What can we do?

CELEBRATING Christian funerals:

"In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has reated each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. Christians celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just."

PRAYING for our beloved departed:

"The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice, the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one communion of saints. Though separated from the living, the dead are still one with community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession. At the rite of final commendation and farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heavens and a new earth, where death will be no more."

COMFORTING mourners:

"The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis... 'If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member' (I Corinthians 12:26). For this reason, those who are baptized into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are responsible for one another .... when a member of Christ's body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love .... The Church calls each member of Christ's Body -- priest, deacon, layperson -- to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn. "

SHOULDERING our responsibilities:

"Members of the community should console the mourners with words of faith and support and with acts of kindness, for example, assisting them with some of the routine tasks of daily living. The community's principal involvement in the ministry of consolation is expressed in its active participation in the celebration of the funeral rites, particularly the vigil for the deceased, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal. In the celebration of the funeral rites, laymen and laywomen may serve as readers, musicians, ushers, pallbearers and, according to existing norms, as special ministers of the eucharist.

The quotes above are from the Order of Christian Funerals, approved for use in the United States by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See. © 1989,1985, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved. Used with permission.
Some commonly asked questions

Why do we celebrate the funeral rites?
In the funeral rites we pray for the deceased, entrusting them to God's mercy and care. We honor the body. We comfort the living in their grief. We celebrate the funeral rites not only for the dead but also for the living.

Is cremation permitted by the Catholic Church?
Since 1963, the Church has permitted cremation as long as the Church’s teaching on the resurrection of the body is upheld.

How are the rites celebrated for someone who chooses cremation?
The Church prefers that the body be present for the Funeral Liturgy and cremated following the Final Commendation of the Liturgy. If there is a serious reason, it may be possible to celebrate the Funeral Liturgy in the presence of cremated remains.

What rites can be used for miscarried or stillborn infants?
"Funeral Rites may be celebrated for children whose parents intended them to be Baptized but who died before Baptism. In these celebrations the Christian community entrusts the child to God's all-embracing love." (Order of Christian Funeral #237)

What rites can be used for a suicide victim?
This person is entrusted to God's love and mercy and is therefore entitled to the usual Funeral Rites.

What is done for a lapsed Catholic?
By virtue of Baptism this person is entitled to the prayers of the Church including the Funeral Rites.

What is the proper place for the Funeral Rites?
The Vigil service is celebrated in the presence of the body either in the funeral home or the Parish Church the night before. The Funeral Mass is always celebrated in the Church. The Commital Rite is preferably celebrated at the grave or the tomb.

Why do we recommend viewing in the Church before the funeral?
Gathering at the Church before the Funeral Mass begins allows family and friends a time to console one another, to say final goodbyes, and to enter into the spirit of prayer.

Where can I find the text for the prayers of the funeral service?
The Order of Christian Funerals is the text of all Catholic funeral rites approved for use in the United States of America. It has been in mandatory use in all Latin rite Catholic parishes of the United States since All Souls Day, November 2, 1989. All the major Catholic book publishers have a ritual edition. There is a less-expensive, paperback Study Edition published by:

Liturgy Training Publications
1800 North Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, IL 60622-1101
Phone: (800) 933-1800
Fax: (800) 933-7094
E-Mail Orders: orders@ltp.org

What is the Rite of Committal?
The Rite of Committal is the third station of the Catholic funeral liturgy, after the Vigil (usually the day or night before the funeral) and the Funeral Mass (or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass). It is normally celebrated at the site of burial.

The rite begins with an Invitation to prayer, followed by a Scripture Verse, for which there are several options. Then comes the Prayer over the Place of Committal, with seven text options. Next comes the Committal itself, for which there are also seven text options.

Then come the Intercessions (four text options), the Lord’s Prayer, a Concluding Prayer (five), the Prayer over the People, with two forms of the final blessing, depending on whether the minister is a cleric or not, and a dismissal.
A song may conclude the rite. Where it is the custom, some sign or gesture of leave-taking may be made.

**Why is the grave or tomb the preferred site for the Rite of Committal?**

The grave or tomb is preferred because the prayers from the ritual express clearly the finality of placing the body in the ground or in the tomb.

