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# FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE

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Holy Apostles Catholic Church



WINTER 2023  
HOLY APOSTLES CATHOLIC CHURCH  
4925 N. Carefree Cir Colorado Springs CO 80917



As Christians we find hope and comfort in the redemptive work of Christ with the assurance that in death, “life has changed not ended.” We give great thanks and praise to Jesus for the gift of our beloved departed. Our Lord urges us to have utmost respect for our deceased brothers and sisters; the dignity of the body is not lost at death, for it too will be raised on the last day. At Holy Apostles we see it as our sacred duty to celebrate the funeral liturgy in a worthy and reverent manner. Every baptized Catholic has the right to a Christian funeral and burial. When this occurs, the Church offers us a particular set of rites which are in accord with their dignity as Christian Catholics. In this booklet you will find these norms and other information to help to make planning easier and endure that the funeral liturgy is prayerful and reverent. We humbly pray that despite the darkness and the sorrow you may be experiencing, you might open your heart to the many blessings that Jesus wish to impart to you.

Funeral Masses are never celebrated in the Triduum (from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday) or on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season. At a funeral Mass on Ash Wednesday, the blessed ashes are not distributed.

Private funerals are gently discouraged. The whole community should share in the blessed burden of praying for the faithful departed. A public funeral also helps the living of the community prepare for their own deaths.

Catechumens may receive the full funeral rites of the Church.

Baptized Christians who are non-Catholics may be buried with the Rite of Christian Burial if during life they attended Mass regularly and the next of kin has no serious objection. Non-baptized persons may not be buried with the funeral rites of the Catholic Church. A simple prayer service may be arranged.

A child who dies before baptism or a still-born or miscarried child may be given the funeral rites. However, we are forbidden to pray for the souls of children who have been baptized and who die before the age of reason, since they go immediately to heaven and spend no time in purgatory. So, in their case, a votive Mass of the Angels is celebrated, using the color white.

The remains of stillborn or miscarried children should be given a Christian burial if at all possible. The remains may be placed in an individual or common burial area.

**N.B.** Because God is the author of life, we as his creatures do not claim the authority to decide when our lives end. We recognize that the tragedy of suicide plagues many families and has a ripple effect through our society. The Colorado Springs region is especially affected by the “contagious” nature of suicide.

(<http://www.newsweek.com/2016/10/28/teen-suicide-contagious-colorado-springs-511365.html>)

If you are planning a funeral for someone who has taken their own life, please know of the deep condolences of the parish and the whole Church. With you, we commend these souls to the mercy of a loving God.

At the same time, in an effort to limit the effects of this painful reality, funeral rites for those who have committed suicide will be limited to a private Mass or burial service but will not be open to the public. The family and friends of those individuals will have as much access as necessary to the priests and clergy to support them in this very difficult time.

Similarly, since the legalization of Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) in Colorado, those choosing to end their lives in this way may only be offered Christian burial. “Funeral Masses, Liturgies of the Word, and paraliturgies are not permitted. Some days after the

burial, loved ones are encouraged to have Masses said for the repose of the soul of the deceased.” – CCHerald Art. 7/7/17

Here are some guidelines to read in advance and to keep in mind when these difficult moments arrive:

- I. Dealing with the funeral home.
  - a. Please see the checklist which accompanies this policy. Please check with Holy Apostles about availability of the parish and the priest/deacon **before** setting the date with the funeral home.
  - b. Funerals are able to be offered Tuesdays-Fridays.
- II. The Rosary/Vigil (Part I)
  - a. This is normally done on the day or night before the funeral, usually at the funeral home. The priests or deacon will be accommodating to the time of the Rosary that the family chooses. The Rosary is also an occasion for the family members to speak about the departed, in the ways they deem fit. The Vigil is the most appropriate time for eulogies and favorite songs that would not be otherwise appropriate for the Funeral Rite.
  - b. A viewing is also possible before the funeral. This is done with an open casket.
- III. The Rite of Christian Burial (Part II)
  - a. A good time for the funeral to begin is usually before noon. It is the responsibility of the funeral home to make sure the remains of the deceased is at the church on time.
  - b. *Eulogy* is a Greek word meaning “high praise.” It is a praiseworthy practice for a family member or friend to offer a few words about the deceased. The Vigil before or the reception afterward are the most appropriate times for others to offer words on the

life of the deceased. Eulogies will not be given during the funeral itself.

- c. The music for the funeral has been set and decided upon by the Church. Recorded music is not played, nor are modern compositions. If the family wants favorite tunes of their beloved played, the appropriate place is at the funeral home or at the time of the wake or reception. Please see the music planning guide for a selection of songs available at Holy Apostles.
- d. Scripture readings for the funeral have been set and decided upon by the Church. There are different sets of readings to choose from. Booklets containing the reading options are available to borrow from the parish office.
- e. The parish will provide one table for memorial items outside the church in the narthex. These are appropriate places to put pictures/guestbook/flowers/etc.
- f. In the case of the presence of cremated ashes for the funeral Mass, the parish will provide an ossuary for the urn that will be placed near the Paschal Candle during the funeral rite.

