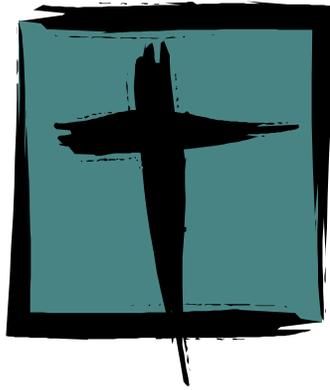


Preparing  
the  
Funeral  
Liturgy



**Saint Mary's Church  
Tipton, Iowa**

Church Office: 886-2506

## **THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS**

On behalf of all the parishioners of Saint Mary's Church, Tipton, we share in your sorrow. We extend to you our prayer and support. We also offer you the following guidance as your family helps to prepare the Church's liturgy for your loved one. The accompanying folder will be especially useful in selecting the scripture readings.

The rituals and prayers surrounding death are witness to the faith of the one who has died. They give comfort to the community of family, friends and associates who have surrounded the dead person during life. These rituals affirm and express solidarity between the living and the dead in the communion of saints.

Approach these rituals and prayers as one prayer, like a procession that moves from the home to the cemetery. Within this procession there are some moments that are marked as we assemble to pray around the body to the deceased. In the Order of Christian Funerals, which is the Catholic book of services for death and burial, these special moments are:

- **The Time of Vigiling or Wake Service**
- **The Funeral Liturgy**
- **The Burial**

## **+THE FUNERAL LITURGY+**

*The Order of Christian Funerals* describes the funeral liturgy:

*At the funeral liturgy the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery. Through the Holy Spirit the community is joined together in faith as one body in Christ to reaffirm in sign and symbol, word and gesture, that each believer through baptism shares in Christ's death and resurrection and can look to the day when all the elect will be raised up and united in the kingdom of light and peace.*

The Funeral Mass is the central moment in the procession from death to burial. It includes:

### **The Formal Reception of the Body**

The Church's minister, in the name of the whole community, greets the mourners. Then two gestures call to mind the Sacrament of Baptism: the sprinkling with Holy Water and covering the coffin with a pall. These rituals are reminders of the waters of Baptism in which the deceased person died to sin and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The pall is the same simple fabric for anyone being buried. It reminds us that all the baptized are brothers and sisters. The family and mourners are escorted to their places. A symbol of the Christian life, such as a Bible or a cross may be carried in the procession, and placed on the coffin in front of the altar. Then the assembly joins in song.

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

The first reading is usually from the Old Testament. The Responsorial Psalm is to be sung as at Sunday Mass, led by the cantor. The psalm is followed by a New Testament reading. The sung Gospel Acclamation prepares the assembly for the reading from the Gospel. A brief homily follows then all join in prayers of intercession.

From the list of scripture readings in the accompanying Notebook, you may wish to suggest one or several to read at the funeral. You may also note why you have chosen a specific reading. Write your selection on the planning sheet. Include the name/ names of those who will be reading the scriptures and the intercessions.

In the prayers of intercession, the Church prays for its own needs, for the needs of the world and especially for the poor. We also pray for the specific needs of the community that has gathered for this funeral. Include your special intentions for the intercessions on the planning sheet.

## **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

The Eucharist is celebrated with the bringing of bread and wine to the altar, the Eucharistic prayer and the communion rite.

A family member may also speak to the gathering after the communion prayer. This is an appropriate way to thank those who have prayed at the funeral Mass, to invite them to the funeral luncheon, etc.

## **Final Commendation**

This is the solemn farewell in which the community entrusts the deceased to the merciful embrace of God. The hymn *Song of Farewell* is always sung at this moment.

After the final commendation, the family and some members of the community usually go to the place of burial.

### **Flags**

If the deceased is a veteran the US flag may drape the casket before and after the funeral Mass. The flag is not used during the Mass.

### **Liturgical Ministries**

Various ministries are needed at every liturgy. Family members or friends may perform some of these ministries at funerals. They include:

- Two or more of the family placing the pall over the coffin;
- Reading the Old Testament and New Testament readings and the intercessions;
- Bringing the gifts of bread and wine to the altar;
- Altar servers;
- Ministers of the Eucharist, especially for ministering the Cup;
- A family member or friend speaking in remembrance of the deceased after Communion.

### **+THE COMMITTAL+**

The committal is the final ritual in the movement from death to burial. It is celebrated at the grave or wherever internment is to take place. The living commit the dead to the earth or tomb or fire, but in reality they commit the dead to the love of God to await the glory of the resurrection. There is a short scripture verse, the blessing of the grave, the lowering of the coffin into the vault, prayers of intercession, the Lord's Prayer, and final blessing.

**+LITURGICAL MUSIC**  
AND  
**PASTORAL MUSICIANS+**

**Congregational singing is indispensable for a Funeral Mass, just as it is for Sunday Mass.**

The parish music director chooses music that enhances the scripture readings and prayer. The music texts give us the hope to share in Jesus' death and resurrection. Favorite secular songs of the deceased are to be used at the Wake Service, since that is the time for the sharing of memories.

The acclamations at the Funeral Mass are the same as those sung on Sunday's (*Alleluia; Holy, Holy, Holy; Amen, etc.*)

You may wish to make suggestions for appropriate congregational songs for the Funeral Mass on the planning sheet. Following is a list of suggested music.

**Gathering and Closing Hymns:**

All Creatures of our God and King	Lord of All Hopefulness
Amazing Grace	Lord of the Dance
Be Not Afraid	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
City of God	Now Thank We All Our God
Crown Him with many Crowns	On Eagles Wings
For All the Saints	Praise to the Lord
Glory and Praise to Our God	Sing a New Song
Holy God We Praise Thy Name	The Strife is O'er
How Great Thou Art	There is a Balm in Gilead
Jesus Remember Me	Though the Mountains may Fall
Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee	To Jesus Christ our Sovereign King

**Responsorial Psalms:**

Psalm 23:           The Lord is my Shepherd  
Psalm 27:           The Lord is my Light and My Salvation  
Psalm 42/42:       Like a Deer that Longs for Running  
                          Streams, My Soul Longs for you,  
                          My God  
Psalm 63:           My Soul is Thirsting for You,  
                          O Lord my God  
Psalm 103:         The Lord is Kind and Merciful

**During the Presentation of Gifts/Reception of Communion:**

Blest Are They	One Bread, One Body
Gift of Finest Wheat	Prayer of Saint Francis
Hosea	Precious Lord
I am the Bread of Life	Seek Ye First
I have loved you	Taste and See
I heard the Voice of Jesus Say	There is a Balm in Gilead
Like a Shepherd	We have Been Told
Now we Remain	You are Mine
On Eagle's Wings	

**Solo Music:** Ave Maria      Panis Angelicus

