

St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Overlea Guidelines for Funerals

Introduction

The staff and parish family of St. Michael the Archangel extends our deepest sympathy on the loss of your loved one. At this difficult time, we turn to our loving God for comfort and strength. As we prepare for the Mass of Christian Burial, we offer some suggestions for your consideration.

Scriptures

The words of scripture can be particularly comforting at this time. The funeral director or parish staff member will offer you a book, entitled *Preparing a Catholic Funeral*, with some suggested readings. You may select an Old Testament and/or a New Testament passage. The priest or deacon who will deliver the homily may prefer to choose the gospel reading, but if a particular gospel holds special meaning for you, please discuss this with him. The responsorial psalm will be sung, and will be considered in the music section of this booklet.

Ministerial Roles

Family members or friends are welcome to minister in the following ways:

- assisting with placing the pall, a reminder of the white baptismal garment on the casket,
- proclaiming the scripture readings;
- bringing the bread and wine forward at Preparation (Offertory) time;
- assisting with the distribution of Communion, if he or she is a eucharistic minister;
- assisting as an altar server;
- music ministry

You may consult relatives and friends as they visit with you, and then discuss these options with the priest or deacon at the Vigil Service. You may also be contacted by the parish Director of Music & Liturgy, Jo Anne Ibex, regarding these choices and the music selection.

Music for the Funeral Liturgy

The parish provides a Cantor for the funeral, and dedicated parishioners sing with our Funeral Choir, offering prayerful support. While you are not limited to the following list of hymns, these have been found to be most hope-filled and encouraging at the time of a loss:

826 – Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

586 – Amazing Grace

596 – Be Not Afraid

636 – Blest Are They

489 – Crown Him with Many Crowns

616 – Eye Has Not Seen

791 – For All the Saints

496 – How Great Thou Art

822 – I Am the Bread of Life

454 – I Know That My Redeemer Lives

822 – I Received the Living God

764 – Jerusalem, My Happy Home

560 – Lord of All Hopefulness

588 – O God, Our Help in Ages Past

593 – On Eagle's Wings

442 – Sing with All the Saints in Glory

459 – The Strife Is O'er

699 – Unless a Grain of Wheat

583 – We Walk By Faith

627 – You Are Mine

590 – You Are Near

The following are common responsorial psalms:

- 23 – Shepherd Me, O God
- 26 – To You, O Lord
- 29 – The Lord Is My Light
- 59 – The Lord Is Kind and Merciful
- 634 – Shelter Me, O God

Normally, we sing an entrance hymn, a psalm, a song during the offertory, and a communion hymn. At the conclusion of the funeral, we sing a setting of “May the Angels lead you into paradise...”

Please remember that the music used during a Mass of Christian Burial reflects the sacred nature of our worship, which is living and active. We do not play pre-recorded music, nor do we use secular songs. If you wish to include your loved one’s favorite song in some way, we recommend using it at the conclusion of the Vigil Service at the funeral home, or at a family gathering after the liturgy and burial.

Speakers / Eulogies

Certainly there will be many stories told and memories shared over the next few days. During the Mass of Christian Burial, the homily is based on the readings selected. The homilist may well incorporate stories recounted by the family as examples of ways in which the deceased exemplified Gospel values in his or her life. If a presider agrees to a speaker during the Mass itself, we ask that you respect the Archdiocesan policy:

“one speaker, a member or friend of the family may speak for not more than five minutes.” (Archdiocese of Baltimore Policy on Catholic Church Funeral Rites, 12 – C, 1/13/2000.)

Typically this person speaks at the beginning of the funeral liturgy. We recommend that the speaker prepare a written text of their remarks, as funerals are naturally rather emotional times. The written text allows the speaker to remain focused. Additional speakers or more lengthy talks would be more appropriate at the funeral home at the conclusion of the Vigil Service (Wake), or when family and friends gather after the funeral.

Conclusion

During the fall, you will receive an invitation to attend a Memorial Mass at St. Michael’s on November 2, the feast of All Souls. The names of all who have passed away since the previous November will be read in a moving litany. We encourage you to attend this beautiful liturgy as we remember those who have gone before us in faith.

We will continue to remember your family and friends in our prayers during the coming weeks and months. If you would like more information on Grief Ministry, or if you have any questions pertaining to the funeral, please feel free to call the Parish Office: 410-665-1054

- Fr. Jim Proffitt, Pastor - ext. 103
- Fr. James Purvey, Associate Pastor - ext. 108
- Deacon Henry Davis, Pastoral Associate - ext. 109
- Jo Anne Ibex, Director of Music & Liturgy - ext. 110