

# Guidelines for Eulogies

Your time at the funeral home is intended for spending time with family, greeting visitors, and exchanging with them your memories of the deceased. A eulogy, consisting of the history or stories of the deceased, is best delivered at the funeral home. The ideal occasion is the final gathering in the funeral home, usually about an hour before coming to the church for the Funeral Mass.

Eulogies are not normally permitted at the Funeral Mass, but your priest may make an exception. If he permits a eulogy, please follow these rules:

(a) Tell a few brief stories or anecdotes about the deceased. Instead of saying “Dear Joe was a kind man,” tell a brief story that illustrates his kindness or otherwise exemplifies what you want to say about the deceased.

(b) Keep it short. The Funeral Mass is already longer than the usual Mass. A eulogy lasting more than about four minutes begins to weight the end of the Funeral disproportionately.

(c) If rules (a) and (b) are too constraining, write up what you have to say, photocopy it, and distribute it at the Funeral Home or to those who attend the Funeral. Long biographies, for example, are more easily absorbed in print than in a speech. Similarly, if a certain text or poem appeals to you, do not read it in place of a eulogy; instead, have your Funeral Director print it up and distribute it at the Funeral Home.

(d) Stay away from religious topics such as the Christian faith, moral lessons, Heaven, eternal life, etc. These are important at a Funeral, but they are the responsibility of the preacher.

(e) Write it out in advance. Even if you don’t plan to read from your paper, you’ll have a backup in case the emotion of the moment overcomes you. You’ll also have a copy to file away in your scrap book.

(f) Don’t surprise anyone. In some cases, the liturgy is carefully timed to accommodate the needs of the church or cemetery. Make sure your priest and funeral director know well in advance of your intentions concerning a eulogy.