

Guide to a Catholic Funeral



at

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish
Austintown, OH

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends,

Jesus assured the crowd gathered to hear him, “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (*Matthew 5:4*) As you grieve, may you be comforted by the love of Christ and the support of the members of the parish family of Immaculate Heart of Mary.

This booklet is given to you as a service of our parish Bereavement Ministry, to help guide you through the funeral rites of the Church. These funeral rites are meant to help you grow in the hope that, through the Spirit of Jesus, we on earth still share in a special union with our loved ones who celebrate the fullness of life with the Risen Christ. As you participate in these rites and as others gather to support you in the difficult days ahead, you will be in the prayers of many people.

You will be asked to choose hymns and scripture readings, and to consider family and friends who can participate in the funeral rites by assisting with readings and prayers. As you choose the prayers, readings, and music, I hope your choices make these rites of the Church a source of comfort for you and your family, and reflect the life of the loved one who has died.

As you review the suggestions offered in this booklet, please realize that within the Catholic Church, there are funeral rites with or without a Mass. Both forms are officially recognized rites in the Church.

Members of our parish Bereavement Committee and I will work with you to plan prayer services and a funeral liturgy that will help you as you both mourn and honor the person who has died. Be assured that the parish family and I will continue to pray for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Fr. Kenneth Miller
Pastor, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish

Catholic funeral rites

offer praise and thanksgiving to God for the life of your loved one, pray for the deceased loved one, and support those who mourn.

Our Catholic funeral practices take place in three movements through the process of Christian burial:

1. The Prayer Vigil

This is the first stage through which the parish helps with prayer.

A priest, deacon, or lay leader of prayer will preside at a service for family and friends at the wake.

2. The Funeral Liturgy

This is the main celebration of the Christian community for the deceased loved one. The following pages will help with the preparations.

The Church has two forms for this liturgy:

In the Funeral Home without Mass

(sometimes suggested if a large number of family and friends are not familiar with the Mass of Christian Burial)

OR

In Church with Mass

3. The Committal

This final act of leave-taking is prayed at the cemetery.

Jesus said,
 “I am the resurrection and the life;
 whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,
 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”
 (John 11:25-26a)



The signs and symbols of our services are meant to give you comfort and hope.
 Some of these are:

The Easter Candle:

Christ is the Light of the World. At Easter, we light the large paschal (Easter) candle to symbolize that Christ has conquered sin and death, and lives among us now. During the funeral we burn this candle as a reminder that your loved one shares in Christ’s victory.

The Pall and Crucifix:

A large white cloth is draped over the coffin as a symbol of the baptismal garment -- a sign that your loved one was baptized in Christ, lived as a member of the Body of Christ, and now shares in Christ’s glory. Family members and friends have the opportunity to place the pall on the casket. On top of the pall, the priest will place a crucifix as a reminder that Christ shared in our humanity and death, so we have hope for our share in the resurrection.

Sprinkling with Holy Water:

This action also recalls baptism, when holy water brought your loved one into the life of Christ, and now is a sign of hope for eternal life.

Incense:

Incense is a symbol of the prayers for your loved one rising up to God, as the smoke of the incense rises up. When the priest incenses around the casket, it is a sign of our respect for the body of your loved one, and our commending him or her to God.



Almighty and ever-living God,
 in you we place our trust and hope,
 in you the dead, whose bodies were temples of the Spirit,
 find everlasting peace.
 As we take leave, give our hearts peace
 in the firm hope that one day
 we will live in the mansion
 you have prepared for us in heaven.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 (from the Order of Christian Funerals)

These pages are meant to help you to choose readings, music, and selected prayers as you meet with someone from the parish who will assist you through the process.

