

FUNERALS

Can a Catholic and non-Catholic be buried together?

If you married them and spent your life with them you should lie beside each other. Just not in the same casket.

Can we have a funeral for a non-Catholic?

A non catholic married to a Catholic “may” have a Catholic funeral as long as it is in keeping with their wishes. Generally this is done when they have been an active member of the Catholic community and are seen as a member of the parish life.

Who is eligible for a Catholic funeral?

Any baptized Catholic is entitled to a Catholic funeral regardless of whether they go to church or not. As long as they have never publicly declared that they are no longer Catholic.

Children whose baptism was intended by the parents but who died before being baptized. These children are to receive the full rites of a baptized person.

Members of the RCIA who were journeying towards the Catholic church may also receive full funeral Rites.

Are all funerals the same?

The funeral Mass is a ritual and the priest is required to stick to the ritual. There are some deviations allowed, these would be for military personnel, police officers, members of parliament, K of C, CWL, each should be checked with the parish priest as to their practice. As an example, for a military funeral, “Taps” can be played in the church or after the deceased is placed in the coach or placing of poppies near the casket.

Often what makes a Funeral Mass look different is the choice of readings and music. If you choose up beat music it generally will appear more like a celebration than if the music is very sad, which often results in no understanding of the celebration of one of God’s children going home, the Resurrection.

What are the three parts of the Funeral Liturgy?

They are the wake or vigil prayers, the funeral Mass and the final interment or burial.

- ***The wake or vigil is about who the person is and how they have affected our lives.***
- ***The funeral Mass is about Jesus and the promise of eternal life – the resurrection.***
- ***The interment or burial is the good bye, the letting go.***

Vigil

The person

Funeral Mass

Jesus and the resurrection

Interment

Good bye

Each part plays an important part in the grief process and allows the people of God to experience the fullness of God's plan for us. The Church explains it this way: "By means of the funeral rites it has been the practice of the Church, as a tender mother, not simply to commend the dead to God but also raise high the hope of its children and to give witness to its own faith in the future resurrection of the baptized with Christ."

From the Congregation for Divine Worship 15, 08, 1969

Why is the casket covered in White for every one?

Regardless of who the person is, in death we are all the same. "Naked we came into this world and naked we shall return." The coffin is covered with a white garment to remind us of how baptism makes us all equal in the eyes of God. The garment reminds us that we are all God's children and we have put on Christ and call Him our Brother.

Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honor to the body of the deceased, which through Baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also the sign of the community's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God and as a sign of farewell.

What about eulogies? *The definition of a eulogy is "to speak well of the person." Generally what we call a eulogy today is actually a tribute in which the person talks often more about themselves and how the person has affected their life. The eulogy should be about the person and hopefully about how they walked with God in this life and thus will receive God's promise of eternal life.*

When do we give the eulogy?

Generally the eulogy is given during the funeral prayers (wake service). They can also be given at the cemetery or at the reception after the Funeral Mass. The eulogy is NEVER given during the Funeral Mass; remember the Mass is about Jesus and Jesus' promise to the deceased person, of eternal life.

Who picks the music and readings?

Generally this is done by the family, but often now the person who is dying chooses to plan their funeral themselves and they may choose what they wish to be read and sung beforehand.

The readings have been compiled over time and offer us help in focusing on God's promises. The music also should have, as a focus, the wonderful promise of eternal life. The music must be sacred in nature, the use of secular music is never appropriate.

Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express conviction and feelings which words cannot convey.

They 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 Scriptures.

Music should be provided for the vigil and the funeral liturgy and, whenever possible, for the funeral processions and the Rite of Committal.

Can a Catholic be cremated?

Yes, Catholic's are allowed to be cremated. The preferred process is cremation after the funeral Mass and the ashes are buried or laid to rest in a mausoleum. A funeral is not to be granted if the wishes for cremation are not in keeping with the Christian motives (the intention flows from a rejection for the importance of the body and the need for a physical reminder).

