



The Celebration of the
Rite of Christian Funerals

Church of the Sacred Heart
2875 10th Avenue NE
Sauk Rapids, Minnesota 56379
(320) 251-8115

Fr. Ron Weyrens, Pastor
Maureen Otremba, Pastoral Associate
Beth Plumski, Co-Director of Music & Liturgy
Sarah Woeste, Co-Director of Music & Liturgy

Dear Family and Friends,

On behalf of our Faith Community we offer you our sincere condolences and prayers. We understand that right now you may feel confused, sad, stunned, even overwhelmed by your loss. The funeral rites of the Roman Catholic Church are meant to comfort your sorrow and provide hope for the future.

As an assembly of Christian believers, we are invited to focus our lives on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At the time of death of a Christian, the church community gathers to celebrate the Order of Christian Funerals (OCF) in order to:

- “offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just;” (OCF §5) to
- intercede on behalf of the deceased and “to commend the dead to God’s merciful love” and to plead for the forgiveness of their sins; (OCF §6) and to
- minister to the sorrowing and to console them “with the comforting Word of God and the sacrament of the Eucharist.”

The celebration of the Order of Christian Funerals is rooted in the Sunday Assembly. It is an action of the entire church in whose presence we celebrate the life of the deceased and pray for him/her as well as for all those who mourn his/her loss.

Because the Order of Christian Funerals is worship, it is, above all, congregational. And because it is congregational, every effort should be made to enable the assembly to participate in a full and active manner.

In light of this we have developed this funeral guide. Our intent is to ensure that the Order of Christian Funerals, which you ask to celebrate with us, be of the best theological, liturgical, and artistic quality worthy of your love for the deceased.

May God give you strength during this difficult time. The prayers of our faith community go with you.

General Principles and Procedures

1. The Church of the Sacred Heart will be available for the celebration of funerals every day of the week except Sunday and Holy Days, and providing that nothing else has been scheduled.
2. There are three aspects to the funeral rites according to the Catholic tradition:
 - I. The Vigil for the Deceased celebrated the evening before the funeral, usually in the funeral home
 - II. The Funeral Liturgy, either with or without a Mass celebrated in the parish church
 - III. The Rite of Committal which happens at the cemetery at the time of interment.
3. A meeting will be scheduled with the Pastor or Pastoral Associate to assist with the necessary decisions.
4. Cremation of the body is permitted by the Catholic Church, provided that the cremated remains are treated with as much respect as the body. Although not mandatory, it is preferred that the body be present for the funeral services and that cremation take place afterward.
5. Guest priests or deacons are welcome to preside. They will be asked to abide by the liturgical customs of the Church of the Sacred Heart.
6. The Church of the Sacred Heart will provide the following services:
 - The use of the church as well as the use of the Gathering Space if a reception is to be held. Staff to set up, serve, and clean up reception
 - Staff to assist in preparations, work with the liturgical ministers, and be present for the liturgy
 - Planning meeting with Pastor/Pastoral Associate to help you make decisions about the funeral
 - A worship aid to be used for the Vigil Service and the Funeral
 - A recording of the funeral Mass if requested by the family before the funeral
 - Sacred Heart musicians to provide music for the funeral
7. Sacred Heart musicians are used at the funeral. This will guarantee that the service goes smoothly as the presider, cantor, organist, and instrumentalists are used to working with each other in the specific demands of our space. It ensures a desirable continuity with the church's regular worship life and it protects Sacred Heart's mission of high quality liturgy. Family or friends of the deceased are welcome to sing an appropriate song during the funeral liturgy, but the repertoire must be approved by a Co-Director of Music & Liturgy. A Sacred Heart cantor and organist will still be present in addition to the guest soloist. A Co-Director of Music & Liturgy will assist the guest soloist at the liturgy.

8. The Resurrection Choir may be available for the funeral to lead the congregation in song. There is no charge for the Resurrection Choir. A list of fees for other musicians is available from the Pastor/Pastor Associate. A Co-Director of Music & Liturgy will be responsible for booking all musicians.
9. As a Faith Community we are called to pray for and bury the dead. Our only fees for parish members are for the musicians and the cost of the lunch. Some families do give a donation to the church and/or the priest in the range of \$75 to \$100. Such donations are a family choice and are not required or expected. Musician payments and donations are handled through the funeral home.
10. During the visitation and the reception it is recommended that a memorial table is set up with photos and mementos that capture the life of the deceased.

Liturgical Ministers

Pall Bearers

Family and friends are invited to escort the coffin or urn with the cremated remains in and out of the church as well as to the place of burial.

Lectors (Readers)

Members of the family or friends may be asked to proclaim the first and second reading as well as the intercessions. Although this may be a very meaningful experience for both the family and the reader it is good to remember the importance of the Word of God and the need for good readers. Be sure that the lectors have their reading in advance and advise them that they are to speak slowly and to project clearly.

