



BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO MOURN

A GUIDELINE FOR THE
CELEBRATION OF THE
FUNERAL RITES

DIOCESE OF LANSING

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FOR FURTHER READING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE ROLE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY	2
Ministry to the Bereaved	
Preparing the Funeral Rites	
THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS: AN INTRODUCTION	3
OVERVIEW: THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS	4
VIGIL AND RELATED FUNERAL RITES	6
Prayers After Death	
Gathering in the Presence of the Body	
Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal	
Vigil Service	7
FUNERAL LITURGIES	10
Funeral Mass	
Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass	22
RITES OF COMMITTAL	23
Rite of Committal	
Rite of Committal with Final Commendation	
FUNERAL LITURGIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES	24
Funeral Rites for Children	
Vigil	
Funeral Liturgy	
Rite of Committal	
Texts	
CREMATION AND BURIAL	24
THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY	25
APPENDIX	
Preparation Sheets	27

INTRODUCTION

A Theology of Christian Death and the Resurrection

In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God created each person for eternal life and that Jesus... by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity... principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead and glorious ascension” (OCF 1, quoting the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 5) This mystery of the Lord’s death and resurrection is at the center of the Church’s worship, life, and mission.

Especially in word and sacrament, the Church makes this mystery present in the life of the faithful. Through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, women and men are initiated into this mystery. In the eucharistic sacrifice, the faith of the baptized is renewed and nourished.

At the death of a Christian, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because it is confident that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the word of God and the Eucharist.

Lest we forget, this is also a time of celebration. We offer praise and thanksgiving to God, the Author of Life, for the gift of a life that has now been returned to him. Through the funeral rites, especially the Funeral Mass, the community expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great Communion of Saints. It recognizes the spiritual bond that exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited and death will be no more.

The funeral rites give hope and consolation to the living and remind all who take part of God’s mercy, judgment, and his abiding love in times of crisis.



THE ROLE OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

The Ministry of Consolation

The ministry of consolation engages all members of the believing community who must heed the words of Christ: “Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be consoled” (Mt 5:3). Each shares this ministry according to their various gifts and offices in the Church.

The parish should offer annual catechetical sessions that instruct the faithful about the theology of death and resurrection, Catholic teaching on medical ethics, and the beauty of the Catholic funeral rites.

Moreover, parish staffs and/or bereavement teams should be skilled in ministry to those who mourn. Parishioners in the medical profession; those who have lost spouses, parents, or children; professional counselors; and those who are gifted with a keen sense of hospitality will be invaluable members of a Bereavement Team.

We are grateful for all you do with such genuine kindness. Even in small matters, you express our certain hope in the resurrection and you build up the Kingdom.

Preparing the Funeral Rites

When circumstances permit, the family and the dying person may want to meet with the parish priest, liturgist, and musician to prepare the funeral rites. The readings and prayers can offer great consolation and peace, just as they will to the mourners at the funeral liturgy.

Pastors, liturgists, and musicians should have resources on hand that will assist the family as they prepare the funeral rites. This will ease the burden of those who mourn. One should rarely assume that family members are well tutored in the finer points of liturgical preparation, repertoire, or parish policies. Carefully prepared aids will facilitate dialogue at these planning sessions.

You may copy the forms in the Appendix, pages 27-31. On these helpful forms you can record preparations for the Vigil Service, Funeral Liturgy, and Rite of Committal. For music suggestions, consult pages 19-21.

Persons who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, indeed, even healthy persons, may wish to read an important document published by the Michigan Catholic Conference, *Guidelines for End of Life Decisions: Patient, Physician, and Family* (517-372-9310 or www.micatholicconference.org). It allows the person and his/her family to discuss end-of-life issues, such as extraordinary means of perpetuating life or organ donation. Forms are included to record the patient's wishes and to appoint an advocate that would carry out the patient's wishes in the event that he/she is incapacitated.

Local Catholic cemeteries can assist families regarding burial plots or mausoleum spaces. For information, please call the diocesan Office of Cemeteries at 517-342-2524.

THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS: AN INTRODUCTION

At the time of a death, the Church is called to a ministry of consolation - to pray for the dead and to comfort those who mourn (OCF 8). In addition, the funeral and related rites offer an opportunity to instruct the faithful about the paschal character of death.

The revised rites reflect the ancient idea of “stations” or praying at various locales in a progressive format. Three such stations are evident in Part I of the Order of Christian Funerals - the vigil and related rites, the funeral liturgy, and committal. You will find prayers after death, a rite for gathering in the presence of the body, a rite for the reception of the body at the church, a scripture-based vigil service, a funeral liturgy within or outside of Mass, and rites of committal.

Part II recognizes the special pastoral needs of a family and community at the death of a child. A vigil, funeral liturgies, and rites of committal are provided.

Parts III and IV include a wealth of alternative prayers and readings, including the Office for the Dead for Morning and Evening Prayer.

When cremation must take place before the funeral liturgy, the presider may turn to a recent appendix to the OCF. It was approved by the U. S. bishops in November 1996, confirmed by Rome in July 1997, and made mandatory in the USA on November 2, 1997. OCF nos. 411-431 offers practical and pastoral notes on a funeral in the presence of cremated remains; nos. 432-438 provide prayers adapted for this circumstance.

About This Guideline

First, this guideline provides a simple outline of the Order of Christian Funerals. For your convenience, paragraph numbers are cited. Note carefully the wealth of pastoral circumstances that this liturgical book addresses. Then on the pages that follow, this guideline explores pastoral directives for each of these rites.

Like the OCF itself, it will refer to the funeral itself (within Mass or outside Mass) as the “funeral liturgy,” while other stational services will be referred to as “funeral rites” (editorial note, page ix).

