

Funeral Planning Guide



*If, then we have died with Christ,
we believe that we shall also live with him.
We know that Christ, raised from the dead,
dies no more; death no longer has power over him.*

Romans 6:8-9

St. Mary Church

Catholic Funeral Rites

"At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of Baptism and strengthened at the Eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end, nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting Word of God and the Sacrament of the Eucharist." (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 4)

From the St. Mary Church family, we extend our prayers and condolences to those who are grieving. It is an honor for us to assist you as you make funeral arrangements. Catholic funeral rites are intended to bring hope and consolation to the living through our belief that God has created each person for eternal life. We celebrate our belief that as the Son of God, Jesus Christ's death and resurrection have broken the chains of sin and death, and make eternal life possible for everyone. The funeral rites also emphasize the sacredness of the human body and the need to treat it with reverence, since all people have been created in the image and likeness of God. Cremains are always to be treated with the same reverence as the body of the deceased. Funerals with only the cremains present are allowed, but the church prefers that cremation occur after the funeral rites.

The Catholic funeral rite is divided into three parts, each with its own purpose. For this reason we encourage planning for all three parts: vigil service, funeral liturgy, and rite of committal.

Vigil Service

"At the vigil, the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence" (Order of Christian Funerals, no. 56). The Vigil Service usually takes place during the period of visitation at the funeral home. It is a time to remember the life of the deceased and to commend him/her to God. We ask God to console us in our grief and give us strength to support one another through our prayer together.

Funeral Liturgy

The funeral liturgy is the central liturgical celebration of our church community for the deceased. When a member dies, the Church encourages the celebration of the funeral liturgy at a Mass. When Mass cannot be celebrated, a funeral liturgy outside Mass can be celebrated at the church.

At the funeral liturgy, the Church community gathers together to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's mercy, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery. The funeral liturgy is an act of worship, and not just an expression of grief.

Rite of Committal

The Rite of Committal, the conclusion of the funeral rite, is the final act of our church community in caring for the body of our deceased member. It should normally be celebrated at the place of committal; beside the open grave or place of interment. In committing the body to its resting place, the we expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before us in faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection.

Old Testament Readings

1. Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have considered the task that God has appointed for the sons of men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without man's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

2. Wisdom 3:1-9 or 3:1-6, 9 [Shortened form omit selection in brackets]

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

[In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; They shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the LORD shall be their King forever.]

Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love:

Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

3. Wisdom 4:7-15

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age. He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported—Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul; For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the LORD, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account.

4. Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken. On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the LORD for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

4. Job 19:1, 23-27a

Job answered Bildad the Shuhite and said: Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever! But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him; And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed with longing.

Responsorial Psalms

1. Psalm 23

R/. Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.

God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. R/.

Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,
You lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,
My spirit shall sing the music of your Name. R/.

Though I should wander the valley for death,
I fear no evil, for you are at my side,
Your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. R/.

You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred,
crowning me with love beyond my power to hold. R/.

Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the hours of my God forever more. R/.

2. Psalm 27

R/. The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I be afraid, of whom should I be afraid?

The Lord is my light and my help; whom should I fear?
The Lord is the strong-hold of my life; before whom should I shrink? R/.

There is one thing I ask of the Lord; for this I long:
To live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. R/.

I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living;
Hope in him, and take heart. Hope in the Lord! R/.

3. Psalm 25

R/. To you, O Lord, I lift up, I lift up my soul, my God.

Your ways, O Lord, make known to me; teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, for you are my God, and for you I will wait. R/.

Good and upright is the Lord; he shows us the way.
He guides the meek to justice, he teaches the humble to follow his ways. R/.

Your way, O Lord, is kindness to those who are true.
Your friendship is with those who love you; you reveal to them your Word. R/.

4. Psalm 103

R/. The Lord is kind and merciful, the Lord is kind and merciful.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all my being bless his name;
Bless the Lord, and forget not his benefits. R/.

He pardons all your iniquities, and comforts your sorrows,
Redeems your life from destruction, and crowns you with his kindness. R/.

Merciful, merciful, and gracious is our God;
Slow to anger, abounding in kindness. R/.

New Testament Readings

1. Romans 5:5-11

Brothers and sisters: Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his Blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2. Romans 6:3-9 or 6:3-4, 8-9 [Shortened form omit selection in brackets]

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

[For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin.]