**Order of Christian Funerals**

**THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS** has three principal parts: the Vigil for the Deceased; the Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass; the Rite of Committal.

**VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED**

**INTRODUCTORY RITES**
- Greeting
- Opening Song
- Invitation to Prayer
- Opening Prayer

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**
- Scripture Readings with Responsorial Psalm
- Homily

**PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**
- Litany
- The Lord’s Prayer
- Concluding Prayer (A family member or friend may speak in remembrance of the deceased.)

**CONCLUDING RITE**
- Blessing
- Song and/or a few minutes of silent prayer

**FUNERAL MASS**

**INTRODUCTORY RITES**
- Greeting & Sprinkling with Holy Water
- Placing of the Pall (and Christian Symbols)
- Entrance Procession
- Song
- Opening Prayer

**LITURGY OF THE WORD**
- Scripture Readings with Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation
- Homily
- General Intercessions

**LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**
- Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Communion Rite

**FINAL COMMENDATION**
- Invitation to Prayer
- Song of Farewell and Incense
Prayer of Commendation

PROCESSION TO THE PLACE OF COMMITAL

RITE OF COMMITTAL

Invitation
Scripture Verse
Prayer over the Place of Commital
Committal Intercessions
The Lord's Prayer

Concluding Prayer

Prayer over the People

Readings for a Christian Funeral

These Readings are suggested in the Order of Christian Funerals. At a funeral, one reading from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament and a Gospel are proclaimed. (Click onto the Bible Gateway and enter a bible reference from the tables below to get the verse online.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
<th>Gospel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom 3:1-9</td>
<td>Romans 5:5-11</td>
<td>Matthew 11:25-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9</td>
<td>Romans 6:3-9</td>
<td>Matthew 25:31-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Maccabees 12:43-46</td>
<td>Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12</td>
<td>Luke 12:35-40</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10</td>
<td>John 5:24-29</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Thessalonians 4:13-18</td>
<td>John 6:51-58</td>
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<td>2 Timothy 2:8-13</td>
<td>John 11: 17-27</td>
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<td>1 John 3:1-2</td>
<td>John 11:32-45</td>
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<td>1 John 3:14-16</td>
<td>Revelation 14:13</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Revelation 14:13</td>
<td>Revelation 20:11-21:1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7</td>
<td>Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Here are other alternate suggestions for appropriate readings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
<th>Gospel</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31</td>
<td>Ephesians 3:14-21</td>
<td>Matthew 6:19-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of Songs 2:8-14</td>
<td>1 Peter 1:3-9</td>
<td>John 3:13-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Song of Songs 8:6-7</td>
<td>Revelation 22:1-7</td>
<td>John 10:11-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sirach 44:1, 10-15</td>
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<td>John 10:27-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah 35:1-6, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah 41:8-10, 13</td>
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<td>Isaiah 57:15-19</td>
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<td>Isaiah 61.1-3</td>
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<td>Isaiah 65:17-21</td>
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<td>Ezekiel 34:11-16</td>
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<td>Ezekiel 37:12-14</td>
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<td>Micah 6:6-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zephaniah 3:16-20</td>
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Music for a Christian Funeral

This is a list of appropriate songs for a Catholic funeral Mass. We hope it will be of aid to you at a difficult time. A parish representative will help you with your planning. During the season of Lent, we do not sing "alleluia."

GATHERING SONG
In the Worship hymnal:

- During the season of Advent
  - 357 - 0 Come, 0 Come, Emmanuel (v. 1, 4, 5, 6)
  - 368 - Creator of the Stars of Night

- During the season of Christmas:
  - 387 - Hark The Herald Angels Sing
  - 391 - Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

- Saints in Glory
  - 496 - Crown Him with Many Crowns
- During the season of Christmas:
  - 387 - Hark The Herald Angels Sing

- To Jesus Christ
  - 497 - Our Sovereign King
- During the season of Christmas:
  - 387 - Hark The Herald Angels Sing

- Our God and King (v. 1, 5, 6, 7)
- During the season of Christmas:
  - 387 - Hark The Herald Angels Sing

