



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord!

As Catholics, we are a people of hope. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we know that death is not the end, but the doorway to eternal life. While it can be difficult to think about our own mortality, making preparations for our final journey is an act of faith, love, and stewardship.

This Catholic Funeral Planning Guide has been created to help you and your loved ones thoughtfully prepare for the day when the Lord calls you home. By taking time now to make known your wishes for your funeral liturgy, burial, and other important decisions, you offer a tremendous gift to those who will one day mourn your passing. Your preparation can ease the burden on family members during a time of grief and ensure that your funeral reflects both your faith and your hope in the promise of eternal life.

The Church's funeral rites are among the most beautiful expressions of our belief in Christ's victory over death. Through prayer, Scripture, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the support of your parish community, we commend our loved ones to the mercy of God and find comfort in the promise of the resurrection. Planning ahead allows you to thoughtfully select readings, music, and other elements that reflect your faith journey and witness to the hope that sustains us as disciples of Jesus. At the same time, you will bless those of us who remain by enabling us to lift you up to the Lord and intercede on your behalf.

I encourage you to use this guide not only as a practical resource, but also as an opportunity for prayer and reflection. Consider the legacy of faith you wish to leave to your family, friends, and parish community. May your preparations serve as a reminder that our true home is with God and that each day is a gift to be lived in faithful service to Him.

Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones. May the Lord bless you with peace, strengthen you in faith, and fill you with the hope that comes from knowing that, in Christ, death has been conquered and eternal life awaits. Know that I remain,

Sincerely in the Lord,

Most Reverend Shelton J. Fabre
Archbishop of Louisville

Guidance for Loved Ones

Catholic Funeral Rites Explained

The funeral rites evoke the soul's passage from this life to the next: "The funeral liturgy mirrors the journey of human life, the Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem" (Order of Christian Funerals, No. 42). **Along the funeral pilgrimage, there are three parts:** (1) the Vigil (wake) and its related rites and prayers; (2) the Funeral Liturgy: preferably the Funeral Mass or, if this is not possible, the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass, and (3) the Rite of Committal. Each of these rites emphasizes a particular dimension of the Church's prayer for the deceased.

The Order of Catholic Funeral Rites

Anointing of the Sick & Apostolic Pardon

Once a loved one has entered their final days, it is important to call a priest to administer the last sacraments of the Church.

Prayers after Death

These prayers, offered at the time of death or shortly thereafter, are led by a priest, deacon, or other minister of the Church. This rite usually takes place in a hospital, nursing home, hospice facility or home of the deceased.

Prayers in the Presence of the Body

These prayers are usually recited either privately or at the funeral home before the viewing of the body.

FUNERAL MASS PRE-PLANNING SHEET

Contact Information

Full Name for Worship Aid: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ City/State of Birth: _____

Funeral Home: _____ Cemetery: _____

Family Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Mass Details

Celebrant Preference: _____

Lector for First Reading: _____

Lector for Second Reading: _____

Reader for Petitions / Prayers of the Faithful: _____

Gift Bearers (1 to 3): _____

Servers: _____

Communion Ministers: _____

READING / SONG CHOICES: (See listings attached)

1st Reading: _____

2nd Reading: _____

Gathering Song: _____

Psalm: _____

Presentation of Gifts: _____

Communion: _____

Recessional: _____

FUNERAL MASS PRE-PLANNING

When planning a funeral, the family chooses the first and second readings. The priest celebrant typically chooses the Gospel.

First Reading - Old Testament - choices:

___ 2 Maccabees 12:43-46

___ Job 19:1, 23-27a

___ Wisdom 3:1-9

or short form: ___ Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

___ Wisdom 4:7-15

___ Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

___ Lamentations 3:17-26

___ Daniel 12:1-3

During the Easter Season, one of the following 4 readings from the New Testament is used instead of a passage from the Old Testament:

___ Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43

or short form: ___ Acts 10:34-36, 42-43

___ Revelation 14:13

___ Revelation 20:11-21:1

___ Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

Second Reading - New Testament - choices:

___ Romans 5:5-11

___ 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

___ Romans 5:17-21

___ Philippians 3:20-21

___ Romans 6:3-9

or short form: ___ Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

___ Romans 8:14-23

___ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

___ Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

___ 2 Timothy 2:8-13

___ Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

___ 1 John 3:1-2

___ 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

or short form: ___ 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

___ 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

___ 1 John 3:14-16

___ 1 Corinthians 4:14-5:1

FUNERAL MASS PRE-PLANNING

Recommended selections for music during the Funeral Mass:

Amazing Grace	Lord of All Hopefulness
Be Not Afraid	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Blest Are They	On Eagle's Wings
City of God	One Love Released
Eat This Bread	Parable
Eye Has Not Seen	Prayer of St. Francis
Gather the People	Shelter Me, O God
Gift of Finest Wheat	Softly and Tenderly
Go Forth	We Are Many Parts
Here I Am, Lord	We Walk By Faith
How Great Thou Art	We Will Rise Again
I Am the Bread of Life	We Remember
I Heard the Voice of Jesus	You Are Near
In Every Age	
Let There Be Peace on Earth	

Suggestions for Psalms:

Ps. 19 Lord, You Have the Words of Everlasting Life
Ps. 23 Shepherd Me, O God
Ps. 25 To You, O Lord, I Lift My Soul
Ps. 27 The Lord Is My Light and My Salvation