

CATHOLIC FUNERALS

“Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this is to see what you believe”

St. Augustine

We recognize that Christ gave His life that all may have eternal life, and that His risen and glorified Body is the pattern of what we hope to become. We recall that, through our Baptism, we were welcomed into the Communion of Saints; and, can therefore continue to pray for one another even after death. Death is not an ending, but the beginning of a transformation into a glorious existence; the bonds forged by love in this life cannot be broken by death, for they have been taken up into that Love which loves until the end – and beyond.

The Order of Christian Funerals reflects the power of Christ’s Resurrection and our participation in it through our Baptism. This is symbolized by the priest’s white vestments (although purple or black may be worn), the Paschal Candle (the sign of the presence Risen Christ in the midst of the Church), the sprinkling of the casket with Holy Water as a reminder of Baptism, and the white pall on the casket (recalling how we are “clothed with Christ” at our Baptism).

In the ***Funeral Rites of the Church***, we recommend the departed to God’s mercy, pray that we ourselves might be consoled and renewed in hope of eternal life, and thank God for whatever gifts and blessings our loved one received in this life. It also provides the opportunity to say a proper farewell.

The Catholic funeral is structured in three (3) parts. In the *Vigil* (or wake), we begin to accept the finality of death by viewing the body, gather as a community for mutual support and prayer, and share memories of the one we have lost. The Vigil service is the most appropriate time for eulogies. In the *Funeral Mass*, we pray for the forgiveness of the departed through the merits of Jesus’ Passion and Resurrection. (A family member or friend may speak briefly about the life of the deceased at the Mass, but the focus here is on what God has done for us in Christ.) At the *Committal* (or burial), we commend our loved one to God as we take our leave in the hope of the ultimate reunion in Heaven.

Cremation is now permitted by the Church, as long as it is not viewed as a denial of the ultimate resurrection of the Body. It is still preferred that the body of the deceased be present for the Funeral

Mass if at all possible. It is through the body that we come to know a person. It is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, washed in the waters of Baptism and fed with the Body of Christ. The body is therefore treated with tremendous reverence – and so should the cremated remains of a body. The ashes should therefore be buried in a grave or columbarium, where a person’s memory may be enshrined rather than kept in one’s home or scattered in the winds.

Please call the Parish Office, (904) 259 – 5959, when a loved one has passed away to make arrangements for the Funeral Mass.

A LIST OF FUNERAL HOMES IN OUR AREA:

Blackburn-Curry Funeral and Cremation	380 N. Lowder St., Macclenny, Fla	(904) 259-2806
Ferreira Funeral Services	250 N. Lowder St., Macclenny, Fla	(904) 259-5700
Fraser Funeral Home	250 N. Lowder St., Macclenny, Fla	(904) 259-2521
Guerry Funeral Home	420 E. Macclenny Ave, Macclenny, Fla	(904) 259-2211

THE ORDER OF A CHRISTIAN BURIAL

“The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with the deceased, at the participation in that communion of the community gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1684)

As you prepare for a Catholic Funeral Mass, it is important to remember that you are not alone. We, at St. Mary Mother of Mercy Catholic Church, will assist you in the planning of the Funeral Mass and will provide a Memorial meal if so desired after the Committal.

The following is a list of “things to know” as you begin your planning:

1. The **Vigil** consists of a time to gather with friends and family, usually at a funeral home or church. During the Vigil, there will be readings from Sacred Scripture, prayers for the deceased and an appropriate setting for sharing in remembrance of the deceased.

2. The **Funeral Mass** consists of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The celebrant shares a few remarks on the life of the deceased while focusing on the reading of the Liturgy, God's compassionate love and the Paschal Mystery (Jesus' Death and Resurrection). During the Mass, one friend or family member can have an opportunity to share briefly in remembrance about the deceased.

3. The **Rite of Committal/Burial** is considered the final act of caring by the community for the deceased and their body. This takes place at the gravesite after the Funeral Mass.