**Funeral Process for Catholics**

**The Process**

The Order of Christian Funerals is a three-part ritual, with **Vigil (viewing), Funeral Mass, and Rite of Committal (internment).** It is strongly encouraged that the Funeral Rites be conducted in the presence of the body of the deceased. This practice is most in accord with the sacred principles and rituals of the Christian Faith. However, the Mass of Christian Burial may also be celebrated with the cremains present in the church. Care should be taken that the cremated remains of the deceased are accorded proper respect through interment in blessed cemetery ground, or in a mausoleum. Any scattering of the cremains is not permitted, because of the reverence due the bodies and remains of the bodies of those who have been baptized and have been temples of the Holy Spirit.

**The Vigil for the Deceased**

The Vigil is usually celebrated at the funeral home. The parish funeral coordinator can arrange for a deacon to be present and assist with a scripture and/or rosary service. The vigil service is the most appropriate time for a eulogy or reflection, sharing of stories, etc., as opposed to during the Funeral Mass.

**The Funeral Mass**

The Mass is traditionally celebrated in the morning. The parish church is the proper place for the Mass of Christian Burial. For the Funeral Mass, Christian symbols (cross, bible, scapular, etc.) may be placed on the casket at the beginning of the Funeral Mass. All secular items, like flags or medals of Honor are important, but not part of the Funeral Mass. These secular and important symbols are removed at the church door and a pall placed over the casket. This symbolizes our unity in Christ through our baptism. Christian symbols are only used within a church. Flowers may be placed in the church. Photos and other items are normally displayed at the entrance to the church with the Book of Remembrance. A small table can be placed in the front of the altar for the cremains. Some families choose to have a picture and or flowers on the table with the urn. The parish funeral coordinator will help the family select songs, readings, and answer any questions about the details of the service.

**The Rite of Committal**

The Rite of Committal (internment or inurnment) is celebrated, at the cemetery, ending the three-part liturgy. If in town, the priest can accompany you to the cemetery for the Committal Service.

# Order of the Funeral Mass

The following is the Order for Christian Funeral Mass so that you may plan your liturgy (Funeral Mass) and choose the scripture readings and songs.

## Introductory Rites

(\*Below is the order with body present. If cremains, the opening song may be first.)

* Greeting
* Sprinkling with Holy Water \*
* Placing of the Pall \*
* Placing of Christian symbols \*
* Opening Song (choose from the song list)
* Opening Prayer

## Liturgy of the Word

* First Reading (you may choose from Scripture list, may choose a reader)
* Psalm (spoken or sung - you may choose from Scripture list, may choose a reader if spoken)
* Second Reading (you may choose from the Scripture list, may choose a reader)
* Gospel (you may choose from the Scripture list, will be read by the priest or deacon)
* Homily
* Intercessions (normally read by deacon or priest, but you may choose a reader)

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

* Presentation Song (choose from the song list)
* Preparation of the Gifts (choose family members or friends to bring up the gifts)
* Continuation of the Mass as usual
* Communion Song (choose from the song list)

The appropriate place for family and friends sharing, or the offering of a eulogy or reflection, is at the Vigil. If it is determined that a speaker is to be included at the Funeral Mass this will take place following Communion. One person may speak who will limit the comments to three to four minutes. The comments must be appropriate for Mass.

## Final Commendation

* Invitation to Prayer
* Silence
* Prayer of Commendation
* Song (choose from the song list)
* Procession to the Place of Committal (to the cemetery)