*By means of the funeral rites it has been the practice of the Church
not simply to commend the dead to God but also to raise high the hope of its children
and to give witness to its own faith in the future resurrection of the baptized with Christ.
- Order of Christian Funerals, Decree of Promulgation, 8-15-69*

AN OVERVIEW: THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

General Introduction (1-49)

Part I: FUNERAL RITES (50)

Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers (51-53)

Vigil for the Deceased (54-81)

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Prayer of Intercession

Concluding Rite

Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church (82-97)

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Prayer of Intercession

Concluding Rite

Related Rites and Prayers (98-127)

Prayers After Death (101-108)

Gathering in the Presence of the Body (109-118)

Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal (119-127)

Funeral Liturgy (128-153)

Funeral Mass (154-176)

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Final Commendation

Procession to the Place of Committal

Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass (177-203)

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

Final Commendation

Procession to the Place of Committal

Rite of Committal (204-233)

Rite of Committal (216-223)

Invitation

Committal

Prayers over the People

Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (224-233)

Invitation

Invitation to Prayer

Prayer over the People

PART II: FUNERAL RITES FOR CHILDREN (234-242)

Vigil Service

Vigil for a Deceased Child (243-263)

Introductory Rites
Liturgy of the Word
Prayer of Intercession
Concluding Rite

Funeral Liturgy (264-275)

Funeral Mass (276-294)

Introductory Rites
Liturgy of the Word
Liturgy of the Eucharist
Final Commendation
Procession to the Place of Committal

Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass (295-315)

Introductory Rites
Liturgy of the Word
Final Commendation
Procession to the Place of Committal

Rite of Committal (316-342)

Rite of Committal (316-326)

Invitation
Committal
Prayer over the People

Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (327-336)

Invitation
Invitation to Prayer
Prayer over the People

Rite of Commendation for an Infant (337-342)

Part III: TEXTS OF SACRED SCRIPTURE (343-347)

Funerals for Adults
Funerals for Baptized Children
Funerals for Children Who Died Before Baptism
Antiphons and Psalms

Part IV: OFFICE FOR THE DEAD (348-395)

Morning Prayer
Evening Prayer

Part V: ADDITIONAL TEXTS (397-414)

Prayers and Texts in Particular Circumstances
Holy Communion Outside Mass
Appendix: Ordo Exsequiarum (1969)
Biblical Index for Order of Christian Funerals

Appendix: Funerals in the Presence of Cremated Remains (1997)

Introduction (411-437)
Optional Texts (432-438)

VIGIL AND RELATED FUNERAL RITES

PRAYERS AFTER DEATH (OCF 101-108, 398)

This rite may be used by the minister when he/she first meets with the family following death, whether this is in a hospital waiting room, in the home, or slightly later at the first pastoral visit of the minister. The presence of the minister and the calming effects of familiar prayers can comfort the mourners as they begin to face their loss. A minister unfamiliar with the deceased can learn a great deal on this occasion about the needs of the family and the life of the deceased.

Invitation to Prayer

Reading

Mt 18:19-20, John 11:21-24, Luke 20:35-38, or other

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Blessing

GATHERING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY (OCF 109-118)

This rite may be used/adapted when the family first gathers in the presence of the body, when the body is prepared for burial, or after it has been prepared. At this time the family faces their loss and the mystery of death. The rite may be adapted to cultural traditions and practices. The minister should be as attentive as possible to the particular needs of the mourners and should begin the rite at an opportune moment in, as much as possible, an atmosphere of calm and recollection.

Sign of the Cross

Scripture Verse

Sprinkling with Holy Water

Psalm

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Blessing

TRANSFER OF THE BODY TO THE CHURCH OR THE PLACE OF COMMITTAL (OCF 119-127)

This rite may be used with the family and close friends as they prepare to accompany the body of the deceased in the procession to the church or the place of committal. This procession is a time of initial separation of the mourners from the deceased and may be an occasion of great emotion. The minister and members of the community should be present.

Invitation

Scripture Verse

Litany

The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Invitation to the Procession

Procession to the Church or Place of Committal

VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED (OCF 54-97, 243-263)

At the vigil, the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in the abiding presence of Christ and his Spirit. In this time of grief, the family and community turn to God's word as the source of faith and hope (56).

The Vigil for the Deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy, or if there is no funeral liturgy, before the rite of committal. It may take the form of a Liturgy of the Word or some part of the Office for the Dead (54).

The "Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church" is celebrated in the church and begins with the reception of the body. If the reception of the body is celebrated apart from the Vigil or the funeral liturgy, the rite may be adapted or shortened.

The "Vigil for the Deceased" may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, in a chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy. Proper ministers include a priest, deacon, or lay person. A lay person may offer a reflection on the readings. If the Vigil is celebrated in a church, a priest or deacon should vest in an alb and stole (66).

Whenever possible, the family of the deceased should take part in the selection of texts and music and in the designation of liturgical ministers (65).

- Introductory Rites
 - Greeting
 - Opening Song
 - Invitation to Prayer
 - Opening Prayer

- Liturgy of the Word
 - First Reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Gospel
 - Homily

- Prayer of Intercession
 - Litany
 - The Lord's Prayer
 - Concluding Prayer

- Concluding Rite

Words of Remembrance

Mourners may be invited to offer eulogies or words of remembrance at a vigil service on the eve of the funeral. This is also an appropriate place and time for favorite secular tunes and for projecting/displaying photos.

The Rosary

Praying the rosary at the funeral home is a practice of long standing. Indeed, the rosary still enjoys a plenary indulgence for the deceased. However, this devotional practice should not compete with the official liturgical celebration of the Vigil for the Deceased. A rosary might be prayed during the days of visitation or during the visitation before the funeral.

The Office for the Dead

The Liturgy of the Hours allows us to “pray unceasingly” (1 Thess 5:17). At key hours of the day, we give praise to God and petition for his assistance. The Office of the Dead can be an invaluable source of prayer for those who mourn. It provides texts for the Office of Readings (usually recited in the early morning), Morning Prayer, Daytime Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer. These, too, might be used during a period of visitation, using the text appropriate to the time of day. The prayers are to be adapted in gender and number according to circumstances.

