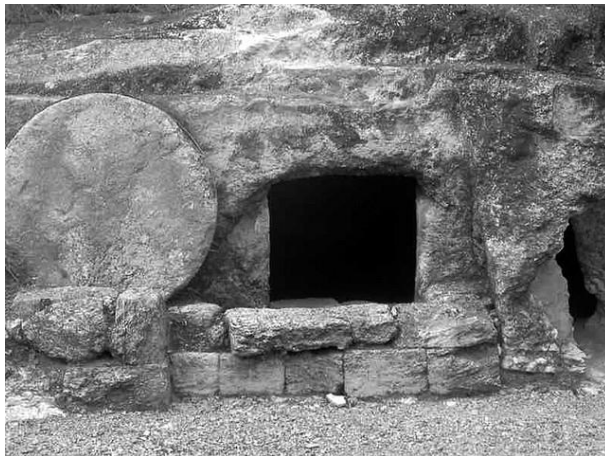


FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIESTS
A GUIDE FOR THE EXECUTOR AND FAMILY



DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD
555 COLMAN CENTER DRIVE
P.O. BOX 7044
ROCKFORD, IL 61125
815-399-4300

In preparing for a priest's funeral, the following are some commonly asked questions by the Executor and family members. Hopefully these answers will help you through the process of carrying out the priest's wishes.

Q. Who at the Diocese should be notified with the news of a priest's passing?

A. The Vicar for Clergy office should be notified at 815-399-4300. If it is a weekend or evening, please leave a message. Our calls are transferred to a system that will notify the correct person to return your call.

Q. How are the priest's wishes known concerning his funeral/burial plans?

A. All priests should have Post Mortem instructions on file with the Chancery. Once the Diocese is notified of the death, the Chancellor will pull these instructions. The Vicar for Clergy office will help the family plan the funeral, coordinating with the family, the funeral home and the parish.

Q. Who has the listing of the priest's assignments for the newspaper?

A. The Vicar for Clergy Office will send a death notice to all the priests of the Diocese. This notice will list all of the priest's assignments, immediate family members, visitation and funeral times. This notice is also sent to the funeral home if the Executor and family wishes so that parts of it may be used for the newspaper announcement.

Q. Are there any guidelines for advance funeral planning?

A. The Diocese requires that all priests have on file at the Chancery Office a Funeral Planning Sheet, Post Mortem Instructions and Will. The Executor should check with the Vicar for Clergy office to see if the priest has these documents on file. The Funeral Planning Sheet includes the readings and songs the priest would like with the Funeral Liturgy.

Q. Where is the funeral Mass to be celebrated?

A. It is preferred to have the Mass celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Rockford, but it may take place at the last parish the priest was assigned. The priest should list this on his Funeral Planning Sheet.

Q. Where is the visitation held?

A. Visitation for a deceased priest is always in the church where the funeral takes place. Generally, visitation is the night before the funeral and an hour before the funeral Mass.

Q. What happens at the visitation the night before?

A. The deceased priest will be in the church and the family will stand by the casket greeting the attending guests who come to pray and show their respect. At the end of the evening, a priest will lead the rosary for those present. After the rosary, the funeral home will take the casket back to the funeral home and bring it back to the church the next day.

Q. Who will celebrate the funeral Mass?

A. The Bishop of Rockford will be the celebrant. Close priest friends of the priest whom he specified in his Funeral Planning will concelebrate at the altar. Priests of the Diocese may concelebrate also. Priests from outside the Diocese will need to forward a Letter of Good Standing in order to concelebrate.

Q. Who coordinates the planning with the Bishop and the parish?

A. The Vicar for Clergy office will coordinate planning of the funeral itself, mindful of the priest's wishes, the family's wishes, the Bishop's schedule, and the availability of the church. If the Bishop is not available to celebrate the Funeral Mass, the Vicar General will celebrate the Mass.

Q. What day of the week are most priest funerals held?

A. Priest funerals are not held on Sunday, nor are they usually held on Saturday because the brother priests are not able to attend. The best days are Monday through Friday.

Q. Should there be a luncheon after the funeral?

A. Most often a luncheon is held immediately after the funeral Mass. The burial is then to take place after the luncheon so that most of the priests will be able to attend the luncheon before returning to their parishes. The Vicar for Clergy office will help arrange the luncheon with the parish and a caterer, if the executor and family would like. This is part of the funeral expenses paid by the Executor.

Q. Who preaches at the funeral?

A. If the Bishop of Rockford is the celebrant, he will preach, unless the priest has specified on his planning sheet for a close priest friend to preach. In that case, the Bishop will say a few words before the final commendation.