Gift Bearers

At the Preparation of the Gifts and Altar several members of the family or friends may be asked to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

If any of the members of the family or friends are installed as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, particularly ones that belong to this community, they may be invited to assist with the distribution of communion.

The Order of Christian Funerals

In order to facilitate the preparation of the funeral liturgy we have carefully prepared this overview. It will take you through the different ritual segments of the liturgy and will give you basic guidelines by which to abide in order to ensure that the funeral will be of the highest liturgical, theological, and artistic quality.

Remember that the funeral is a liturgical celebration. Therefore, music is selected that promotes the full and active participation of the assembly and is sacred and liturgical in nature. Popular songs and secular music, no matter how meaningful they may be to you or your loved one, do not have a place in the liturgy. They may be appropriately sung during the visitation or at the reception. The only appropriate time for solos is during the Prelude, at the Preparation of the Gifts, or as a Communion Meditation.

The Pastor/Pastoral Associate or a Co-Director of Music & Liturgy will ask for music that is especially meaningful to the family or the deceased. This music will be incorporated into the Vigil and Funeral liturgies as appropriate. Other music will be carefully selected by the Co-Directors of Music & Liturgy.

Vigil Service

At the Vigil Service the Christian community keeps watch with the family. It is a time to share memories of the loved one, to pray for the deceased, and to offer support and prayers to the mourners. We encourage you to set out pictures and memorabilia of the loved one at the vigil.

Today vigils most often take place at the funeral home. In the past, vigils took place in the family home. We encourage you to consider having the vigil at the church, the faith home of your loved one.

Prayer flows throughout the vigil. A prayer may be given as the family gathers in the presence of the loved one prior to the arrival of the public. The priest, deacon, or lay presider will lead the prayer service. During the prayer service family and friends will be invited to share stories, memories, or sayings of the loved one. This is also the most appropriate time for a eulogy.

Funeral Ceremony

Prelude

As the family and friends gather for the funeral, the musicians will play a variety of prelude music to assist the people in their prayer.

Opening Rites

The coffin is closed with the family gathered around. The coffin/urn is sprinkled with Holy Water in remembrance of the baptism of the deceased. The coffin/urn is clad with the white pall as the deceased was clothed in white at the time of baptism. The family is invited to assist in placing the pall over the coffin. Symbols of the Christian faith may be placed on the coffin, including the Book of the Gospels or a cross. The coffin/urn is brought to the front of the church and placed before the Easter Candle, as a sign of the deceased's Passover from death into life. The family takes their seat in the front rows.

Opening Song

The opening song is sung as the procession begins.

First Reading

Please see the reading booklet for a list of First Readings. This reading should be proclaimed by a lector of your choice.

Responsorial Psalm

The Responsorial Psalm is a Psalm of your choice, sung, alternating between cantor and assembly. It is not appropriate to replace the Psalm with a solo. If you wish, a Co-Director of Music & Liturgy will choose the Responsorial Psalm. Appropriate Psalms include:

Ps. 23: Shepherd Me, O God

Ps. 25: To You, O Lord, I Lift My Soul

Ps. 27: In the Land of the Living

Ps. 27: The Lord is My Light and My Salvation

Ps. 63: My Soul is Thirsting for You, O Lord My God

Ps. 103: The Lord is Kind and Merciful

Ps. 116: I Will Take the Cup of Life

Ps. 143: O Lord, Hear My Prayer

Second Reading

Please see the reading booklet for a list of Second Readings. It should be proclaimed by a second lector of your choice.

Gospel Reading

Please see the reading booklet for a list of Gospel Readings. Either a priest or deacon will proclaim the Gospel.

Homily

The priest or deacon will give a homily based on the selected scripture readings and the life of the deceased. While aspects of the deceased's life may be included, the homily is not a eulogy.

Intercessions

We pray for our own needs and the needs of the whole world. These may be read by one of the lectors.

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

The gift bearers of your choice will bring the bread and wine to the altar. Instrumental music will be played.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen; and Lamb of God) will be the setting that is currently used at the Sunday liturgies, or chosen by a Co-Director of Music & Liturgy

Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion of your choice may assist in the distribution of communion.

Eulogies

Although eulogies are traditionally not a part of the funeral rites and are best done during the visitation, you may choose to have a eulogy at this time. It is of the greatest importance that the eulogy be limited to three minutes. Our preference is that remembrances be shared at the vigil service.

Song of Farewell

After the presider invites the people to pray, he incenses the body/cremated remains to honor the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. During this time a song of farewell is sung.

Procession to the Place of Committal

A song is sung as the assembly departs to the place of committal.

Rite of Committal

We come to the conclusion of the funeral rites. In committing the body to its resting place, the faith community expresses the hope that the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. During the Rite of Committal, an U.S. flag ceremony is possible for those who have served in the Armed Forces or in Community Service. We encourage the lowering/entombment of the casket/urn during the Rite of Committal. It is possible for the lowering or entombment to take place after the family and friends have left the grave site.