

SECTION 12: FUNERALS

The following policies shall be followed in regard to funerals.

12.1 CELEBRATION OF FUNERALS

As a rule, funerals for any of the faithful departed must be celebrated in his or her own church. However, any member of the Christian faithful or those commissioned to arrange for the funeral may choose another church for the funeral rite with consent of its pastor and after informing the departed person's pastor.

12.2 TIME OF FUNERALS

12.2.1 Funerals, with or without Mass, are not to be celebrated on Sundays.

12.2.2 Wake services may be held on a Sunday.

12.2.3 Funerals may be celebrated on holy days of obligation, but not within the context of Mass. The Eucharist may not be celebrated or distributed at a funeral on holy days. This includes holy days which occur on a Saturday or Monday when the obligation may have been dispensed.

12.2.4 Funerals may be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, but not within the context of Mass. The Eucharist may not be celebrated or distributed at a funeral on these days.

12.3 THOSE TO WHOM FUNERAL RITES ARE TO BE GRANTED OR DENIED

12.3.1 In regard to funerals, catechumens are considered members of the Christian faithful.

12.3.2 Unbaptized children are likewise to be granted funeral rites if the parents intended to baptize the child.

12.3.3 Baptized non-Catholics may also be granted funeral rites unless it would be contrary to the will of the deceased, and provided the deceased's minister is unavailable.

12.3.4 Unbaptized spouses of Catholics may also be granted funeral rites unless it would be contrary to the will of the deceased, and provided the deceased's minister, if any, is unavailable.

12.3.5 For all other cases, the Archbishop is to be consulted.

12.3.6 No Catholic is to be denied funeral rites without first consulting the Archbishop.

12.4 CREMATION

12.4.1 The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed; it does not, however, forbid cremation unless cremation has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching, such as a denial of life after death.

12.4.2 While the Church teaches and has always preferred that the body of the deceased be present for funeral services, by indult granted in March 1997, the cremated remains is permitted to be present at the rites celebrated in and governed by the *Order of Christian Funerals*.

12.4.3 Priests or deacons may not preside at a funeral without the guarantee that the cremains will be interred at the conclusion of the funeral rites. “The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering the remains on the sea, from the air, or in the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition the Church requires” (*Order of Christian Funerals*, paragraph 417).

12.4.3 Priests or deacons may preside at the interment of the remains of a cremated body at the tomb, grave, columbarium or mausoleum. They are not allowed to be present for any other type of disposal of the remains of the cremated body, such as a scattering or sprinkling of the remains, or conduct any service when the cremated remains are not interred, with the exception of a burial at sea.

12.5 FUNERAL OF MASONS

Although Catholics are not to join the Masons, Catholic clergy may celebrate funerals of Catholics who have nonetheless joined the Masons. No Catholic clergy, however, may be present when any Masonic rites are celebrated.

12.6 FUNERALS CELEBRATED OUTSIDE OF A CHURCH

No priest or deacon is to agree to celebrate a funeral liturgy outside of a church without the prior permission of the pastor of the deceased. If there is any question of who this proper pastor is, the dean is to be consulted before the scheduling of the funeral.

12.7 WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

12.7.1 Eulogies are not to be given at funerals celebrated in the Archdiocese. Rather, Words of Remembrance, which focus solely on the faith life not on other anecdotal memories of the deceased, may be read.

12.7.2 As Catholics, we say each day at Mass that "we wait in joyful hope" for the time of our

return to the Lord. In reflecting on the faith life of the deceased, we prepare ourselves to say our farewell filled with that same joyful hope. "Because our loved one lived this life, we therefore with joyful hope entrust him/her to the Lord." That is the spirit of Words of Remembrance. Reflecting on manifestations of a loved one's life of care and nurturing, of prayer and fidelity to the sacraments, of service to Christ's Church family, of fidelity to relationships and commitments made in faith: these are all that need be included in Words of Remembrance, for this is how Christian faith is lived.

12.7.3 Words of Remembrance are offered only by one person on behalf of the family. Therefore, the one chosen for this should consult with the family to make certain that the remembrances of all are represented in the remarks.

12.7.4 In our Archdiocese, it is the preference of the Archbishop that Words of Remembrance, if selected to be included, are offered at either of the following times:

- During the Vigil Service (Wake Service) following the Concluding Prayer and before the Blessing and Dismissal.
- Before the Funeral Mass following the prayers for the Transfer of the Body to the Church or Chapel, if these prayers are offered at the funeral home.
- At the conclusion of the time of visitation and before the beginning of Mass, if all is done at the parish church.

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