Music for Vigil Services

“Music is integral to any vigil, especially the vigil for the deceased ...well chosen music can touch the mourners ... at levels of human need that words alone often fail to reach” (68). An instrumentalist and cantor should be present to assist the participation of the faithful.

In planning the music, preference is to be given to the Opening Hymn and the Responsorial Psalm, though the Litany, Lord’s Prayer, and a closing song may also be sung. OCF states that “the opening song or entrance song should be a profound expression of belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the dead, as well as a prayer of intercession for the dead” (58.3).

Appropriate Opening Hymns might include:

Keep in Mind	various
I Know That My Redeemer Lives	various
Resucitó	various
At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing	various
Sing with All the Saints in Glory	various
Christ is Alive	various
Christ the Lord is Risen Today	various
Take Me Home	GIA (GC2)
We Shall Rise Again	GIA (GC2, GC1)
How Blest Are They	JS2
Yes, I Shall Arise	JS2
Lord, Receive Your Servant	WLP

“The Responsorial Psalm enables the community to respond in faith to the reading and express its grief and its praise of God” (60). The recommended psalm is Psalm 27. Various settings follow:

Proulx/Gelineau	W3, RS
Haas	RS, GC1, GC2, WLP
C. Johengen	RS, GC1
Isele	WLP
DeBruyn	JS2
Lourdes Montgomery	FyC
Alberto Taulé	FyC

The Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church has a slightly different format and different music suggestions. Here the body is greeted at the door of the church and sprinkled with holy water. The pall is then placed over the coffin and the procession begins with “a psalm, song, or responsory” (OCF 85). The Song of Farewell may also be used at the entrance procession. Familiar texts here include “Saints of God, Come to His/Her Aid” and “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” (see OCF 403.4)

The suggested Responsorial Psalm is Psalm 103, but others may be used. Settings of Psalm 103 include:

Haas	RS
Hurd/Gelineau	W3
Cotter	RS, GC1, GC2
Haugen	RS, GC1, GC2
Kolar (English & Spanish)	WLP
Jaime Cortez (English & Spanish)	JS2
Willcock	JS2
Dufford	JS2
Maria Matinez	FyC
Eleazar Cortés	FyC
José Luis Castillo	FyC

In a preeminent way, the assembly participates in liturgy through music. The use of recorded music should not replace the role of the assembly, cantor, and musicians. Songs of a secular nature should never be used at the Vigil or at the funeral liturgy.



THE FUNERAL LITURGY

At the funeral liturgy the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give thanks and praise to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery (OCF 129).

In sign and symbol, word and gesture, we reaffirm that each believer through baptism shares in Christ's death and resurrection and can look to the day when all the elect will be raised up and united in the kingdom of light and peace (ibid.)

The funeral liturgy is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community. It may take two forms -- the Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass.

THE FUNERAL MASS (OCF 128-176, 264-294)

The Funeral Mass includes the reception of the body, if this has not already occurred, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Final Commendation and Farewell. It may be followed by the procession to the place of committal.

Proper Times and Places

The Funeral Mass may not be celebrated on solemnities of obligation, on Holy Thursday during the day, during the Easter Triduum, nor on the Sundays of Lent, Advent, and the Easter Season. It should be scheduled at a time that permits as many members of the Christian community as possible to be present (OCF 150). The Funeral Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church.

The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may be celebrated on those days and in other circumstances when it is not possible to celebrate the Mass before the Committal, for example when a priest is not available or when for pastoral reasons, the priest and the family decide that the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass is a more suitable form of celebration, e.g. for a deceased child.

Mass Texts

The Mass texts are taken from the Sacramentary (Masses for the Dead) and from the Lectionary, nos. 1011-1016. Additional and complementary texts may be found in the Order of Christian Funerals, nos. 158-176, 276-294, 343-347, 397-404, and 432-438.

Worship Aid

To promote the full, conscious, and active participation of the assembly, the parish should provide a simple worship aid, personalized for each funeral liturgy. It should contain the complete outline of the Funeral Mass, responses and acclamations, and music (or at least references to hymnal numbers). If music is reprinted, copyright permissions should be secured.

Vesture

The liturgical color expresses Christian hope. In the United States, white, violet or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the dead (OCF 39, GIRM 346e).

The Reception at the Church

The rite of reception of the body has great significance. The church is the place where the community of faith assembles for worship, where the Christian life is begotten in baptism, where we are nourished in the Eucharist, and where the community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to the Father. The church is at once the symbol of the community and of the heavenly liturgy which all liturgical celebrations anticipate (131).

Through the use of various baptismal symbols, the community shows the reverence due the body and recalls the promise of salvation made to all who are washed in the waters of baptism and marked with the sign of faith (ibid).

Any national flags or insignia of associations are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church. They may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church (OCF 132).

The rite of reception takes place at the entrance to the church. It begins with the greeting of the family and others. The minister sprinkles the coffin with holy water in remembrance of the deceased initiation into the community of faith. A funeral pall, a reminder of the white garment of baptism, is then placed on the coffin by family, friends, or the minister. The entrance procession follows. The minister precedes the coffin and mourners into the church. If the Easter candle is used on this occasion, it may be placed beforehand near the position that the coffin will occupy at the conclusion of the procession (133).

Symbols of the Christian life, such as a crucifix or a Bible, may be carried in the procession by a family member, friend, or the minister, then placed on the coffin (134).

The procession should be accompanied by the singing of an entrance song (see page 21).

The usual Introductory Rites of the Mass are replaced by this rite. If the Rite of Reception has already taken place, the Funeral Mass begins in the usual way (136).

Liturgy of the Word

The reading of the word of God is an essential element of the funeral liturgy. The readings proclaim the paschal mystery, teach remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together in God's kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life. Above all, the readings tell of God's design for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own" (137).

