

VII. Celebrating a Life in Prayer & Ritual

Death is time for the ministry of consolation. The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides the moments and the means to express the

sadness of loss and the hope of faith.

The rituals are a journey... spiritual, physical and emotional... from the deathbed to the place of burial.

A priest, deacon or pastoral minister from the parish will help plan the funeral rites. These three major moments must be considered: The Vigil, The Mass of Christian Burial and The Committal Rite. [See our Catholic Cemeteries brochure

FROM GRIEF AND SORROW TO HOPE AND PEACE, a commentary on the *Order of Christian Funerals*.]

Most important and expressive is the Funeral Mass — the Mass of Christian Burial. It is a celebration of Christ's Resurrection; it is a Banquet of Eternal Life in the face and presence of death. By the Word of Scripture and the Sacrament of the Altar, the People of God are renewed in hope to continue living as Christ's followers. At the end of a person's life, the promises made in Baptism are recalled and called upon for the deceased and for the living.

The ritual uses all the senses, all the talents, all the capabilities of the human person. Active participation is the way of expressing hope in the resurrection...the living cannot capitulate to death. So the living express their hope and love...in the face of death.

A Funeral Mass cannot be celebrated on certain days of the church year, so be sure to check with your parish before scheduling a funeral mass.



The rituals of the Catholic Church offer a witness of faith, a comfort to the bereaved and a solidarity between the living and the dead.

The Vigil is held before the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal takes place at the cemetery afterward.

Planning for Order of Christian Funerals

I. Vigil

- Location of Vigil
- Time of Vigil
- Special preparations (collage, multi-media, etc.)
- Readings
 - *Scriptural*
 - *Non-Scriptural Readings, not for Liturgy of the Word*
- Music / favorite hymns and songs
- Special participants

Readers, Greeters, Musicians, Speaker in Remembrance (as permitted), Presider, Preacher, Other



II. *Funeral Mass*

- Location of Funeral Mass
- Time of Funeral Mass
- Special preparations
- Readings
 - *Scriptural, at least a New Testament & Gospel reading*
 - *Non-Scriptural Readings, not for Liturgy of the Word*
- Music / favorite hymns and songs
- Special features
- Special participants

Presider, Preacher, Readers, Greeters, Musicians (vocal / instrumental), Servers, Pallbearers, Bearers of Christian Symbols, Placers of pall on casket, Gift bearers of bread and wine, Eucharistic Ministers, Speaker in Remembrance (as permitted)

III. *Committal Rite at the Cemetery*



- Location of Committal Rite
- Time of Committal Rite
- Special preparations, such as sprinkling with dirt or other actions
- Leave-taking gestures or words, such as touching casket/urn or sprinkling with holy water