#### IV. The Burial

- a. This should occur as soon as possible after the funeral. This is also an appropriate time for family members to eulogize the departed if they did not get the chance to do so at the wake (Rosary service).
- b. The Church encourages burial in a Catholic cemetery (Canon 1180.1). Burial in consecrated ground is a sign of the commitment and vows of baptism and gives witness, even in death, to the Resurrection of Christ. Since this is not always

possible, there is a blessing given by the priest or deacon over the burial site in a public cemetery.

- c. Cremation should not occur before the funeral Mass. If there are ashes for cremation, then these must be interred in the ground or a columbarium as soon as possible after the funeral, like the burial of a body. Scattering of ashes in any way is a great offense against the dignity of the deceased and is strictly forbidden. Cremated remains must be given the same respect as the body and will normally be placed in a burial vault at a cemetery. These should not be kept in the home after the funeral. The church cannot set the date for the funeral until the place and time of interment of ashes is established.
- d. While cremation is not forbidden under the Code of Canon Law, it is hoped that it will only be considered after serious thought. The body is not a shell or husk to be tossed aside after use by the “real” person - the soul within. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor 5: 6-8, Phil 1:23). That body belongs to someone we love, who will reclaim it someday by the power of the Lord. It should give us pause that some have promoted cremation as a way to undermine the Christian faith in the resurrection.
- e. Organ donation is a praiseworthy and charitable act. However, the remains of the body must not be treated as mere disposable material; rather they should be given proper burial.
- f. There are no charges for the rites of the Church. However, there are stipends associated with those who serve the liturgy and for the operation of the church. You can find these later in this booklet.

- V. There are options for the liturgical colors used in the funeral: Black or purple (a sign of mourning and encouragement to pray for the deceased); White (a sign of hope in the future resurrection).
- VI. Flowers: The family may only place flowers in front or on the sides of the main altar and in front of the ambo. These should not be higher than the altar or ambo. Flowers may also be placed on the memorial table in the narthex. The family is responsible for cleaning up all decorations. Flowers may be left for the church.
- VII. Reception
  - a. Holy Apostles is blessed to have a parish ministry that is able to provide a simple meal for the bereaved in the parish hall after the funeral. They should be notified as soon as possible through the parish office, including an approximate number of how many will be attending the reception and what time the funeral will be held. If this ministry is utilized, the parish asks for reimbursement for the cost of food.
  - b. DVD's, slide shows, and other forms of media can be shown in the parish hall during the reception. It is not appropriate for them to be shown in the church before or after the funeral.
- VIII. "Celebration of Life"
  - a. The Catholic Church has beautiful Rites for Christian Burial with or without Mass. A celebration of life is a different event and does not replace the funeral. These are not to be celebrated in the church. If the family desires to put on a celebration of life, they may rent the parish hall or Mary's House for this occasion.



## Checklist in the event of a death in the family

**A. Notification** (It is wise to write these down ahead of time, because the stress can be high at the time of death and it can interfere with your ability to remember.)

1. Contact Holy Apostles: (719-597-4249)

2. If the death occurs at home under Hospice Care, contact the local Hospice Office:

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

3. If the death occurs at home, contact local law enforcement.

Non-emergency police phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

4. It is wise to have a family liaison that will make/receive phone calls, answer questions, and respond to offers of assistance. Keep in mind that there often are unscrupulous and even criminal attempts to defraud you in these times. Having a good liaison will help prevent these attempts from succeeding.

Liaison: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Record names and numbers of immediate family and friends. Again, the stress of the time may interfere with your ability to remember or find these numbers:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Inform the employer/human resources manager at work to make sure that the deceased's co-workers are informed and that insurance benefits are handled properly:

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

HR Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Organization of items and information.** There are a number of items which are required or recommended by funeral homes.

1. Items:

- a. Clothing (including undergarments)
- b. Jewelry (but specify if you want it returned)
- c. Glasses
- d. Shoes
- e. Rosary (to be placed in the hands of the deceased)

2. Information:

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Children(s)' name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_

Photo (for obituary) \_\_\_\_\_

Name and addresses of Newspapers/Internet sites for the obituary:

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Military Discharge Papers \_\_\_\_\_

Work History \_\_\_\_\_

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Clubs, hobbies, accomplishments, etc.:

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### **C. Funeral Home Services**

1. A viewing at the funeral home is not necessary. Parishioners have the option of using the parish church for a viewing before Mass. The Rosary can be said at the end of the viewing. In the parish hall, should the family wish it, recorded music or secular music can be played. If the Rosary is prayed immediately before the funeral (which can save parishioners a good deal of money), the funeral liturgy would begin after the viewing. It is also wise to establish a budget, especially since in times of stress it is hard to think clearly about money matters and resist salesmen.