Q. Who prepares the funeral Mass booklet?

A. The Vicar for Clergy office prepares the Funeral Mass booklet using the information provided on the Funeral Planning Sheet and will have them printed and available at the

church the morning of the funeral

Q. What if the priest did not complete the Funeral Planning Sheet?

A. The Vicar for Clergy office will consult with the Diocesan Director of Divine Worship and plan the Mass after consulting with family and priest friends of the priest.

Q. Is there a specific casket for a priest?

A. Priests should have a full body casket. That is, the lid can be removed so that the priest in his vestments may be viewed. After the viewing period has ended, the casket is prepared for the beginning of the Mass and the lid is installed and sealed.

Q. What is the attire for the deceased priest?

A. The priest is vested in his Mass vestments. The funeral home will need a set of clerics (black dress pants and black collar shirt), alb, cincture, white chasuble and white stole. He should have under garments, black socks and shoes. He should also have his favorite rosary. A priest will be assigned to assist the funeral home in properly vesting the priest.

Q. Is it permissible to have a memento in the casket and buried with the priest?

A. Out of respect for the priestly order, mementos are not to be in the casket for the viewing. They may be given to the funeral home to place in the casket before it is sealed before the funeral Mass.

Q. Who is responsible for the funeral expenses?

A. Each priest has an insurance policy with the Diocese, but it is not enough to cover all the funeral expenses. As part of their advanced planning, each priest should make financial arrangements for these expenses. The luncheon cost should be included in the planning. The priest should name his Executor as the beneficiary of the insurance policy if he wishes to use that money for funeral expenses. The priest should have listed in his Post Mortem instructions the location of any insurance policies, bank accounts, attorney and executor.

Q. How is the Diocesan Life Insurance obtained?

A. When funeral arrangements are made, the funeral home is instructed by the Vicar for Clergy office to provide the Diocese with an original Death Certificate. When this is received, it will be given to the proper department to process. The check will be made payable to whomever the priest has specified as beneficiary and is to help defray costs of the priest's funeral.

Q. Is there a particular cemetery for priests?

A. The priest should have already secured his cemetery plot and recorded it on his Funeral Planning Sheet prior to his death. In the Diocese of Rockford some of the Catholic cemeteries have a special section for priests. You may call the main office for the Diocese at 815-965-1450 or you may visit them at Calvary Cemetery, 8616 W. State Street, Rockford, Illinois.

Q. Who will do the committal at the cemetery?

A. Often the Bishop has arranged for one of the priest's close priest friends go to the cemetery and conclude the burial rites.

Q. Do the priests have last wills and testaments?

A. The Diocese of Rockford requests that all priests have on file at the Chancery Office a copy of their Last Will and Testament, Power of Attorney, Power of Attorney for Health Care, along with their Post Mortem instructions and Funeral Planning sheet. The Chancellor will notify the Executor and provide a copy of the will if needed.

Q. Is it permissible for a priest to be cremated?

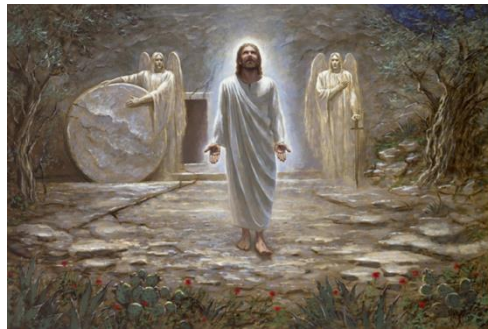
A. It is preferred that a priest not be cremated out of respect for his ordination to the holy priesthood. If cremation does take place, it cannot take place until after the Funeral Liturgy has concluded.

Q. Are flowers permitted to be alongside the casket?

A. Flowers arrangements are not placed at the casket. A couple of arrangements may be placed in the church at the pastor's discretion. A table will be in the foyer for flowers and/or photo exhibits of the priest's life. It is best to note "In lieu of flowers" in the newspaper obituary.

Q. Will the family be permitted to give a eulogy?

A. It is not recommended, but if requested and Bishop gives his permission, a short eulogy may be given at the end of the rosary during the visitation (wake service) according to the Diocese of Rockford Catholic Funeral Guidelines.



The Vicar for Clergy office of the Diocese of Rockford will do all they can to help the Executor and family through the planning process of the priest's funeral. Any questions may be directed to the Vicar for Clergy office at 815-399-4300.

**DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD
555 COLMAN CENTER DRIVE
P.O. BOX 7044
ROCKFORD, IL 61125
815-399-4300
PRINTED JULY, 2017**