

# Funerals at St. Ambrose Church

## Planning the Funeral

*“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.”*

At this time of loss it may be difficult to focus on planning the funeral for your departed loved one. However, the funeral can be a wonderful tribute to him or her, and it can be part of our memories which last forever. The funeral can also offer great comfort and solace to those who mourn. This *Guide for Planning a Funeral* is intended to assist you in designing the memorial service which will celebrate life, face the reality of death and find comfort in the love and truth of our generous and good God.

### **Contact the Pastor**

If you have not yet spoken to the pastor about your loved one's passing and impending funeral, it is important to do so immediately.

You may reach Father Paul at 410.367.9918 or 410.370.1811.

Prior to planning make certain that other family members are involved in the design of the funeral. Be sure to inform the funeral director that you are working with St. Ambrose Church to plan the funeral. It may be helpful to refer the funeral director or counselor to [www.saintambrose.com](http://www.saintambrose.com).

### **Website Obituary**

Our website is available to post the notice of death for public information. Biographical material and one photo of the deceased may be included on the website. The official obituary may be included, if the family desires. The date and times for viewing, visitation, family time and the funeral will be posted when arrangements are finalized. The website will continue to post the notice for at least 24 hours after the funeral. Material for the website should be submitted as soon as possible to the parish office.

### **Scheduling**

You, your family, the funeral home, the cemetery office and St. Ambrose Church will reach a decision concerning the day and time of the funeral. Scheduling is subject to availability. It is absolutely necessary to make scheduling determinations with the pastor.

### **Funeral**

In consultation with the pastor it should be determined whether there will be a funeral Mass or a simpler funeral service. It is recommended that Catholic funerals include the Mass. For members of the Catholic Church it is the Eucharist which unites us. The Mass is a remembrance of the redemption won for us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Celebrating the Mass is not only appropriate but also strongly encouraged. For a deceased family member who is not a Catholic the simpler funeral service is recommended. The order of service for each is included for your consideration.

### **The Order of Service**

*The Funeral Mass of Funeral Service is normally preceded by time for viewing. During this time acknowledgements may be made and notes of condolence and poems may be read.*

*Choose one: Funeral Mass—option A or Funeral Service without Mass—option B*

#### Option A: Funeral Mass

- Reading of the Obituary
- Greeting
- *Sprinkling with Baptismal Waters*
- *Draping with Baptismal Garment*
- Processional Song
- Opening Prayer
- Old Testament Reading
- Responsorial Song
- New Testament Reading
- Alleluia
- Gospel
- Musical Selection
- Sermon
- Musical Selection
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Lord's Prayer
- Communion
- Eulogy
- Final Commendation
- Recessional Song

#### Option B: Funeral Service without Mass

- Reading of the Obituary
- Greeting
- Reminder of Baptism
- *Sprinkling with Baptismal Waters*
- *Draping with Baptismal Garment*
- Processional Song
- Opening Prayer
- Old Testament Reading
- Responsorial Song
- New Testament Reading
- Alleluia
- Gospel
- Musical Selection
- Sermon
- Prayers of Intercession
- Remarks and Acknowledgments
- Final Commendation
- Recessional Song

### **Music**

Music is a very important aspect of the funeral. Saint Ambrose Church is blessed to have an accomplished and experienced music minister, Ms. Shirley Hughes, who is normally able to assist in this matter. In planning the funeral it is important that appropriate music be selected. It is not normally acceptable to include purely secular musical selections for a funeral at St. Ambrose Church. One should consult with the music minister before deciding which songs or hymns are to be included.

The following hymns are among those frequently sung at funerals:

- *Amazing Grace Blessed Assurance*
- *It Is Well With My Soul In the Garden*
- *Come Ye Disconsolate His Eyes Are on the Sparrow*
- *Soon and Very Soon The Old Rugged Cross*
- *Precious Lord Great Is Thy Faithfulness*
- *Ave Maria God Will Take Care of You*
- *On Eagle's Wings The Lord Is My Light*
- *Just a Closer Walk With Thee.*

Other hymns may be chosen in consultation with the music minister. We strongly recommend congregational singing for the funeral Mass or service. Choosing hymns known by a large number of people will enhance the service. Occasionally, family members or friends will ask or be asked to perform a solo. The solo musical selections must also be of a sacred nature and chosen in consultation with the music minister. The appropriate placement of the solo within the Mass or service is an important matter to discuss with the music minister. In all cases the soloist must contact the music minister to schedule a rehearsal. Only one solo selection is ordinarily allowed in the service. The family may select a pianist or song leader of its own choosing. However, these must nonetheless consult with Ms. Hughes prior to the service.