Depending on pastoral circumstances, there may be either one or two readings before the gospel reading. When there are two, there should be a different reader for each. The biblical readings may not be replaced by non-biblical readings (23).

The responsorial psalm enables the community to respond in faith to the first reading. It should be sung. When not sung, it should be recited in a manner conducive to meditation on the word of God (OCF 139, ILM 22, GIRM 51).

In the Alleluia or Lenten gospel acclamation, the community welcomes the Lord who is about to speak to it. If the Alleluia is not sung, it is omitted.

THE LECTIONARY FOR MASS, NOS. 1011-1016: MASSES FOR THE DEAD

Reading I from the Old Testament - Lectionary #1011

2 Maccabees 12:43-46	He acted in an excellent and noble way as he had the resurrection of the dead in view.
Job 19:1, 23-27a	I know that my vindicator lives.
Wisdom 3:1-9 or Wisdom 3:1-6, 9	As sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.
Wisdom 4:7-15	An unsullied life, the attainment of old age.
Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9	He will destroy death forever.
Lamentations 3:17-26	It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.
Daniel 12:1-3	Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.

Reading I from the New Testament during the Season of Easter - Lectionary #1012

Acts 10:34-43 or Acts 10:34-36, 42-43	He is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.
Revelation 14:13	Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.
Revelation 20:11 - 21:1	The dead were judged according to their deeds.
Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7	There shall be no more death.

Responsorial Psalm - Lectionary #1013

Psalm 23:1-3, 4, 5, 6	The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. or Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.
Psalm 25:6 and 7b, 17-18, 20-21	To you, O Lord, I lift my soul. or No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.
Psalm 27:4, 7 and 8b and 9a, 13-14	The Lord is my light and my salvation. or I believe I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.
Psalm 42:2, 3, 5cdef; 43:3, 4, 5	My soul is thirsting for the living God; when shall I see him face to face.
Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9	My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.
Psalm 103:8 and 10, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18	The Lord is kind and merciful. or The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.
Psalm 116:6, 10-11, 15-16ac	I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. or Alleluia.

Psalms 122:1-2, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Psalms 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8

Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

or

I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

Psalms 143: 1-2, 5-6, 7ab and 8ab, 10

Lord, hear my prayer.

Reading II from the New Testament - Lectionary #1014

Romans 5:5-11

Since we are now justified by his blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath.

Romans 5:17-21

Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more.

Romans 6:3-9 or 3-4, 8-9

We too might live in newness of life.

Romans 8:14-23

We also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

So too in Christ shall all be brought to life.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Death is swallowed up in victory.

2 Corinthians 4:14 - 5:1

What is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

We have a building from God, eternal is heaven.

Philippians 3:20-21

He will change our lowly bodies to conform to his glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

2 Timothy 2:8-13

If we have died with him we shall also live with him.

1 John 3:1-2

We shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:14-16

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.

Alleluia Verse and Verse Before the Gospel - Lectionary #1015

See Matthew 11:25

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to the childlike the mysteries of the Kingdom.

Matthew 25:34

Come, you who are blessed by my Father, says the Lord; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

John 3:16

God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

John 6:39

This is the will of my Father, says the Lord, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, and that I should raise it up on the last day.

John 6:40

This is the will of my Father, says the Lord, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.

John 6:51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever.

John 11:25a, 26

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever believes in me will never die.

Philippians 3:20

Our true home is in heaven, and Jesus Christ, whose return we long for, will come from heaven to save us. If we die in Christ, we shall live with him, and if we persevere we shall also reign with him.

2 Timothy 2:11-12a

Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead; glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:5a, 6b

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.

Revelation 14:13

Gospel - Lectionary #1016

Matthew 5:1-12a

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Matthew 11:25-30

Come to me and I will give you rest.

Matthew 25:1-13

Behold the bridegroom! Come out to him!

Matthew 25:21-46

Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Mark 15:22-29; 16:1-6 or Mark 15:33-39

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Luke 7:11-17

Young man, I tell you, arise!

Luke 12:35-40

You also must be prepared.

Luke 23:33, 39-43

Today you will be with me in Paradise.

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

or Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53

Luke 24:13-35 or Luke 24:13-16, 28-35

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory!

John 5:24-29

Whoever hears my word and believes has passed from death to life.

John 6:37-40

Everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life and I shall raise him on the last day.

John 6:51-59

Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and I will raise them up on the last day.

John 11:17-27 or John 11:21-27

I am the resurrection and the life.

John 11:32-45

Lazarus, come out!

John 12:23-28 or John 12:23-26

If it dies, it produces much fruit.

John 14:1-6

In my Father's house there are many dwellings.

John 17:24-26

I wish that where I am they also may be with me.

John 19:17-18, 25-39

And bowing his head he handed over his Spirit.

FUNERALS FOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN

Reading I from the Old Testament - Lectionary #1017

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9	He will destroy death forever.
Lamentations 3:22-26	It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

Reading I from the New Testament during the Season of Easter - Lectionary #1018

Revelation 7:9-10, 15-17	God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Revelation 21:1a, 3-5a	There shall be no more death.

Responsorial Psalm - Lectionary #1019

Psalm 23:1-3, 4, 5, 6	The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Psalm 25:5ab, 6 and 7bc, 20-21	To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
Psalm 42:2, 3, 5cdef; 43:3, 4, 5	My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face.
Psalm 148:1-2, 11-13a, 13c-14	Let all praise the name of the Lord.
	or
	Alleluia.

Reading II from the New Testament - Lectionary #1020

Romans 6:3-4, 8-9	We believe that we shall also live with him.
Romans 14:7-9	Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
1 Corinthians 15:20-23	So too in Christ shall all be brought to life.
Ephesians 1:3-5	He chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy.
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18	We shall be with the Lord forever.

Alleluia Verse and Verse Before the Gospel - Lectionary #1021

See Matthew 11:25	Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to the childlike the mysteries of the Kingdom.
John 6:39	This is the will of my Father, says the Lord, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, and that I should raise it up on the last day.
2 Corinthians 1:3b-4a	Blessed be the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction.