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

3. Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

Brothers and sisters: No one lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why then do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: *As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.* So then each of us shall give an accounting of himself to God.

4. 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Brothers and sisters: Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

New Testament Readings (Con't)

5. 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

Brothers and sisters: We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. We are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

6. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus, we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

7. 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Beloved: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David: such is my Gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

8. Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away." The One who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son."

Gospel Readings

1. Matthew 5:1-12a

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

2. Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus answered: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

3. Luke 12:35-40

Jesus said to his disciples: "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.

Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

4. Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53, 24:1-6a

It was about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, went to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus. After he had taken the Body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried.

At daybreak on the first day of the week the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the Body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised."

Gospel Readings (Con't)

5. John 6:37-40

Jesus said to the crowds: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

6. John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

7. John 14:1-6

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

8. John 17:24-26

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: "Father, those whom you gave me are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them."

Intercessions

Option 1

N. watched the coming of the seasons with their sowing and reaping. May he/she now present to God the good harvest of his/her life. We pray to the Lord.

For those who mourn the death of N. , that Christ may bless and comfort them in their sorrow. We pray to the Lord.

For all those gathered here today, so that while here on earth we may experience a taste of true happiness. We pray to the Lord.

For all who preceded N. in death, that they may enjoy the fullness of eternal life. We pray to the Lord.

For who cared for N. during his/her final days. We pray to the Lord.

For all those intentions we hold in the silence of our hearts. We pray to the Lord.

Option 2

N. found community and fellowship within his/her church. Grant him/her the joy of community and fellowship with the saints. We pray to the Lord.

N. devoted him/herself to making a home for those he/she loved. Give him/her a special place in your heavenly dwelling. We pray to the Lord.

That Christ, who himself knew the sorrow of death, may comfort those who mourn the loss of N., especially his/her family and friends. We pray to the Lord.

That all here present may have our faith in Christ and his Gospel renewed and deepened by our prayer and worship. We pray to the Lord.

That our deceased relatives and friends and all the faithful departed be brought into the light of God's eternal presence. We pray to the Lord.

Music

The music for the celebration of the funeral rites should be chosen with great care. The General Introduction to the *Order of Christian Funerals continues: The texts of the songs chosen...should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture. (Order of Christian Funerals, 30).*

Of course this is not an exhaustive list. We welcome the use of your loved one's favorite Christian songs and hymns. Please keep in mind that if the song should be sung by the assembly and it is not in our hymnal, a worship aide will need to be provided. Secular songs are best used during the Vigil service.

Amazing Grace #614	Lord of the Dance #322
Be Not Afraid #600	Morning Has Broken #778
Blest are They #759	On Eagle's Wings #606
Eat This Bread #505	Only a Shadow #615
Eye Has Not Seen #645	Prayer of St. Francis #679
Gift of Finest Wheat #487	Taste and See #511
Hail Mary, Gentle Woman #372	The Lord is My Light (Walker) #443
Here I Am, Lord #539	The Supper of the Lord #513
Hosea #411	We Will Rise Again #609
How Great Thou Art #694	You Are Mine #651
I Am the Bread of Life #493	You Are Near #610
I Know That My Redeemer Lives (Soper) #431	
Lead Me, Lord #760	

Final Commendation

Song of Farewell (to the tune of OLD HUNDREDTH)

1. Come to his/her aid, O saints of God; Come meet him/her angels of the Lord. Receive his/her soul, O holy ones; Present him/her now to God, Most High.
2. May Christ, who called you, take you home, And angels lead you to Abraham. Receive his/her soul, O holy ones; Present him/her now to God, Most High.
3. Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord. May light unending shine on him/her. Receive his/her soul, O holy ones; Present him/her now to God, Most High.
4. I know that my Redeemer lives; The last day I shall rise again. Receive his/her soul, O holy ones; Present him/her now to God, Most High.

O Loving God (to the Irish tune of *O Danny Boy*)

1. O loving God, we send your daughter/son home to you, home to a place of everlasting love, to join there with the angel choirs and blessed saints, and to be hold your glorious holy face.

Refrain: Receive her/his soul and let eternal light shine, eternal light forever on her/his soul, so she/he may be forever in your dwelling place, and be at rest in peace until we meet her/him there.

2. O loving God, have mercy and forgiveness upon your servant's now departed soul, and may your grace and love enfold her/him evermore, so she/he may dwell in paradise at last.

Refrain.