at Mass. Family members are encouraged to proclaim the readings at the funeral Mass. If it is too difficult for them to proclaim the readings, the Cathedral parish will provide a reader/lector for the funeral.

PALL AND CANDLE

The casket itself, though a center of reverence, is not the focus of attention at the Mass of Christian Burial. Rather, the focus is our hope of sharing eternal life and resurrection, promised at Baptism. During the entrance blessing, the casket is covered with a white cloth, a pall, as a reminder of the white garment used at Baptism. The Easter Candle, another symbol of Baptism will stand ahead of the casket. Usually it is immediate family members who place the funeral pall on the casket. The American flag, a symbol of military service, never covers the casket in church during the Mass.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The order of entrance is as follows: Servers, presider, casket, pallbearers, followed by the family (if not already seated). The same order is used as we leave the Church.

HOMILY

The homily is the sermon given by the priest or deacon after the gospel. It is meant to be a reflection on Christian life, death, and resurrection. This is not the time for a eulogy on the life of the deceased. Only an ordained priest or deacon is allowed to preach the homily at the funeral liturgy. Other persons may speak briefly at the wake service. A eulogy is never appropriate where a homily is prescribed (Order of Christian Funerals #27), but examples from the person's life may be used in the homily. The eulogy therefore is NOT part of the Mass of Christian burial. Eulogies that recounts the life of the deceased by family members or friends are encouraged and most appropriate at the wake service and at the cemetery/graveside or at the luncheon following the funeral. Some families use the wake service for a time of memories for the deceased with an open podium.

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

Members of the immediate family are encouraged to bring the gifts forward as a symbolic way of offering their loved one to God. We encourage Catholics to receive communion under both species. If you have family members who are commissioned Eucharistic Ministers, (even from another parish) they are permitted to assist. Otherwise, the Cathedral parish will provide Eucharistic Ministers.

DEATH RECORD

The funeral home should provide a record of the deceased including name, age, date of death, next of kin and addresses, date of funeral, minister, place of internment or cremation and who has possession of the cremains. This information should be mailed to: Cathedral Saint Peter, P. O. Box 57, Jackson, MS 39205