

Funeral Guidelines

The primary prayer the Church offers on behalf of a deceased person is the funeral liturgy. Thus, funerals should be conducted with reverence and solemnity, bearing in mind that the purpose of the funeral is to pray for the happy repose of the deceased's soul. With this in mind, there's some information that you should bear in mind when preparing for a funeral.

Choosing Music and Readings

As funeral planning can be emotional and taxing, St. Ann's endeavors to simplify this process as much as possible for your convenience. Generally speaking, families of the deceased choose some of the music and the readings for the funeral Mass (from the readings listed in the Rite of Christian Burial), which is done by completing the Funeral Arrangements Form found [here](#). As the music for funerals should fit the sacred and solemn nature of the funeral Mass, we have developed a beautiful repertoire of music from which to choose that is in keeping with St. Ann's musical traditions. Moreover, it is the policy at St. Ann that the parish will provide all necessary liturgical ministers for funerals so as not to impose upon any grieving friends or family members. To choose readings and music for a funeral, [click here](#).

Cremation vs. Bodily Burial

While the Catholic Church now allows for Catholics to be cremated, the Church does have a clear preference for bodily burial. If you are choosing to have your loved one cremated, the Church asks that the *body be present for the funeral and that the cremation take place afterwards*. This is because the body itself is the primary symbol of death in the funeral liturgy, and because the body clearly calls to mind the life and death of the deceased person.

Moreover, a person's cremated remains should be treated with the same reverence as their body, and therefore should be buried in the ground or interred in a columbarium. The Church's understanding of the sacredness of the human body precludes such practices as "scattering" ashes or keeping an urn with a loved one's ashes in the home for a prolonged period of time, so these practices are to be avoided.

Eulogies

Because eulogies are about remembering the life and accomplishments of the deceased, these are to be given at a wake or vigil service before a funeral. In fact, both the *Order of Christian Funerals* and the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* prohibit eulogies at funeral Masses, and thus we do not allow them at St. Ann. This is because the central focus of funeral Mass is the saving mystery of our Lord's death and resurrection. Thus, the funeral Mass is not truly a celebration of the life of the deceased, but rather a celebration of God's mercy and the gift of salvation.