

# *Saint Joseph Catholic Church*



## *Funeral Guidelines*

## **GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN BURIALS**

**St. Joseph Catholic Church  
3600 Devine Street  
Columbia, SC 29205  
(803) 254-7646**

### **CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITES**

The Catholic funeral rites celebrate the mystery of our life, death and resurrection in Christ. Through Baptism we enter into this mystery. We live our lives in the hope of sharing eternal life with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when we complete our passage through death. As Christians we believe death in Christ results in life in greater abundance. This new life, like a seed, was planted in us at Baptism, flowers during our lifetime, and at death will yield a rich harvest. Faith in this mystery should motivate people arranging the funeral of a loved one. With this in mind, and praying with you in this time of grief, we present to you the funeral guidelines for our parish.

The parish is open to celebrating funeral services for current or former parishioners and for their immediate Catholic relatives. Non-parishioners will be accommodated if staff resources allow.

### **Times**

The Mass of Christian Burial is the primary service, customarily celebrated in the morning, reflecting the theme of resurrection. Procession to the cemetery and burial usually follow the Mass.

Funeral arrangements begin with a meeting with the funeral director of your choice. Next, the pastor, Fr. Harris, is contacted to confirm the time for the Mass of Christian Burial. Monday through Friday during business hours call 254-7646 ext. 16 or weekends call 540-1910. No arrangements may be made (time, place, etc.) without contact and clarification with the pastor (or his designee).

Liturgies and/or other activities which are already scheduled for the Church will take priority, and cannot be rescheduled. This may require scheduling the Mass of Christian Burial at a time other than requested.

#### **Special Note:**

Due to staff restraints, usually only one Mass of Christian Burial is allowed per day.

### **Christian Wake Service or Rosary**

The Christian Wake Service of prayer and scripture is recommended and preferred by the Church. The parish priest will lead the Christian Wake Service. This service may be held at the funeral home or the Church with the body present. The Rosary is recommended for the morning of the Mass of Christian Burial, at the funeral home prior to the Mass. It may be lead by a family member or friend.

#### **Special Notes:**

The Rosary may be permitted at the beginning of visitation.

These services should begin no later than 6:00 p.m.

### **Viewing the Body**

This practice, which should take place at the funeral home, is highly encouraged because it helps remove doubts that the loved one has truly died. At the time of the Mass of Christian Burial, the casket is closed and is not reopened at the conclusion of the Mass. Viewing does not usually occur at the gravesite.

### **Cremation**

If the deceased is to be cremated, it is encouraged that this takes place after the Mass of Christian Burial. However, it is permissible to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial with the cremated remains present. If the family prefers a Memorial Mass, it may be celebrated in the absence of the cremated remains. Church law requires that cremated remains be laid to rest in consecrated ground; either buried in a cemetery or placed in a columbarium. The Church does not permit the cremated remains to be scattered.

### **Music**

Music is an integral component to the funeral rites, but is not central to the funeral rite. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone fail to convey. Music has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death; and, should be related to the readings from Scripture. Music is arranged through the Director of Music (or a designee) and approved by the pastor. Popular or secular music is much more suitable for the wake service. Music and a cantor are provided by St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Special Notes:

Bagpipes may not be played in the Church.

Special Notes (cont'd):

Use of a soloist and musicians not affiliated with St. Joseph Catholic Church must be approved by the Director of Music and/or the pastor.

Only a limited number of songs prior to and during the Mass of Christian Burial are allowed.

### **Flowers**

Flowers are permitted for the wake service at the funeral home. The parish welcomes donations of two vases of fresh flowers (no artificial flowers are allowed) for the altar. The parish highly recommends that you contact the florist used by the parish. If you choose to use another florist, you must contact the office for the inserts for the vases. These flowers are considered as dedicated to God once they are placed in the Church sanctuary. They are to remain in the sanctuary.

Special Note:

Additional floral pieces, other than the two vases for the altar must be approved by the pastor.

### **Photographs and Memorabilia**

Memorial displays are allowed at the wake at the funeral home, but not at the Mass of Christian Burial.

### **Incense**

Incense is used only at the conclusion of the Mass.

### **Honor Guard**

If an honor guard is desired, the family of the deceased must speak with the celebrant regarding its presence at the Mass. The firing of rifles is not permitted on the parish campus.

## **CELEBRATING THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL**

### **Reception at the Church**

Since the Church is the place where the community of faith assembles for worship, the Rite of Reception of the Body at the Church has great significance. The Rite of Reception takes place at the beginning of the Mass, at the entrance to the Church. The casket spray or American flag is removed from the casket in preparation for the placing of the pall and Christian symbols. The pall reminds us of the garment given at baptism and therefore signifies life in Christ. After the celebrant greets the family, he then sprinkles the casket with holy water and members of the Bereavement Committee place the pall on the casket. Then the celebrant places the Christian symbols.

### **Entrance Procession**

The order of entrance is as follows: altar servers, celebrant, casket, pallbearers, followed by the family. The same order is used when leaving the Church.

#### **Special Note:**

If an Honor Guard has been allowed, the celebrant will designate their location for the procession and during the Mass of Christian Burial.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

The reading of the Word of God is an essential element of the celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial. The readings proclaim the paschal mystery, teach remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together again in God's kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life.

At the request of the family of the deceased, the celebrant will meet with the family prior to the funeral. At this time,

you may choose your readings for the wake service and the Old and New Testament readings for the Mass. It is preferable to have a different reader for the Old and New Testament readings. Only lectors from St. Joseph Catholic Church or family members **who are trained** and familiar with the procedure for liturgies are permitted to proclaim the readings. The celebrant will choose the Gospel. The Responsorial Psalm is chosen in conjunction with the celebrant or the Director of Music.

The homily, based on the readings, is given after the Gospel. The homilist will dwell on God's compassionate love and on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. Examples from the life of the deceased may be used in the homily. Eulogies, poems, letters, etc. are not part of the Mass of Christian Burial. These may be given after the Christian Wake Service at the funeral home or after the committal at the cemetery.

The Prayers of Intercession are to be read by one of the lectors. The approved intercessions from the Rite are to be used.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

The Liturgy of the Eucharist takes place in the usual manner at the Mass of Christian Burial. Members of the family or friends of the deceased may bring the gifts to the altar. If necessary, members of our Bereavement Committee will fulfill this responsibility.

Eucharistic Ministers from St. Joseph Catholic Church or commissioned family members may distribute the Eucharist (if needed).

### **Committal Rite**

The Committal Rite usually occurs immediately after the Mass of Christian Burial. A visitation with friends is more

appropriate after the committal rather than immediately after the Mass of Christian Burial. Special requests may be honored after the Rite of Committal, but **only after** the Rite. The celebrant or deacon will officiate at the committal.

### **Special Notes:**

Normally, the pastor or the parochial vicar is the main celebrant and homilist. Visiting priests are welcomed as concelebrants.

Altar servers are provided by the Church.

The funeral liturgy, **Mass of Christian Burial**, is the only liturgy allowed at the Church. There are **no** diversions from the **Mass of Christian Burial** (i.e. no deletions or additions).

Funeral Masses are **not permitted** on **Sundays, Holy Days or the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday)** and **never allowed at a funeral home**.

Orders of Worship (programs) are supplied by St. Joseph Catholic Church provided that all selections are made in a timely manner and staff resources allow.

Greeters will be provided by the Bereavement Committee of St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Memorials may be made to St. Joseph Catholic Church and/or St. Joseph Catholic School.

Pre-planning packets containing forms, Scripture, and music suggestions are available in the parish office. You may request an appointment with the pastor to discuss future arrangements.

## NOTES