Gospel - Lectionary #1022

Matthew 11:25-30	You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and have revealed them to the childlike.
Mark 10:13-16	The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to little children.
John 6:37-40 or John 6:37-39	This is the will of my Father, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me.

(For a child who had already receive the Eucharist)

John 6:51-58

Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 11:32-38, 40

If you believe, you will see the glory of God.

John 19:25-30

Behold your mother.

FUNERALS FOR CHILDREN WHO DIED BEFORE BAPTISM

Reading I from the Old Testament - Lectionary #1023

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-8

He will destroy death forever.

Lamentations 3:22-26

It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm - Lectionary #1024

Psalms 25: 5ab, 6 and 7b, 17 and 20

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Alleluia Verse and Verse Before the Gospel - Lectionary #1025

2 Corinthians 1:3b-4a

Blessed be the Father of compassion and God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction.

Revelation 1:5a, 6b

Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead; glory and kingship be his forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel - Lectionary #1026

Matthew 11:25-30

You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and have revealed them to the childlike.

Mark 15:33-46

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

John 19:25-30

Behold your mother.

While the above readings are assigned to the funeral rites, the Lectionary provides other selections that may be suited to a particular circumstance or person. For example, the “Common of Holy Men and Women” (nos.737-742) offers some appropriate texts.

Homily

“A brief homily based on the readings should always be given at the funeral liturgy, but never any kind of eulogy. The homilist should dwell on God’s compassionate love and the paschal mystery as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. Through the homily, the community should receive the consolation and strength to face the death of one of its members with the hope that has been nourished by the saving word of God” (OCF 141).

Intercessions

In the intercessions, the community responds to the proclamation of the word of God by prayer for the deceased and all the dead, for the bereaved and all who mourn, and for all in the assembly. The intercessions should be composed or adapted to fit the circumstances. Sample intercessions are provided in the Order of Christian Funerals, nos. 167, 285, and 401.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

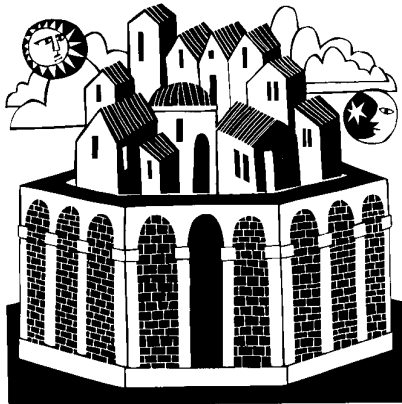
Having been spiritually nourished at the table of the word, the community now turns for spiritual nourishment at the table of the Eucharist. With the priest, they join with Christ in offering to the Father the sacrifice of the New Covenant. In partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ they are united with Christ, with one other, and with all the faithful, living and dead, and are given a foretaste of eternal life in Christ.

“The Liturgy of the Eucharist takes place in the usual manner. Members of the family or friends of the deceased should bring the gifts to the altar. Before the priest washes his hands, he may incense the gifts and the altar. Afterward, the deacon or other minister may incense the priest and the assembly” (144).

Eucharistic Prayers II and III are especially appropriate for the Funeral Mass, because they provide special texts of intercession for the dead.

Participation in Holy Communion

It is typical that many in the assembly are visitors to the church. Before the distribution of Holy Communion (or before the Mass begins) the presider may make a brief and simple explanation of the reception of Communion and may invite non-Catholics forward to receive a blessing. Ideally, one would never interrupt the rhythm of the liturgy and a printed statement in the worship aid will suffice.



Final Commendation and Farewell

At the conclusion of the funeral liturgy, the Rite of Final Commendation and Farewell is celebrated, unless it is to be celebrated later at the place of committal.

The final commendation is a final farewell by the community, an act of respect for one of their members whom they entrust to the embrace of God. This act of last farewell also acknowledges the reality of separation and affirms that the community and the deceased share the same destiny – resurrection on the last day. On that day, the one Shepherd will call each by name and gather the faithful together in the new and eternal Jerusalem (146).

Remembrance of the Dead

A member or friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the dead (170). These guidelines apply.

- Only one person should speak at the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass. Others may speak at the Vigil Service or Committal Service.
- A eulogy recounts significant events in the life of the deceased. Words of remembrance do not attempt to give a biography, but to share insight into the faith and values of the deceased shown in one or two examples from his/her life. A eulogy tends to be lengthy. Words of remembrance are brief.
- The words of remembrance should be prepared beforehand, and ideally reviewed with the priest or presiding minister. They should be no more than three to five minutes (one typed page). Storytelling, anecdotes, poems, songs, etc. are better used of the Vigil Service, the funeral luncheon, or a home gathering. Speakers should be mindful of outside factors, e. g., the time involved in traveling from church to cemetery, other services scheduled that day, or the need of some in the assembly to return to work or other responsibilities.
- The words of remembrance should be about the deceased person's faith and human qualities and how these qualities can inspire the hearers. The speaker should reflect compassionately about the life and circumstances of the deceased. It is inappropriate to include remarks about the deceased's poor habits or prejudices. This is not the focus of our funeral liturgies.
- An itemized obituary of the deceased person's life history might be included in the booklet that is prepared for the funeral, rather than read at the Funeral Mass. While only one person will speak at the Funeral Mass, the words of remembrance could be a summation of thoughts gathered from family members and friends.
- There may be circumstances that would require more than one speaker, for example, a state funeral. In such a case, a protocol of allowing a member of the government or others to speak is to be expected. But normally additional persons should be directed to speak at the Vigil or Rite of Committal.



Invitation to Prayer

Following the Prayer After Communion, the presiding minister goes to a place near the coffin. The rite begins with the minister's opening words and an invitation to a few moments of silent prayer. This silence allows the bereaved to relate their own feelings of loss to the mystery of Christian hope in God's mercy and his promise of eternal life.

