



# CATHOLIC FUNERAL GUIDE

## The Purpose of a Catholic Funeral

A Catholic funeral is not only a time to honor a loved one's life but, more importantly, to commend their soul to God and proclaim our hope in the resurrection of the dead.

The rites offer comfort to the living, prayer for the departed, and a public witness to our faith.

## The Three Principal Rites

### *The Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers*

- Often held the evening before the Funeral Mass at the funeral home or church.
- Includes Scripture readings, prayers, and the Rosary.
- Offers family and friends time to gather, share memories, and pray.

### *The Funeral Liturgy*

- The central liturgy of the Catholic funeral.
- Celebrates the Eucharist, commends the deceased to God, and consoles the faithful with the hope of eternal life.
- Includes readings from Scripture, the homily, and prayers for the soul of the deceased.

### *The Rite of Committal*

- Takes place at the graveside, mausoleum or columbarium.
- The final act of caring for the body before burial or entombment.
- Includes prayers of farewell and commendation to God's care.

## Cremation and the Funeral Rites

The Church prefers burial of the body but permits cremation.

Cremated remains should be buried or entombed in a sacred place, not kept at home or scattered.

When possible, the Church recommends having the body present for the Funeral Mass before cremation.

## Planning Your Catholic Funeral

### *Meet with Your Parish Priest or Funeral Coordinator*

- Discuss funeral liturgy preferences, music, and readings.

### *Select Scripture Readings & Hymns*

- The Order of Christian Funerals provides many options that express hope in the Resurrection.

### *Designate Pallbearers, Readers, and Gift Bearers*

- Involve family and friends in meaningful ways.

### *Communicate Your Wishes*

- Include funeral instructions in your will or estate plan.

### *Choose the Burial Location*

- If possible, select a Catholic cemetery or other blessed burial ground.

**Catholic Cemeteries Office**

**901-373-1200**

**[cdom.org/catholic-cemeteries-office/](http://cdom.org/catholic-cemeteries-office/)**

## Frequently Asked Questions

*1. Can a Funeral Mass be held for someone who is cremated?*

Yes. The Church allows a Funeral Mass with cremated remains present, though funeral rites with the body before cremation is preferred.

*2. Can non-Catholics have a Catholic funeral?*

If they desired it and it does not cause scandal, a Catholic funeral may be celebrated for baptized non-Catholics.

*3. Can a funeral be celebrated during Lent?*

Yes. Funeral liturgies are permitted during Lent, though some festive music is omitted.

*4. Can I pre-plan my funeral?*

Yes. This is encouraged as an act of stewardship, relieving your family of guesswork and ensuring your wishes align with Church teaching.