

# A Guide for Planning a Catholic Funeral Mass

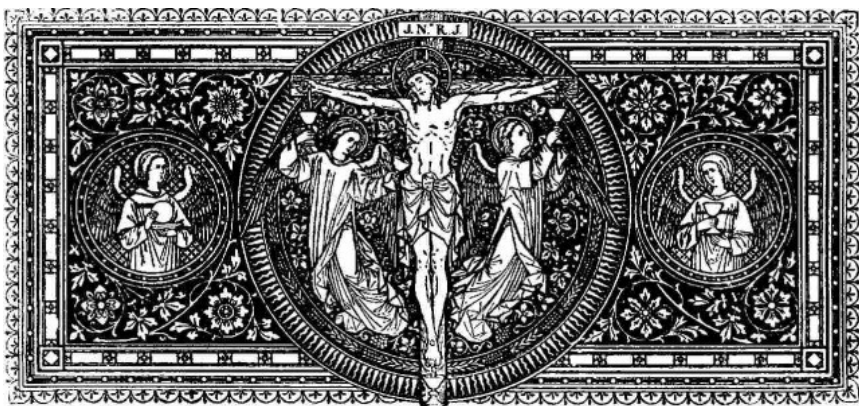


St. Bede the Venerable Catholic Church  
Montgomery, AL



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	4
SACRAMENTS FOR THE SICK AND DYING .....	5
ANOINTING OF THE SICK .....	5
VIATICUM .....	5
PRAYERS AFTER DEATH .....	5
PREPARATION AND INFORMATION .....	5
VISITATION .....	6
FLOWERS .....	6
MUSIC .....	6
PRAYER CARDS .....	6
OLD TESTAMENT READINGS .....	8
NEW TESTAMENT READINGS .....	11
GENERAL INFORMATION .....	15
PLANNING GUIDE .....	16
NOTES .....	18



# Celebrating a Life in Prayer & Ritual

Death is time for the ministry of consolation. The Order of Christian Funerals provides the moments and the means to express the sadness of loss and the hope of faith.

The rituals are a journey... spiritual, physical and emotional... from the deathbed to the place of burial.

A priest, deacon or pastoral minister from the parish will help plan the funeral rites. These three major moments must be considered: The Vigil, The Mass of Christian Burial and The Committal Rite.

Most important and expressive is the Funeral Mass — the Mass of Christian Burial. It is a celebration of Christ's Resurrection; it is a Banquet of Eternal Life in the face and presence of death. By the Word of Scripture and the Sacrament of the Altar, the People of God are renewed in hope to continue living as Christ's followers. At the end of a person's life, the promises made in Baptism are recalled and called upon for the deceased and for the living.

The ritual uses all the senses, all the talents, all the capabilities of the human person. Active participation is the way of expressing hope in the resurrection...the living cannot capitulate to death. So the living express their hope and love...in the face of death.

A Funeral Mass cannot be celebrated on Sundays or during the Triduum which is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Be sure to check with your parish before scheduling a Funeral Mass.

The rituals of the Catholic Church offer a witness of faith, a comfort to the bereaved and a solidarity between the living and the dead.

The Vigil is held before the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal takes place at the cemetery afterward.

# SACRAMENTS FOR THE SICK AND DYING

It is of paramount importance to have a priest present to administer the Sacraments of Confession and Anointing during a life threatening illness. Please make arrangements with the appropriate family member or friends to contact the church and invite the priest to minister to the sick. Accorded by Vatican II and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, there are three opportunities for prayer and ritual in the final days of one's life:

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK** can occur at anytime during a person's illness. Its administration is not meant strictly for the time prior to death, but rather at any of those times when the visitation of the priest, the sharing of God's word, prayer, and anointing with Oil of the Sick would prove to be helpful to the ailing individual and the family. A call to the church office to secure a time for the priest to come to the home or hospital is necessary.

**VIATICUM** which means "bread for the journey" is the reception of communion by the individual and family at home or in the hospital. After a request is made, the priest or deacon, or bereavement minister trained for this ministry will come and share a brief liturgy of Scripture, prayer, and then Holy Communion.