Signs of Farewell

The body may be sprinkled with holy water and incensed or this may be done during or after the song of farewell. The sprinkling is a reminder that through baptism the person was marked for eternal life and the incensation signifies respect for the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Song of Farewell

The song of farewell is the climax of the rite of final commendation. It should be sung to a melody simple enough for all to sing. It may take the form of a responsory or a hymn (see OCF 147.3). We pray for God's intercession with songs such as "Come to His/her Aid" or profess belief in the resurrection with "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Originally a prayer recited at the moment of death, the In Paradisum is actually assigned to the Procession to the Place of Committal.

Prayer of Commendation

The prayer of commendation concludes the rite. In this prayer the community calls upon God's mercy, commends the deceased into God's hands, and affirms its belief that those who have died with Christ will share his victory over death.

Procession to the Place of Committal

This final procession mirrors the journey of human life as a pilgrimage to God's Kingdom of light and peace, the new and eternal Jerusalem. Especially when accompanied by music and singing, the procession can help underscore the bond among the participants. Whenever possible, psalms or songs should accompany the entire procession to the place of committal. When this is not possible, an antiphon or song may be sung as the body is taken to the entrance of the church.

Music for the Funeral Liturgy

Since music can evoke strong feelings, the music for the celebration of the funeral rites should be chosen with great care. The Order of Christian Funerals (30-33) provides us with foundational principles for selecting music - encouraging the presider, musician and family to draw on four major sources for inspiration.

- 1) The Paschal Mystery - The music at funerals should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share of that victory." Consistent with all the liturgies of the Church, we are exhorted to remember Christ's victory over death and its meaning for the Christian community.

- 2) The Scripture Texts -- "The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from scripture" (30).

3) “Many musical settings used by the parish community during the liturgical year may be suitable for use at funerals.” A great deal of our repertoire from the Easter season will be useful.

4) “The psalms are rich in imagery, feeling and symbolism. They powerfully express the suffering and pain, hope and trust of people of every age and culture. Above all, the psalms sing of faith in God, of revelation and redemption. They enable the assembly to pray in the words that Jesus himself used during his lifetime on earth. ... The church, like Christ, turns again and again to the psalms as genuine expressions of grief and of praise and as a source of trust and hope in times of trial” (25-26). Jesus himself used psalms when he heard that his friend, Lazarus, was dead.

Psalmody

The Psalms of the Old Testament are a rich resource for expressing our grief and calling on the mercy of God.

Ten psalms are recommended for use as Responsorial Psalms at a funeral liturgy. They are Psalm 23, 25, 27, 42-43, 63, 103, 116, 122, 130, and 143. When casting about for an entrance or concluding song, one might consider psalm 122 with the refrain (antiphon) “I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord” or “Let us go with rejoicing to the house of the Lord.” Consider, too, Psalm 42-43 with the refrain “My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face.”

The Order of Christian Funerals provides additional psalms (with antiphons) for use elsewhere in the liturgy: psalms 51, 93, 114-115, 116, 118, 119, 121, 123, 126, 132, 134. The choice of any of these obviously depends on the choice of readings, pastoral circumstances, and the resources available.

Songs Related to the Readings

All liturgies should be prepared so that the whole is a sum of its parts. That is, each element of the liturgy is harmonious with the other elements. The same is true for the funeral liturgy. Music should be chosen that reinforces or complements the liturgy’s texts, especially the readings.

Below, one will find hymn suggestions that are based upon or are related to the Scripture readings assigned to funeral liturgies. Some of the suggestions show a closer relationship to the Scripture text than others. There are a number of hymns which use just a few verses of the entire pericope.

The list on page 21 is based on a small, but common selection of worship aids from the major publishers. It is by no means complete. Most worship aids have liturgical and topical indices which may be very helpful.

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John speaks of Jesus as the “Bread of Life.” Many Communion songs which draw on this text would be especially appropriate during the Communion procession. Likewise, songs about the Resurrection work well when the gospel selected is the raising of Jesus or Lazarus. Most familiar music of the Easter Season would fall into this category.

Abbreviations

GIA	W3 - Worship, Third Edition	WLP	WC - We Celebrate, PMB People’s Mass Book, WS Word and Song
	RS - Ritual Song	OCP	JS2 - Journeysongs 2
	GC1 - Gather Comprehensive 1	OCP	FyC - Flor Y Canto
	GC2 - Gather Comprehensive 2		

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	TITLE	SOURCE/AID
Job 19: 1, 23-27	I Know That My Redeemer Lives	various
	Song of Farewell (Smolarski)	WLP
Isaiah 25: 6a, 7-9	In the Day of the Lord	JS2
	Praise the Lord, My Soul	RS
Romans 6: 3-9	We Know That Christ is Raised	Various
	When to the Sacred Font We Came	WLP
	Alleluia! Alleluia!	JS2
Romans 8: 31b-35, 37-39	Neither Death Nor Life	GComp2
	For Those Who Love the Lord	WLP
	Our God Provides	JS2
Romans 14: 7-9, 10b-12	We Live Not for Ourselves	JS2
Corinthians 15: 20-23, 24b-28	Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain	Various
	Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Again	JS2
Corinthians 15: 51-57	The Strife is O'er	Various
	Wake the Song of Jubilee	WLP
	Resucitó	GIA
2 Corinthians 5: 1, 6-10	We Walk by Faith	GIA
2 Timothy 2: 8-13	Keep in Mind	Various
2 Timothy 2:8-13 (contd.)	Acuérdate de Jesucristo	WLP
	We Shall Rise Again	GIA
	Now We Remain	GIA
1 John 3: 1-2	God is Love (esp. vs. 3)	GIA
Revelation 14: 13	Jesus, Lord, Have Mercy	WLP
Revelation 21: 1-5a, 6b-7	Jerusalem My Happy Home	Various
	When We Eat This Bread (esp. vv. 2-4)	JS2
Matthew 5: 1-12a	Blest Are They	Various
	Rejoice with All the Saints	JS2
	O Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit	GIA
Matthew 11: 25-30	I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say	Various
	Come to Me	GIA
	Come to Me, O Weary Traveler	GIA
	We Shall Rise Again	GIA
	All You Who Seek a Comfort Sure	GIA, WLP
	Come to Me	WLP, JS2
Matthew 25: 31-46	What You Have Done for Me	GIA
Mark 15: 33-39; 16: 1-6	Now the Green Blade Rises	Various
Luke 23: 33, 39-43	Jesus, Remember Me (Taizé)	Various
Luke 24: 13-35	On the Journey to Emmaus	GIA
	Daylight Fades	GIA
	Two Were Bound for Emmaus	JS2
	In the Breaking of the Bread	JS2
	Cuando Partimos el Pan del Señor	JS2
John 6: 37-40	We Form One Church	WLP
	I, the Lord	JS2
John 6: 51-58	I Am the Bread of Life	Various
	Eat This Bread (Taizé)	Various
John 11: 17-27	We Shall Rise Again	GIA
John 11:32-45	Up from the Earth	GIA

