

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
Funeral Guidelines

Dear Friends,

After the death of your loved one, you are faced with important decisions during a very difficult time. Among other things, planning the details of a funeral can be overwhelming. But remember that you are not alone. We would like to assist you in any way we can.

A Christian funeral can be an opportunity to celebrate the wondrous gift God gave us in our relationship with the deceased, and a time in which our hope in the Risen Lord is reaffirmed with peace.

Please know we are here for you and welcome the opportunity to be of service to you and your family. It is our hope that this information will be helpful to you.

PLANNING THE FUNERAL RITES

Our priests are ready to help you plan liturgies and to celebrate them. You will be asked to:

- Share with the priest what you remember about the deceased.
- Select readings appropriate for the funeral or memorial.
- Choose lectors for the readings among our ministers or your relatives.

When a loved one dies, people often find themselves at a loss for words. Music can unveil a dimension of meaning and feeling that words alone cannot. As music plays a significant part in our lives and is integral to our sacred liturgies, it is natural that the Church involves music at the funeral liturgy. This is an occasion to sing songs that witness to the Lord of life and the hope that he gave us. Secular music is not appropriate for a liturgical setting, but could be played at the funeral home visitation or other settings outside the liturgy and church.

FLOWERS, PHOTOS, ETC.

- *Flowers* are an appropriate way to honor the deceased and a symbol of the resurrection of our Lord.

Generally, three to four floral arrangements are displayed in the sanctuary. We ask that:

- All floral arrangements should be placed in the sanctuary in such a way that they do not block the view of the presider, lector, musicians, speakers, and the assembly.
- Floral arrangements are not to interfere with the areas needed for Holy Communion.
- Funeral directors or the family take responsibility for the removal of flowers after the service.

Flowers appropriate for the altar or ambo may be left behind for church use.

- A *photo* of the deceased may be placed on a stand near the sanctuary with a floral arrangement. Other photos may be displayed in the vestibule.

- A *guest book* may be placed in the vestibule.

EULOGIES

The more appropriate time and place to give eulogies is at the vigil service or a reception. Eulogies could also be given right before the funeral. Eulogists should have the emotional strength to talk in public during a time of grief and should have their eulogy in writing. A eulogy is about sharing some insight into the *faith* and *virtues/values* of the deceased person as seen in some examples from his or her life. A eulogy in church should be brief (about 3 minutes long, or about 400 written words). If there's more than one eulogy, the total time should be 5 minutes.

MILITARY CEREMONIES

The flag folding ceremony and presentation of the flag is usually done at the gravesite. It may be done right after the funeral.

OFFERINGS AND STIPENDS

- Customary offering to the Parish: a suggested donation of \$300.

- Music minister (cantor, accompanist): between \$150 and \$250.

(For an accompanist or cantor: about \$150; for one who is both: about \$250. It's best to communicate with the musician on their charge).

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Memorial gifts are a special way to honor your loved one who died. Your family, relatives and friends may give a donation to Church of the Ascension in memory of the deceased.

CREMATED REMAINS

Christian bodies, whether cremated or kept in a casket, must be treated with respect because the body of the baptized person is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Cremated remains must be placed in a dignified vessel and receive a proper burial in a cemetery ground, or interment in a columbarium (a structure that houses cremated remains). Moreover, the ashes of a deceased person are kept together and not divided among family members. (For more details, please read "Cremation 101" at occatholic.com/cremation-101/).