

## WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE (EULOGY)

The homily is the primary reflection of the funeral service, and pastors seek to engage the memories of those gathered. Words of remembrance may take place in the following order of preference:

- at the end of the vigil service, as indicated in the Order of Christian Funerals,
- before the Funeral Mass begins
- after the celebration of the Funeral Mass, if burial is delayed,
- following the prayers of committal at the cemetery,
- at the funeral luncheon.

These eulogies are not to be long and never to be accompanied by media (the pastor will help you with this). Generally, there is to be only one person who speaks, and this individual should be of upright reputation.

## FUNERAL LITURGIES WITHOUT MASS

After discerning with the family of a deceased that a serious reason exists, the pastor may decide to offer a funeral liturgy without the celebration of the Mass. The body should still be present for such a service. The funeral liturgy is generally celebrated at the parish church but may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, a funeral home, or a cemetery chapel. Even though a Funeral Mass may not be celebrated as part of the funeral rites in these situations, a Requiem Mass may be offered at another time for the repose of the soul of the deceased and for the spiritual well-being of the relatives, friends and faith community members. The choice of readings and music follow the same guidelines as those used when there is a Mass of Christian Burial.

## FUNERAL OFFERINGS

An offering to the parish for funeral services is customary and may be suggested according to the approved diocesan schedule for such offerings. Music ministry is also usually supported with a donation.

## RITE OF COMMITTAL

The service at the cemetery is the last farewell in which the Christian community honours one of its members before the body is buried or entombed. It is always desirable that the rite takes place at the open grave site or the columbarium.

## PLACE OF BURIAL

Whenever possible, those who were part of a Catholic community should be buried in a Catholic cemetery. Where no Catholic cemetery exists, interment in a place other than a Catholic cemetery is permitted, and the priest will bless the individual space and follow the usual ritual.

## "BUT NONE OF US GO TO CHURCH ANYMORE"

It is an act of selfless love to respect the identity of people. So, even if one dimension of a funeral is "for the living", a Catholic believes that funeral rites are primarily a duty of love to the dead person. We believe that praying for one another continues beyond death in the family of Christ. The greatest act of worship is the Holy Mass – to unite this worship with prayer for the deceased as they meet their Judge and Saviour is what is owed to them by their family and community. Pastors are always ready to walk with you in this loving duty.



**"IF WE HAVE BEEN UNITED WITH HIM IN A  
DEATH LIKE HIS, WE WILL CERTAINLY BE  
UNITED WITH HIM IN A RESURRECTION  
LIKE HIS."** Rom 6:3-5



# GUIDELINES FOR THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

IN THE DIOCESE OF  
SASKATOON

St. Paul presents the core of the Christian faith which the Church celebrates in the funeral rites of her children. Our Catholic pastors and their parishes are waiting to support you and your family as you face the reality of human death. We will lift up your beloved deceased in prayer to their Saviour and Judge, believing that, “though separated from the living, the dead are still at one with the community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession.” Our faith community understands the need of families overwhelmed by sorrow at the time of death.

The Church’s funeral rites have developed over two thousand years into richly meaningful services that Christians find so comforting. These prayers, gestures, songs, and – most of all the Eucharist - lift a grieving family from mourning into hope. More than mere words or sentiment the Holy Spirit of God makes the Risen Christ really present in these funeral rites – and it is into His arms that the Church commends dead persons.

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### **THERE IS A PATTERN TO THIS ANCIENT CELEBRATION:**

- A Vigil Service of Prayer: remembering, mourning, Christian sorrow,
- A Funeral Service of Prayer: uniting the dead person with the Sacrifice of Christ that destroys death, giving thanks for Jesus, the life of the deceased, and solemnly saying goodbye in prayer,
- An Interment Service of Prayer: respectfully bringing the earthly remains of the deceased to the place of rest to await the resurrection of the body and the community returning to share a meal in joy and memories).

***Here are some guidelines to help you prepare for these rites.***

## **MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL**

(Funeral Mass)

The Mass, namely the memorial sacrifice of Christ’s Death and Resurrection, is the foundation of a Catholic’s spiritual life, and so it is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral. In it, the Church on earth is united with the Church in heaven in one great prayer offering to God that Jesus commanded His people to celebrate. Unless there are very serious reasons, no baptized Catholic is to be deprived of the celebration of the Funeral Mass upon their death. The Funeral Mass is customarily celebrated on the day of burial in a church or approved sacred chapel, never in a funeral home.

Here are some things to note:

- The body of the deceased should be present in the church for the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial.
- You will receive a planning guide with readings from which to choose. All music ideally should come from a hymnal expressing the promise of the Resurrection. The use of non-religious music is discouraged. Such music is to be played or sung outside of the liturgy, such as at the lunch.

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### **THE VIGIL SERVICE**

While people grieve individually in ways that are not always visible, so they also need to mourn – to express their sadness and loss with a “togetherness” filled with empathy, compassion, and hope. This is the spirit of the wake or vigil services which the Church has prepared. Elements such as the praying of the Rosary after the service may be added. This service generally happens the evening preceding the funeral in the church, however, it may for pastoral reasons take place in a funeral home or the home of the deceased.

## **PLACE OF FUNERAL**

The funeral of a deceased member of the faithful should normally be celebrated in the church of the deceased’s parish, so the first thing to do is contact the parish priest.

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### **CREMATION AND CHRISTIAN FUNERALS**

Burial or entombment follows in the manner of Christ’s own burial has long been part of the Church’s ritual. Central to Christian Faith is our belief that our bodies, like that of Christ, will be raised to life on the Last Day. So, our funerals presume the presence of the body to express respect for the human body as a member of Christ’s Body and to witness to faith in the Resurrection of the body.

If cremation is to occur, cremation should take place after the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial. However, for pastoral reasons and in particular situations, the cremation may take place prior to the Funeral Mass. Your funeral home will arrange with the pastor to accompany the cremation process with special prayers.

Cremated remains are not simply ashes – they are the ashes of a body that Jesus promised will rise again. Our Church family accords all the respect to ashes treating them as we would a body in a casket. Cremated remains thus must never be scattered or divided. They are not to be mixed with any other remains. The ashes must never be incorporated into pendants or artisanal works. They should be placed in their entirety in a secure vessel and buried in a grave or inurned in a columbarium as soon as possible. As always, burial in a Catholic cemetery is preferred. Keeping cremated remains in family homes is not in keeping with Catholic respect for the deceased.