THE FUNERAL LITURGY OUTSIDE MASS (OCF 177-203, 295-315)

The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may include the reception of the body (if this has not already occurred), the liturgy of the word, and the final commendation and farewell. It may be followed by the procession to the place of committal.

This form is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church, but it may also be celebrated at the home of the deceased, at the funeral home, chapel of rest, or cemetery chapel.

The minister who is a priest or deacon wears an alb or surplice with stole. A layperson wears an alb or proper business-like attire.

Through the funeral rites, the Church manifests its care for the dead, both baptized members and catechumens. The Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a child who died before baptism and whose parents intended to have the child baptized (canon 1183).

At the discretion of the bishop, the funeral liturgy outside Mass may also be suitable for celebrating the funeral of a baptized member of another ecclesial community provided this would not be contrary to the wishes of the deceased person and provided the minister of his/her ecclesial community is unavailable.

The readings are those found in the Lectionary for Mass, "Masses for the Dead" (nos. 1011-1016).

Intercessions should be adapted for the circumstances (see OCF 193, 401).

The celebration may include the distribution of Holy Communion (see OCF 195 and Part V, nos. 409-410).

After the Lord's Prayer or before the Final Commendation, a member or friend of the family may offer some brief Words of Remembrance.

**PROPER TIMES FOR A LAYPERSON TO SPEAK
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD**

Vigil Service:	after the Concluding Prayer, before the Blessing and Dismissal
Funeral Mass:	after the Prayer after Communion, before the Final Commendation
Funeral Outside Mass:	Rite of Reception (if included), after the Lord's Prayer, before the Final Commendation
Committal Service:	after the Prayer of Committal, before the Intercessions

rites of committal

The rite of committal is the last of the three major stations of the funeral rites. It is the final act of the community in caring for the body of a deceased member (204). In committing the body to its final resting place, the community expresses its hope that the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the Church on earth in to the welcoming company of the Church in heaven (206).

The rite may be celebrated at the grave, tomb, or crematorium or may be used for burial at sea. Whenever possible, the rite is to be celebrated at the site of the committal, i.e., beside the open grave or place of interment, rather than at a cemetery chapel.

Two forms of the rite are provided in the Order of Christian Funerals - "Rite of Committal" and "Rite of Committal with Final Commendation." The first form is used as part of the conclusion of a funeral liturgy. The second is used when the final commendation does not take place during the funeral (perhaps days later or in another state) or when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal rite.

Rite of Committal (OCF 216-223, 316-326)

Invitation
Scripture Verse
Prayer Over the Place of Committal
Committal
Intercessions
The Lord's Prayer
Concluding Prayer
Prayer Over the People

Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (OCF 224-233, 327-336)

Invitation
Scripture Verse
Prayer Over the Place of Committal
Invitation to Prayer
Silence
[Signs of Farewell]
Song of Farewell
Prayer of Commendation
Committal
Prayer Over the People



FUNERAL LITURGIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Order of Christian Funerals contains a wealth of texts and advice for celebrating funeral liturgies in special circumstances.

Funerals Rites for Children

Part II of the OCF contains a Vigil (243-263); a Funeral Mass (276-294); a Funeral Outside Mass (295-315); a Rite of Committal (316-326); and Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (327-336). It also provides a Rite of Commendation of an Infant (337-342).

Both baptized children and children who died before baptism are considered.

Additional/Alternate Texts

In addition to the citations noted above and on the previous pages, in Part V of the OCF, one can find texts for particular circumstances (e.g., “suicides,” “sudden death,” or “after long illness”) or persons (e.g., bishops, priests, deacons, wives, husbands, young person, elderly person, ...) Turn to this section to find alternate prayers when preparing any of the funeral rites:

- Prayers for the Dead
- Prayers for Mourners
- Placing of Christian Symbols
- General Intercessions and Litanies
- Final Commendation and Farewell
- Rite of Committal

CREMATION AND BURIAL

Ideally, the funeral liturgy is celebrated with the body present. The body “which lies in death naturally recalls the personal story of faith, the loving family bonds, the friendships, and the words and acts of kindness of the deceased” (411).

Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, the Church “clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites” (414). The body should be enclosed in at least a simple casket, as required by state laws and ecclesial policies.

When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice, clergy and other ministers must extend genuine pastoral sensitivity. The cremated remains are always treated with the same respect as the body - they should be placed in a worthy vessel, carried with dignity, transported with care, and displayed in a worthy manner during the funeral rites.

In 1997, the Church provided an appendix to the OCF that provided praenotanda and new texts that are suitable for the funeral liturgy in the presence of cremated remains (411-438). During the greeting at the doors of the church, the cremated remains are sprinkled with holy water. The placing of the pall is omitted (434). The Easter candle is placed beforehand in the place where the cremated remains will occupy at the conclusion of the procession.