Funeral Liturgy in Church with Mass:

(marked places are for family choice or participation)

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting

Sprinkling with Holy Water

[Placing of the Pall]

Entrance Hymn

Collect (Opening Prayer)

LITURGY of the WORD

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Homily

Profession of Faith

Universal Prayer (The Petitions)

LITURGY of the EUCHARIST

Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts

Hymn

Prayer over the Offerings

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Rite

Communion Hymn

CONCLUDING RITE

Invitation to Prayer

Prayer of Commendation

Recessional Hymn

If a family member is to give prepared **Words of Remembrance** or **Welcome** with the pastor's approval, it will be before Mass begins. Eulogies can be expressed at the funeral home service before the casket is closed, or at the funeral luncheon.

If the family has chosen **cremation**, the cremains should be present in church, along with a photograph or portrait of the deceased.

Family Participation in the FUNERAL LITURGY at MASS:

Placing pall (Family members can help to place on the casket this white cloth that symbolizes the baptism of the loved one.)

Hymns (Please choose four hymns, either favorites or from the suggestions on p. 7 of this booklet)

Entrance _____

Offertory _____

Communion _____

Recessional _____

Readings:

First (Please choose an Old Testament reading, either a favorite or from pp. 8-10)

Responsorial Psalm (Your favorite, or Psalm 23) _____

Second (Please choose an New Testament reading, either a favorite or from pp. 11-14)

Gospel Reading (Please choose a Gospel reading, either a favorite or from pp. 15-18)

Family Members:

First Reading Reader: _____

Second Reading Reader: _____

Petitions Reader: _____

Gift-bearers: _____

Funeral Liturgy in Funeral Home without Mass:

(marked places are for family choice or participation)

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting
Sprinkling with Holy Water
[Placing of the Pall]
Invitation to Prayer
Opening Prayer

LITURGY of the WORD

First Reading
Second Reading (optional)
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel
Homily
[Family Words of Remembrance]
Universal Prayer (The Petitions)
The Lord's Prayer

FINAL COMMENDATION

Invitation to Prayer
Prayer of Commendation

Family Participation in the FUNERAL LITURGY without MASS

Music (Please make arrangements with the funeral home about music for the service)

Readings:

First (Please choose a reading, either a favorite or from pp. 8-10)

Second (If you to have two readings, the first should be Old Testament (pp. 8-10),
and the second should be New Testament (pp. 11-14))

Gospel Reading (Please choose a Gospel reading, either a favorite or from pp. 15-18)

Family Members:

First Reading Reader: _____

Second Reading Reader: _____

Petitions Reader: _____

Words of Remembrance: _____

Hymns

(choose four: Entrance, Offertory, Communion, Recessional)

Choose favorite church hymns, or select from of the following:

Alleluia, Sing to Jesus

I Am the Bread of Life

Alleluia, the Strife Is Over

I Heard the Voice of Jesus

Amazing Grace

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

Ave Maria

Now We Remain

Be Not Afraid

Ode to Joy

Blest Are They

On Eagle's Wings

Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Today

Prayer of St. Francis

Eye Has Not Seen

Song of the Body of Christ

For All the Saints

We Remember (how you loved us)

Hail Mary, Gentle Woman

We Walk by Faith

Here I Am, Lord

We Will Rise Again

How Great Thou Art

You Are Mine

You are Near

First Reading

Choose a favorite Old Testament reading, or select one of the following:

A reading from the book of Job (19:1, 23-27)

Job answered and said,

Oh, would that my words were written down!

Would that they were inscribed in a record:

That with an iron chisel and with lead

they were cut in the rock forever!

As for me, I know that my vindicator lives,

and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust.

This will happen when my skin has been stripped off,

and from my flesh I will see God:

I will see for myself,

my own eyes, not another's, will behold him:

my inmost being is consumed with longing.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Wisdom (3:1-6, 9)

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,

and no torment shall touch them.

They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;

and their passing away was thought an affliction

and their going forth from us, utter destruction.

But they are in peace.

For if to others, indeed, they seem punished,

yet is their hope full of immortality;

Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,

because God tried them

and found them worthy of himself.

As gold in the furnace, he proved them,

and as sacrificial offerings* he took them to himself.