**PRAYERS AFTER DEATH** is a short service or prayer, Scripture and blessing which acknowledges that death has occurred, and in the midst of sorrow, God is present. The service is meant to comfort the mourners in a quiet and prayerful response to death. It is the final rite of all the rituals in the Catholic funeral process and is led by the priest or deacon. A call to the church office will make this possible.

## PREPARATION AND INFORMATION

Should the body be present for the services?

The church assumes that unless there are specific circumstances which prohibit it, the body will be present; open casket or closed. The presence of the body serves as a reminder of the reality of death. Also, during the funeral, the body is honored as the sacred vessel which has held the spirit of life, the Holy Gift of God. If the body has been cremated, the ashes will be present at the Mass on a table in front of the altar.

A Mass in which the body or ashes is not present is regarded as a Memorial Mass, not a Funeral Mass.

## **Can family and friends be included in the services?**

Definitely! We always encourage those who wish to participate in special ways. Numerous options are:

Immediate family members to place the pall and Christian symbols on the casket.

Readers for the two Scripture readings at the funeral service. These persons must be practicing Catholics.

If there is a Mass, people to present the gifts of bread and wine and young people to serve as altar servers.

Special music at the funeral provided by the family or friends may be used, and should be coordinated with the organist. Any such music must be approved for Sacred Liturgy. No secular music is permitted.

## **When and Where is the Visitation or Wake?**

The visitation is usually the evening before or can be a couple of hours before the Funeral Mass. It will take place at the funeral home or here at the parish. If you decide to have the visitation at the parish, it will be in the Parish Hall or in case of large numbers, in the Family Life Center. When the visitation is held at the parish, the room will be set up and you are asked not to move any furniture. The body can be present but must be moved back to the funeral home that night. You will need to make the moving of the casket arrangements with the funeral home.

## **Flowers and Plants**

Flowers should be delivered the day of the funeral. The church office will work with florists to have the flowers and plants in the church in a timely manner. We are a working parish and delivery's are not permitted when daily Mass (6:30am & 8:30am) is being said.

All flowers and plants brought into the church for the funeral, must be removed within 4 hours of the conclusion of the funeral or before the next scheduled Mass; whichever comes first. Any plants remaining after this time will be disposed of or distributed by the parish staff.

Normally, no decoration including flowers and plants is permitted during Lent. You can have tasteful, minimal flowers for the funeral but they must be removed immediately after the Mass.

## MUSIC

You can use the organist or pianist and singer of your choice. The church office can give you names if needed and they will be happy to call the musician for you. The usual cost is \$150. We try to use organists or pianist that also sing and can lead during the liturgy.

Below are some hymns that are appropriate for a funeral. Keep in mind that particular songs are appropriate for certain parts of the liturgy. If you have a favorite hymn, the priest or your organist can tell you when it should be sung. (Songs with an “Alleluia” may not be used during Lent.)

### Processional

Amazing Grace

Be Not Afraid

Christ, Be Our Light

On Eagle’s Wings

Here I Am Lord

Only You My God

Peace is Flowing like a River

Spirit of God

### Responsorial Psalm

*Psalm 23*) The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

*Psalm 27*) The Lord is my Light and my Salvation.

*Psalm 84*) How Lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord God of Hosts!

*Psalm 103*) The Lord is kind and merciful.

*Psalm 116*) I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

### Offertory

Shelter Me, O God

I Heard the Voice of Jesus

Prayer of St. Francis

### Communion

Gifts of Finest Wheat

One Bread, One Body

Shepherd Me, O God

### Reflection

Ave Maria

Were You There

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

### Recessional

All Creatures of Our God and King

How Great Thou Art

Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Sing With All the Saints in Glory

I Have Loved You

City of God

We Walk by Faith

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

## **PRAYER CARD**

The church office has a supply of prayer cards they can print for you. These are Holy Cards on the front with the deceased name and dates on the back with a prayer or poem. We also have samples of the different prayers and poems used most often but will print what ever you want on the card. The cost for these cards is \$30 for 80 cards.