Cremated remains must be interred in a timely fashion – buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. They may never be scattered over land or sea nor should they be incorporated into a work of “art.” Whenever possible appropriate means for recording the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased, date of birth, and date of passage to eternal life.

THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The funeral rites are a vital expression of our belief in the resurrection of the body and our certain hope of eternal life. But in other ways, the community of faith expresses its comfort for those who mourn and its union with the Church of heaven.

- Regular prayers for dead
- When the day allows, the recitation of the Office for the Dead
- Funeral Luncheons
- Mass Offerings
- General Intercessions
- Annual Memorial Mass in November
- Reading names of deceased parishioners on November 2
- Careful recording of the names in the parish necrology
- A display of the names in a Book of the Dead during the month of November or in a more permanent display
- Bereavement Teams who make follow-up visits to the family of the deceased
- Bereavement support groups
- Charitable care of widows and orphans

I am grateful for your continuing efforts in this regard.

Conclusion

In the gospels, we constantly encounter a Savior who showed compassion for those who mourned. Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41-55); he raised the widow’s son (Luke 7:1-17); and he wept for Lazarus and raised him from the dead (John 11:17-27). He promised eternal life to the repentant thief (Luke 23:33) and to those who ate the Bread of Life (John 6:51-58), assuring all of us that his Father’s house had many dwelling places (John 14:1-6).

This directory’s purpose is to guide the proper celebration of our funeral liturgies. For when we celebrate them well, we cannot help but comfort those who mourn, commend the dead to God, and celebrate our certain hope in the resurrection! “Christ has been raised from the dead! We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence” (2 Cor 2:14).

Most Reverend Carl F. Mengeling
Bishop of Lansing
August 22, 2007
The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

APPENDIX I:
PREPARATION SHEETS FOR
THE FUNERAL RITES



COVER SHEET: PREPARATION OF THE FUNERAL RITES

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Name of Deceased: _____
Born into Life: _____ City: _____
Child of _____ and _____
Born into Eternal Life: _____ City: _____
Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____
Funeral Home: _____ Phone: _____
Memorial Contributions: _____

VIGIL SERVICE

Date of Vigil Service: _____
Time: _____ Location: _____
Presider: _____

FUNERAL LITURGY

Date of Funeral Liturgy: _____ Time: _____
Within Mass: _____ Outside Mass: _____
Location: _____
Presider: _____
Music Minister: _____
Placing of the Pall: _____
Placing of Christian Symbols: _____
Reader #1 _____ Reader # 2 _____
General Intercessions: _____
Gift Bearers: _____
Eucharistic Ministers: _____
Ministers of Hospitality : _____
Pall Bearers: _____

RITE OF COMMITTAL

Date: _____ Time: _____
Location: _____

PREPARATION OF THE VIGIL SERVICE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting	A	B	C	D	Presider
Opening Song	_____				Assembly
Invitation to Prayer					Presider
Opening Prayer	A	B			Presider

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel
- Homily

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Litany					Presider & __
The Lord's Prayer	Invitation A	B	C		Presider
Remarks					_____
Concluding Prayer	A	B			Presider

CONCLUDING RITE

- Blessing

PREPARATION OF THE FUNERAL MASS

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Assigned to:

Greeting	A	B	C	D	Presider
Sprinkling with Holy Water					
Placing of the Pall					_____
Entrance Song/ Procession	_____				
Placing of Christian Symbols	yes	no			_____
Opening Prayer	A	B	C	D	

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading	_____	_____
Responsorial Psalm	_____	_____
Setting:	_____	
Second Reading	_____	_____
Gospel Acclamation	_____	
Gospel	_____	_____
Homily		_____
General Intercessions		_____

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts and the Altar		
Presentation Hymn	_____	Assembly
Prayer Over the Gifts		

Eucharistic Prayer

Preface # _____

Eucharistic Prayer II III

Acclamations _____

Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer _____ recited _____ chanted Assembly

Sign of Peace

Lamb of God _____ Assembly

Communion Hymn(s) _____ Assembly

Prayer After Communion

FINAL COMMENDATION

Invitation to Prayer A B

Silent Prayer

Signs of Farewell Holy Water _____ Incense _____ _____

Song of Farewell _____ Assembly

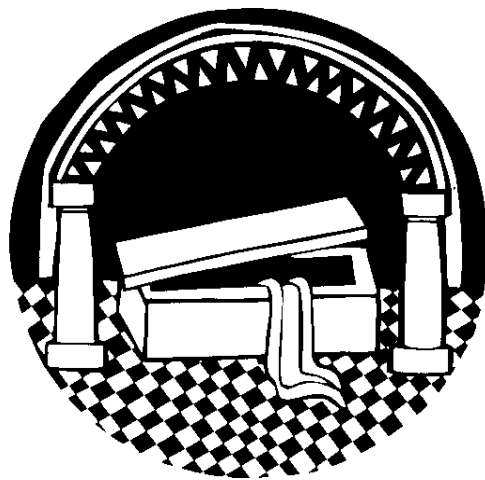
Prayer of Commendation A B

PROCESSION TO THE PLACE OF COMMITTAL

Closing Hymn _____ In Paradisum Assembly
_____ Psalm 118, 42. 93, 25, 119
Setting: _____
_____ Other _____

PREPARATION OF THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

Invitation		Presider
Scripture Verse	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt 25:34 <input type="checkbox"/> John 6:39 <input type="checkbox"/> Philippians 3:20 <input type="checkbox"/> Revelation 1:5-6 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	_____
Prayer Over the Place of Committal Place of Committal	<input type="checkbox"/> A (to be blessed) <input type="checkbox"/> B (already blessed) <input type="checkbox"/> C (final committal later) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____(OCF 405)	Presider
Committal	A B Other _____	Presider
Intercessions	A B Other _____	Presider/ All
The Lord's Prayer		All
Concluding Prayer	A B Other _____	Presider



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