If so, what happens to the ashes?

Sometimes the ashes are kept at the Funeral Home until the family can gather again for the burial. They can also be kept in the family home until burial; this of course does create some issues for some family members.

Can you keep ashes in your home?

Yes, but there is the expectation that sometime in the future you will be burying them in a sacred space or placing them in a mausoleum.

How can "planned giving" help your estate?**What happens if there is no will?****Why plan for your death?****Can you plan your funeral before you die?****What should a funeral home do for you?**

"The Last Rites" Viaticum with *Anointing of the Sick*.

The church no longer talks about Last Rites. What most people are referring to is the practice of the priest come to the person, hearing their confession and then anointing with the Oil of the Sick, and finally giving them the Eucharist. Each of these plays an important part in the preparation to receive God's gift of Eternal Life. These Rites are hopefully given in the home where the fullness can be expressed, but often they take place in the hospital or hospice where they are often shortened to just the anointing with Oil of the Infirm.

The Sacrament of the Sick can be administered to a person many times in their lives. If they are seriously ill it should be administered each time there is a serious change in their health.

In the past it was the hope for every Catholic that there would be a priest at their bedside when they died and that they would receive this last anointing. Yet, in the Church's teaching it is the prayer of the Church that the last sacrament we receive just before death is the Eucharist – that is – the bread for the journey.

A Faith-Based Directive for my Health Care A Statement of my Catholic Values

I am a Catholic and as I have sought to live my life faithfully as a Catholic, I wish to make it abundantly clear at the start of this directive that the values, customs and way of life of my Christian faith should direct any treatment decisions that must be made should I not be competent to make them.

To begin with, I accept fully that my life on this earth is a gift of a loving God and that God alone knows the number of my days. In accordance with my Catholic faith, I do not accept that my life should ever be actively terminated either through euthanasia or assisted suicide. I expect that pain will be controlled as far as possible (and that the 'principle of double effect' [see **Appendix**], may be invoked should pain become a particularly horrendous issue). Nor do I consider the ending of pain of absolute importance. For example, I would consider putting up with some pain if consciousness or awareness were still possible. In short, I would hope that **the best of palliative care would be available to me should I be dying and not be competent to make my own decisions.**

I understand that death is part of the journey of life. When God calls me home, I wish to be prepared with the Sacraments of the Church, as far as possible. Should I be dying or suffering from some terminal illness, I am prepared to forego any treatment which would prolong a poor dying process or place undue burdens on myself or those who care for me. If, on the other hand, I am in a critical condition and there is significant uncertainty about the outcome, I expect to receive all needed treatment until the clarity of the outcome is established.

Life is first and foremost a gift from God. It is a gift I cherish and many of its so-called 'handicapped' forms are not a diminishment of life for me, but simply part of the journey God calls me to and accompanies me on.

I realize, nonetheless, that there are often very difficult decisions to be made either at the end of life or when one's life hangs in a critical balance. And to that end I wish to leave this directive as a form of my instructions, based upon my commitment to God in faith, about the care that I would expect should I no longer be able to make decisions about my own care.

Of note: Morally there is no difference between not starting treatment and stopping or withdrawing treatment **if the circumstances are the same in either situation.** In other words, if treatment must be started in order to buy time for a truer prognosis, that is acceptable provided treatment will be stopped if the prognosis reveals one of the conditions under which I would not accept treatment. I recognize that 'no moral difference' does not mean that there is no psychological difference for the staff person who must stop the treatment. Thus, I would ask that my proxy and my physicians be particularly sensitive to those persons who would not find it easy to stop treatment.

NB: I have attempted to satisfy the legal conditions for an advance care directive according to the law of my particular province or state. I trust that legal technicalities will not interfere with my clear wishes as recorded in this document and as revealed through my conversations with family, friends and proxy. The purpose of this directive is to assist proper health care in critical situations and to encourage proper palliative care in the event of my dying; legal protections are meant to support my decisions, not override them.