Those who trust in him shall understand truth,

and the faithful shall abide with him in love:

Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,

and his care is with the elect.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Wisdom (31: 10, 17, 20, 25-31)

Who can find a woman of worth?

Far beyond jewels is her value.

She girds herself with strength; she exerts her arms with vigor.

She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy.

She is clothed with strength and dignity, and laughs at the days to come.

She opens her mouth in wisdom; kindly instruction is on her tongue.

She watches over the affairs of her household,
and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, too, praises her:

“Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all.”

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting;

the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Acclaim her for the work of her hands,

and let her deeds praise her at the city gates.

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes (3:1-11)

There is an appointed time for everything,

and a time for every affair under the heavens.

A time to give birth, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to tear down, and a time to build.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them;

a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

A time to rend, and a time to sew;

a time to be silent, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate;

a time of war, and a time of peace.

What profit have workers from their toil?

I have seen the business that God has given to mortals to be busied about.

God has made everything appropriate to its time,

but has put the timeless into their hearts so they cannot find out,

from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (25:6a, 7-9)

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples.

On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples,
the web that is woven over all nations.

He will destroy death forever.

The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces;

The reproach of his people he will remove

from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

On that day it will be said:

“Indeed, this is our God; we looked to him, and he saved us!

This is the LORD to whom we looked;

let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

The word of the Lord.

Other possible Old Testament readings:

Lamentations 3:17-26

Daniel 12:1-3

2 Maccabees 12:43-46



Second Reading

Choose a favorite New Testament reading, or select one of the following:

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (6:3-4, 8-9)

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8:14-22a)

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!"

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.

For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility,

not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8:31b-35, 37-39)

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones?

It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn?

It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

As it is written: "For your sake we are being slain all the day; we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (13:1-8a)

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away everything I own,

and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous,

it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests,

it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,

it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love does not come to an end.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (15:20-28)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for “he subjected everything under his feet.” But when it says that everything has been subjected, it is clear that it excludes the one who subjected everything to him. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (4:14-5:1)

We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence. Everything indeed is for you, so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God. Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to Timothy (3:1-2)

For I am already being poured out like a libation,
and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.
From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me,
which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day,
and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of St. John (3:1-2)

See what love the Father has bestowed on us
that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are.
The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.
We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Revelation (14:13)

I heard a voice from heaven say,
"Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."
"Yes," said the Spirit, "let them find rest from their labors,
for their works accompany them."

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Revelation (21:1-7)

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.
The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
"Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race.
He will dwell with them and they will be his people
and God himself will always be with them as their God.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes,
and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain,
for the old order has passed away."
The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."
Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true."
He said to me, "They are accomplished.
I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.
The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son."

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Reading

Choose a favorite gospel reading, or select one of the following:

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew *(5:1-12a)*

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you

and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew *(11:25-30)*

Jesus said,

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned
you have revealed them to the childlike.

Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father.

No one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son

and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,

for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew (25: 31-40)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him.

And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right,

‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food,

I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,

naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say,

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you,

whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (5:24-29a)

Jesus said to them: “Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For just as the Father has life in himself,

so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself.

And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man.

Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming

in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice

and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life.”

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (6:37-40)

Jesus said to the crowd: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me,

because I came down from heaven not to do my own will

but the will of the one who sent me.

And this is the will of the one who sent me,

that I should not lose anything of what he gave me,

but that I should raise it on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father,

that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life,

and I shall raise him on the last day.”

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (6:51-58)

Jesus said to the crowd:

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
 whoever eats this bread will live forever;
 and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
 “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you,
 unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
 you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,
 and I will raise him on the last day.

For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father,
 so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven.

Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
 whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (12:23-28)

Jesus answered them,

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
 it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves his life loses it,

and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.

The Father will honor whoever serves me.

The gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John (14:1-7a)

Jesus told his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.

If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.

Where I am going you know the way.”*

Thomas said to him,

“Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, then you will also know my Father.”

The gospel of the Lord.



Hail Mary,
full of grace,
the Lord is with you;
blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



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