- 5 - Gospel Canticle of Zachary
- 373 - The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns
- 445 - I Know that My Redeemer Lives
- 451 - The Strife Is O'er
- 467 - Sing with All the Saints in Glory
- 496 - Crown Him with Many Crowns
- 497 - To Jesus Christ
- 520 - All Creatures of Our God and King (v. 1, 5, 6, 7)
| 524 - Holy God, We Praise Thy Name | 409 - As with Gladness Men of Old |
| 525 - Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You | 427 - Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley |
| 568 - Lord of All Hopefulness | 433 - When I Survey the Wondrous Cross |
| 575 - God Is Our Fortress & Our Rock | 583 - Amazing Grace |
| Listen | 585 - How Firm a Foundation |
| 588 - Love Divine, All Love's Excelling | 588 - Love Divine, All Love's Excelling |
| 600 - What Wondrous Love Is This | 600 - What Wondrous Love Is This |
| 674 - Morning Has Broken | 674 - Morning Has Broken |
| 690 - Jerusalem, My Happy Home | 690 - Jerusalem, My Happy Home |
| 705 - For All the Saints | 705 - For All the Saints |
| 737 - Alleluia! Sing to Jesus | 737 - Alleluia! Sing to Jesus |
| 738 - I Am the Bread of Life | 738 - I Am the Bread of Life |
| 741 - Let Saints on Earth in Concert Sing (tune: Amazing Grace) | 741 - Let Saints on Earth in Concert Sing (tune: Amazing Grace) |
| During the season of Lent. | During the season of Easter: |
| 441 - Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks | 441 - Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks |
| 442 - Jesus Christ Is Risen Today | 442 - Jesus Christ Is Risen Today |

*In the Gather hymnal:*

- 217 - Sing of the Lord's Goodness
- 252 - We Walk by Faith
- 263 - Be Not Afraid
- 275 - Eye Has Not Seen
- 282 - Singing Songs of Expectation
- 296 - We Have Been Told
- 306 - Peace Is Flowing Like a River
- 321 - We Shall Rise Again

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

- Psalm 16: Center of My Life (Gather 251)
- Psalm 19 (Gather 18)
- Psalm 23 (Worship 163)
- Psalm 25 (Gather 21)
- Psalm 27 (Gather 23)
- Psalm 30 (Gather 24)
- Psalm 33 (Gather 25)
- Psalm 42 / 43 (Worship 825)
- Psalm 63 (Worship 42)

**COMMUNION SONG**

Any of the Responsorial Psalms could be sung, or one of the following songs:

*In the Worship hymnal:*

- 423 - Jesus, Remember Me
- 451 - The Strife Is O'er
Psalm 91 (Gather 42)  
Psalm 91: **On Eagle’s Wings** (Gather 261)**

**Listen**
Psalm 103 (Gather 46)  
Psalm 116 (Gather 48)  
Psalm 121 (Gather 52)  
Psalm 122 (Come, let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord)  
Psalm 126 (Gather 256)  
Psalm 130 (Worship 71)  
Psalm 130 **With the Lord There Is Mercy** (Gather 56)  
Psalm 143 (Worship 75 -v. 1-10)  
Psalm 145 (Gather 59)  
Psalm 146 (Gather 60)  
Psalm 147 (Gather 61)

727 - Let Us Break Bread Together  
734 - Eat This Bread  
736 - You Satisfy the Hungry Heart (Gift of Finest Wheat)  
738 - I Am the Bread of Life

*In the Gather hymnal:*

20 - **Shepherd Me, O God**  
180 - **Easter Alleluia**  
248 - **Your Love Is Finer Than Life**  
263 - **Be Not Afraid**  
284 - **Blest Are They**  
338 - **Taste & See**  
346 - **One Bread, One Body**  
274 - **The Lord Is My Shepherd**

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**FAREWELL SONG**

I Shall See My God (inside front cover of Worship)  
God’s Holy City (inside front cover of Worship)  
177 (Worship) - May Saints & Angels Lead You On  
691 (Worship) - Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace (v. 1, 2, 5)  
261 (Gather) - **On Eagle’s Wings**