The church office creates and prints programs for all funerals. This is helpful for non-Catholics attending the Catholic Funeral Mass.

### **Readings For The Liturgy**

You will need to select a 1st reading from the Old Testament and a 2nd reading from the New Testament. The following pages will contain several appropriate selections.

## **OLD TESTAMENT READINGS**

### **A Reading from the Book of Wisdom (Wisdom 4:7-15)**

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding passes for gray hair, and an unsullied life is the attainment of old age. The one who pleased God was loved, living among sinners, was transported—Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul; for the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the LORD, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take that consideration into account.



### **A Reading from the Book of Wisdom (Wisdom 3:1-6, 9)**

The souls of the just 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 in the eyes of men, indeed they be 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 offering, 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 his elect.

### **A Reading from the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 31: 10-13, 19-20,30-31)**

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. Like a merchant fleet, she secures her provisions from afar. She puts her hands to the distaff and her fingers ply the spindle. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arm to the needy. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

### **A Reading from the Book of Job (Job 19: 1, 23-27)**

Job answered Bildad and Shuhite 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! But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; Whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him; And from my flesh I shall see God; my inmost being is consumed the longing.

### **A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 25: 6a, 7-9)**

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples. On the 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: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the LORD to whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

### **A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11)**

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every thing under the heavens. A time to be born, 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 advantage have workers from his toil? I have considered the task that God has appointed for the sons of men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts; without man's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

### **A Reading from the Second Book of Maccabees (2Macc 12: 43-46)**

Judas, the ruler of Israel, took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

## **NEW TESTAMENT READINGS**

### **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans (Romans 5:17-21)**

Brothers and Sisters:

If, by the transgression of the one, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so, through one righteous act, acquittal life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so through the obedience of the one the many will be made righteous. The law entered in so that transgression might increase but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans (Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39)**

If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own son but handed him over for us all, 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?

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 Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans (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. 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.

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans (Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12)

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why then do you judge your brothers? Or you, why do you look down on your brothers? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God.

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:20-28)

Christ has been raised from dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead came also through man. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits; then, at is coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over Kingdom to his God and father. 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.

## A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 15:51-57)

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:

*Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?*

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ.

## **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:1, 6-10)**

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. We are always courageous, although know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

## **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Philippians (Philippians 3:20-21)**

Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

## **A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)**

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

## **A reading from the First Letter of John (1 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.

## **A Reading from the First Letter of John (1 John 3:14-16)**

Beloved: We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that He laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

## **A Reading from the Book of Revelations (Revelation 20:11-15—21:1)**

I, John, saw large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw dead the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; the Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire. Then I saw new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

## **A Reading from the Book of Revelations (Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-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. 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."

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The following two pages are for you to fill out. The planning guide will make it easier for the family to understand your wishes or to plan a funeral from the beginning. Bring this to the church office as soon as it is completed so we can get a copy. The Lectionary will be set on Lectern open to your reading. We ask that you contact your organist to give the list of songs but if that is not possible, we will contact him/her for you.

We hope that this booklet has helped in the planning stage for the Funeral Mass. The Burial or final stage of the funeral will be planned by your director at the funeral home. The priest who says the Funeral Mass will follow the procession to the cemetery and will do the final Committal Rite. In the event that the burial will take place at a later date, you must make arrangements with the priest accordingly.

Be advised that only music from our hymnal is to be played in the church. If you need to borrow a hymnal, it can be checked out of the office for a few days.



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# PLANNING GUIDE

Name of the Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mass: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Vigil Service Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Burial Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Director: \_\_\_\_\_

## READINGS

First Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

## MUSIC

Processional Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Offertory Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Communion Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflection: \_\_\_\_\_

Recessional Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Roles**

Altar Server: \_\_\_\_\_

Altar Server: \_\_\_\_\_

Placing on of the Pall: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reader 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Reader 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Bearers: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Other Considerations**

Military Honors: \_\_\_\_\_

Luncheon Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Christian Symbols:**

Cross: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Rosary: \_\_\_\_\_

# NOTES

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