### Scripture

Catholic funerals include four passages from Scripture. In addition to an appropriate Psalm, a passage from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament letters and a Gospel passage are selected. A list of suggested scriptural passages are provided below. In choosing appropriate passages it is helpful to remember that a Christian burial focuses on our life-giving and wonderful God, whose greatness is ultimately expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are consoled in our time of loss by our faith in Him who conquered death; by God's mercy our tears are wiped away. Although the Gospel is always proclaimed by the deacon or priest, the other scriptural passages may be proclaimed by a family member or friend who is willing and able to effectively read the passage from the pulpit. The readers must be of the Christian faith but are not required to be Catholic. It is inappropriate for the readers to interject their own thoughts or words of condolence either before or after reading the scriptural passage; the Word of God is allowed to stand on its own.

Recommended scriptural passages from which to choose:

- Old Testament (*choose one*)
- Job 19.23-27 Wisdom 3.1-9
- Wisdom 4.7-15 Isaiah 25.6-9
- Lamentations 3.17-26 Daniel 12.1-3
- II Maccabees 12.43-46
- New Testament (*choose one*)
- Acts 10.34-43 Romans 5.5-11
- Romans 6.3-9 Romans 8.14-23
- Romans 8.31-39 Romans 14.7-12
- I Corinthians 15.20-28 I Corinthians 15.51-57
- II Corinthians 4.14 – 5.1 II Corinthians 5.6-10
- Philippians 3.20-21 I Thessalonians 4.13-18
- II Timothy 2.8-13 I John 3.1-2
- I John 3.14-16 Revelation 14.13
- Gospel (*choose one*)
- Matthew 5.1-12 Matthew 11.25-30
- Matthew 25.1-13 Matthew 25.31-46
- Mark 15.33-39, 16.1-6 Luke 7.11-17
- Luke 12.35-40 Luke 23.33, 39-43

- Luke 23.44 – 24.6 Luke 24.13-35
- John 5.24-29 John 6.37-40
- John 6.51-58 John 11.17-27
- John 11.32-45 John 12.23-28
- John 14.1-6 John 17.24-26
- John 19.17-30

It is also recommended to choose one Psalm to be sung or recited. One of the following Psalms would be appropriate for a funeral.

Psalm (*choose one*)

- Psalm 23 Psalm 25
- Psalm 27 Psalm 63
- Psalm 103

### **Pre-Service Viewing**

If the family wishes to offer pre-service viewing there are two options for placement of the coffin. It is recommended that the remains of the deceased be viewed in the fellowship area, near the entrance of the church. However, if the family desires, the casket may be placed at the front of the church, near the altar. In either case funeral directors are instructed to limit the number of flower arrangements to three, including the casket bouquet.

### **Acknowledgements, Remarks & Tributes**

Notes of condolence, acknowledgements, poems, etc., may be read during the pre-service viewing time. If the family desires that cards and acknowledgements be read it is advisable to designate an individual for this purpose. Civic, occupational or organizational citations should be presented at another time, preferably during Family Visitation at the funeral home.

### **Obituary**

A family member may read the obituary at the appropriate time during the pre-service viewing immediately preceding the closing of the coffin.

### **Eulogy**

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Baltimore that only one person be permitted to offer remarks as a eulogy.

St. Ambrose Church adopts this policy for funerals conducted in our church.

Other speakers may be selected or invited by the family to address the gathered people at the funeral home wake service.

### **Homily**

The pastor or an ordained Catholic priest or deacon designated by the pastor preaches the sermon or homily. Of course, visiting Catholic and non-Catholic clergy will be most welcome to participate in the funeral in varying capacities as directed by the pastor.

### **Pall Bearers**

It is helpful to designate six persons as pall bearers who are aware of their responsibilities before the funeral begins. The pastor and funeral director will provide the necessary instruction.

### **Cremation**

If cremation is desired, it is recommended that it occur after the funeral service. However, cremation may occur prior to the funeral; it is acceptable to place the urn of cremated remains in a prominent place in the church.

It is no longer the policy of the Catholic Church to prohibit cremation. According to the wishes of the deceased or the surviving family, cremation is certainly permitted.

### **Repast or Post-Funeral Reception**

Ordinarily St. Ambrose does not provide accommodations for the repast or reception following the funeral. The school is not available because of daily program and organizational demands. It is possible to request an area which can accommodate no more than 45 persons. A person who will not attend the funeral must be designated to coordinate the repast preparations. Use of the area is subject to availability and requires a set-up and cleaning fee of \$75 for church members or non-members.

### **Church Use Fee**

For the deceased who is a registered member of St. Ambrose Church or a member of the immediate family (parent, spouse or child) of a registered member, the funeral is provided without cost. Donations are accepted but not expected. The fee for non-parishioners is \$200. Utility and maintenance costs are included.

### **Music Services Fee**

Musical services are provided free of charge for the funeral of a deceased registered member of the church.

The music service fee for the funeral of a deceased non-registered person is negotiated with the music minister