



St. Vital Catholic Church

Funeral Planning Considerations

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(.pdf file of this brochure is on the website)

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Life is Changed not Ended

The death of a loved one is one of the most difficult experiences in life. If you have recently experienced the death of a loved one, you may be overwhelmed with grief and the many decisions that need to be made. The St. Vital Church family wishes to support those who grieve, and to assist them in funeral planning by using the guidelines provided in the *Order of Christian Funerals*.

This brochure is intended to assist you in planning funeral rites and to make you aware of some of the decisions that need to be made. As Catholics, we believe that life is changed, not ended. We believe in the promise of eternal life and this gives us hope in times of sorrow. It is hoped, that as you plan the funeral rites, your choices will reflect these beliefs to offer comfort to all those that share your loss.

When someone dies, the funeral home of your choice should be contacted. You can then make an appointment to meet with the priest, or funeral planner, by phoning the parish office. If you have used this guide, bring it with you to aid the planning process. Together, with the parish representative, the times, and location(s) of the services will be determined, and you will plan the funeral rites for your loved one.

The Catholic Funeral Rites are composed of:

1. Funeral Prayer Vigil (recommended, but optional)
2. The Resurrection Mass
3. The Rite of Committal

or

1. Funeral Service
2. Rite of Committal



CHOICES TO BE MADE

1. **Date(s) and Time(s):** (to be determined in consultation **with the parish priest**)

Funeral Prayer Vigil (optional): _____ Funeral: _____

2. **Resurrection Mass or Funeral Service?**

_____ *Resurrection Mass*: This is a complete Mass with Holy Communion. The Eucharist is the “source and summit” in the faith life of Catholics, and it is our most significant act of worship. Prayers, music and readings focus on our belief in the resurrection.

_____ *Funeral Service*: The community gathers to share prayers, readings and music to offer comfort, and to pray for the deceased.

MORE CHOICES TO BE MADE

3. **Funeral Prayer Vigil (optional):** This is usually held at the funeral home or at the church. A deacon, priest or approved layperson may preside at this service generally held the evening before the funeral. This may be a time for more personal tributes (poems, music etc.). For this service, as outlined in the Order of Christian Funerals, you will need to choose capable people for these roles:

Cross Bearer: _____

Reader (Bible reading): _____

Reader(s) (Prayer of the Faithful): _____

Optional - Shared Memories/Eulogy: _____

4. **Funeral Mass/Service:** You may select family members and friends to perform some of the ministries, or you can ask the parish funeral planner to assist you in selecting parish members. Participation by capable family members is encouraged.

Placement of the funeral pall on the casket (1-4 people): _____

Cross Bearer (to lead the procession): _____

Optional - Placement of flowers on the casket: _____

Optional - Shared Memories/Eulogy: _____

Proclaimer (First Reading): _____

Psalm (may be sung by the music ministry or read): _____

Proclaimer (Second Reading): _____

Reader(s) (Prayer of the Faithful - Intercessory Prayers): _____

Urn Bearers or Pall Bearers: _____

OTHER (optional): If family members or friends are altar servers or Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, they may fulfill these roles during the funeral Mass.

5. Readings for the Prayer Vigil and the Funeral Mass/Funeral Service:

The *Order of Christian Funerals* has a selection of appropriate and faith-affirming readings. The scripture readings can be chosen with the guidance of the parish funeral planner.

**Note: If you wish, you may look at the Catholic Funeral Scriptures online:
http://fathergilles.net/GoodNews/Funeral_Rdgs_Ord_Time_Ref.pdf**

6. **Music:** The music chosen should be liturgical in nature. Often, this is accomplished by choosing songs from the hymnals or from the regular repertoire of St. Vital Church. This promotes congregational singing. If you wish to propose music that is not from a hymnal, the lyrics should be approved by the parish priest. The funeral planner can suggest musicians and singers to fulfill this ministry and to help with music selections.

Hymn Suggestions (optional): _____

OTHER INFORMATION

Shared Memories (Eulogy) Guidelines:

Note: Shared Memories are optional. If you choose someone to offer Shared Memories, this can be done at the Funeral Prayer Vigil and/or *before* the Funeral Mass.

1. Words of remembrance are shared to give some insight into the faith and values of the deceased person using a few examples from his/her life. It is not intended to be a complete biography. An option is to provide a printed biography.
2. Typically one person has this role, but two people may speak sharing the same presentation.
3. Ideally, Shared Memories should be about five minutes, with a maximum of ten minutes.
4. A copy of the Shared Memories should be given to the parish priest as soon as possible (to allow him time to review it).
5. This tribute should be appropriate and respectful. The church, as the venue for the service, sets a tone for any humour or stories.
6. It is an appropriate time to thank those in attendance and those that have offered prayers and support.

Funeral Lunch

St. Vital parish can provide a lunch following the funeral service which is usually served in our church hall. An estimated number of people is needed. There is a charge per person and it depends on what is served. You can choose dainties with coffee and tea, or a more substantial meal with buns, ham, cheese etc. An average funeral lunch serves 150 people.

Symbols used during Catholic Funeral Liturgies



Easter candle: The paschal candle reminds us of the light of Christ that is present in our world. It represents the Risen Jesus and it is often placed beside the coffin.

Holy water: Holy water reminds us of the saving waters of Baptism. It may be used as the rite of reception or at the final commendation.

Incense: Incense is used to honour the body of the deceased. It signifies the prayers of the people rising to God.

The pall: This is the white cloth placed over a coffin before the entrance procession. It is a reminder of a white baptismal garment. It is a way reaffirming that the deceased belongs to Christ. In Baptism, a new life is begun, just as in death, new life is found in Christ Jesus.