2. The casket: Please realize that the funeral home business can sometimes try to persuade you to purchase a lead-lined casket “to protect your loved ones.” Realize that anything besides a simple wood casket slows down a natural process, is very expensive, and does not “protect” at all. You are not expected to spend unnecessarily in this area.

3. Urns for cremated remains. There are times when cremation is necessary, such as when the remains have to be transported over a great distance at great expense. However, everything in the funeral rite assumes the presence of the body. If there is an urn, it should be made of a worthy substance. This is not defined by Church law, but by common sense.

4. Choosing a burial plot or vault. There is no Church law which applies to unconsecrated ground. The only two geographical locations which can be consecrated are churches and cemeteries. The advantage of consecrated ground is, of course, not so much to the dead but to the common good, as honoring the dead is an excellent way to fulfill the Fourth Commandment. Internment in consecrated ground is a perfect way to express our belief in the resurrection of the body. If a plot is purchased in non-consecrated ground, then it should be blessed at the time of burial.

If you have purchased a plot, crypt, or niche ahead of time, remember to keep your deed or Right of Burial in a safe place, as it is required by the cemetery at the time of need.

Name of Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Description of place: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Deed: \_\_\_\_\_

Beneficiaries documented with cemetery:

\_\_\_\_\_

Surviving heirs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Because state law determines eligibility for burial, unless documented in writing by the original owner, it is important to verify eligibility and availability with the cemetery before the time of need.

If purchasing a new in-ground burial space, be sure to understand the number of burials a single space can accommodate.

Regardless of the type of burial, there is a fee associated with the opening and closing of a grave. This fee is typically assessed at the time of need but some cemeteries will package this fee with the purchase of the burial space. This usually decreases cost as it avoids price increases and inflation.

Many cemeteries also have a number of rules and regulations for what may be placed on a grave or attached to a marker. For example, be sure you know what these regulations are before contracting a florist to place things such as Christmas wreaths.

5. Register book. Many families use the register to write their thanks to those who attend the funeral or who bequeathed gifts.

6. Prayer card or memorial folder. On this card the information should be a Catholic prayer or information on the dates of birth/death of the deceased. The priest who celebrates the Mass should be called "Celebrant," not "officiant."

7. Many families like to purchase some thank-you or acknowledgement cards. If Masses are said for the deceased, memorial Mass cards may be obtained from the parish office.

8. A memorial crucifix is a good reminder of the deceased, which can be put in a prominent place in the house. This is oftentimes made available by the funeral home.

9. This policy will not address military funerals, since much of the protocol for those has already been settled long ago. But a flag is quite appropriate for transportation of the remains in the hearse,

and the funeral pall is appropriate for the Mass. So the purchase of a flag for a veteran is proper.

10. Flowers may be placed around the church in moderation. It is good to choose a florist ahead of time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep in mind that much of the above – memorial cards, guest books, flowers, etc. – involves discretionary spending. You are under no obligation to purchase these things.

#### **D. Costly mistakes to avoid.**

1. Not being aware of non-declinable charges and any other charges which may be added after signing the contract with the funeral home.
2. Not comparing pricing.
3. Making a decision based on service charges only and not taking into account other funeral related charges.
4. Not knowing about embalming. It is usually not required by law, though many funeral homes require it if there is to be a viewing.
5. Be aware that some unscrupulous individuals will search newspaper obituaries for dates and times of funerals. They have broken into and robbed the homes of a grieving family during the funeral. It is advisable to have a neighbor or friend keep an eye on your home during the funeral, burial, and reception.

## **People and costs involved with a funeral at Holy Apostles**

- I. Funeral Coordinator: This person will meet with the family upon news of the death of the loved one and help arrange readings and music, as well as walk through the funeral liturgy. The requested stipend is \$150.
- II. Sacristan: This person helps set up and serves at the funeral. The requested stipend for a sacristan is \$25.
- III. Musician: This will either be our Director of Music or another musician. The requested stipend for a musician is \$150.
- IV. Priest Celebrant/Deacon: This clergyman will celebrate the funeral for the deceased and lead the community in prayer. The suggested stipend for the clergy celebrant is \$150.
- V. Interment: A priest or deacon will be present at the committal to bless the burial site. Suggested stipend is \$100.
- VI. Holy Apostles has a group of parish volunteers that offers a light reception in the parish hall after the funeral. If this group is utilized, there is a requested stipend to cover the cost of food.

### **A Lasting Legacy**

Please consider remembering Holy Apostles Catholic Church in your will or by making a planned gift. There are many ways that you can continue to make a difference in your parish after you are gone. Please contact us for more information on how you can leave a lasting legacy for future generations:

719-597-4249

office@holypostlescc.org

