

When you're thinking about a Catholic funeral, it's so important that you know some of the Catholic practices generally observed in the United States and Canada.

Oftentimes what we find is that lots of our Catholic brothers and sisters have been away from the church and they are not familiar with what's allowed and what is not allowed.

Cremation is allowed for Catholics, but scattering of the ashes on a favorite plot of land or a peaceful lake or sea is not. The church wants the ashes to remain intact and be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum.

Some families would like to have a Roger Whittaker song or secular music played during the funeral Mass. However, during the liturgical celebration of the Mass, only liturgical music which proclaims Christian hope and resurrection is allowed to be played.

Some families want a eulogy at the end of the Mass in the Church. The Church discourages a eulogy at the end of the Mass for various reasons. The celebration of the Mass is the peak moment in the funeral liturgy. During the funeral Mass, the grieving family is comforted by our Christian hope that their loved one is in the Lord's powerful hands. The Church believes that the peak moment of hope and faith experienced at the funeral Mass is distracted by a eulogy at the end of the Mass.

So a eulogy could be done at a different time, perhaps in the funeral home during the wake service, or before the Mass starts in the Church. Some parishes allow a short biography of the deceased person that would not exceed more than three minutes before the first reading during the Mass.

The Church discourages Catholic families from having funeral services in the funeral home, but it does happen sometimes and it usually happens due to the fact that the family has not been practicing their faith. However, when this does happen, what they have at the funeral home is not Mass, but a funeral liturgy which comprises a few prayers, scripture readings and a homily.