



Planning a Catholic Funeral

With the Cathedral Parish of St Joseph

Foreword...

Organising the funeral for a loved one is a highly sensitive and challenging time. It is our hope that this small booklet provides information to make the funeral preparation process as straightforward as possible during this difficult period.

Our administration staff and bereavement team are fully committed to assisting you throughout this process and you are encouraged to contact them at any time with concerns or queries.

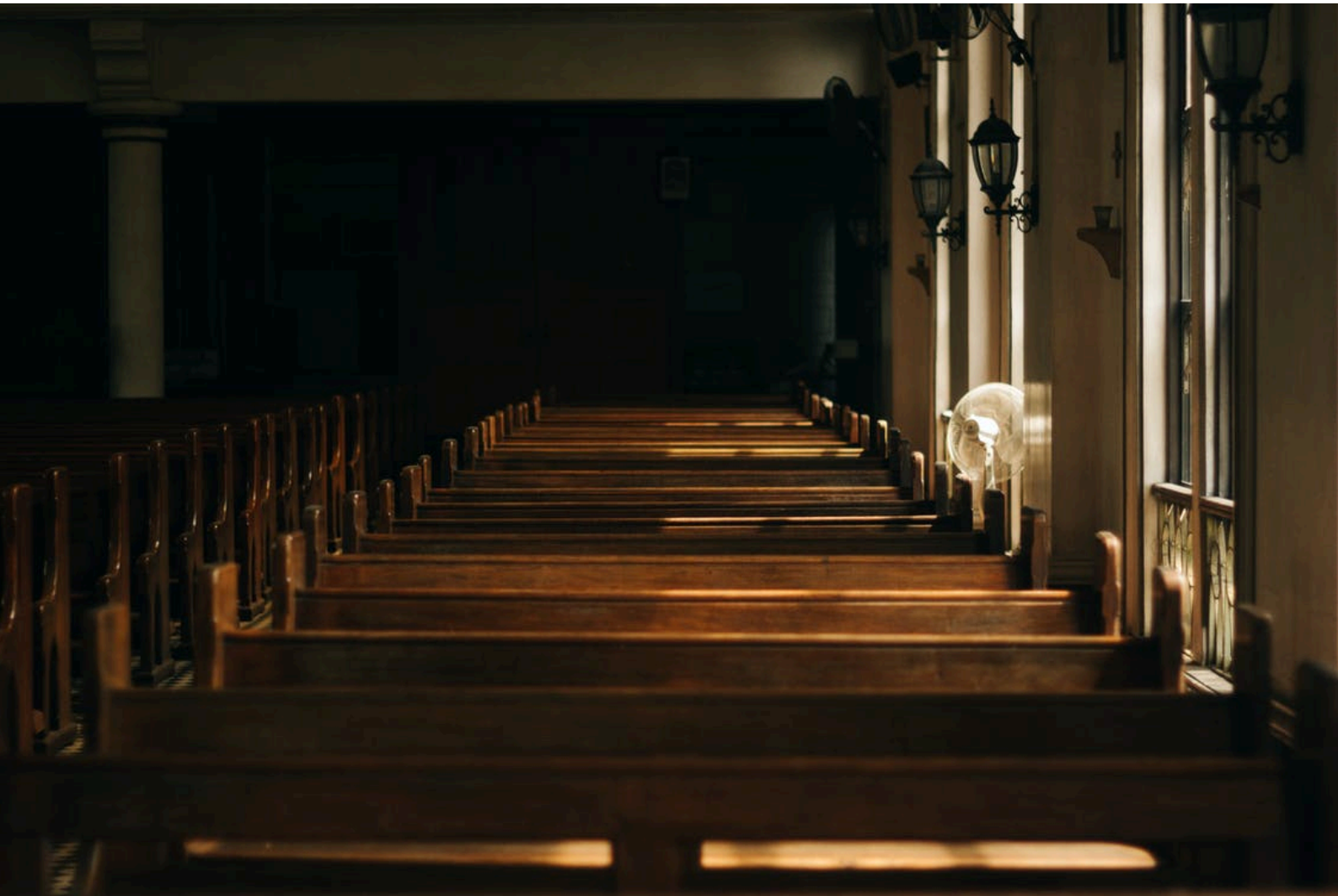
Scheduling a Bereavement Meeting

Shortly after your initial meeting with a funeral director; they will contact The Cathedral Parish Office with your information. We will soon after contact you and organise a bereavement meeting.

A bereavement meeting is an opportunity for your family to plan the funeral service with our experienced bereavement team. They will guide you through the process ensuring planning the funeral is as hassle-free as possible.

A bereavement meeting typically goes for approximately 1 hour and is where the family will select hymns, readings, and specific elements of the funeral.

Our bereavements teams are flexible and will do their best to organise themselves around your schedule during this time.



Planning the Ceremony

The bereavement team facilitates of planning the funeral ceremony. This section seeks to explain the major elements of the Catholic funeral to ensure families are aware of how a typical funeral ceremony is conducted and what options are available in terms of customisation.

The most important aspect about Catholic funerals is their expression of Christian hope in eternal life. Every element of a Catholic funeral expresses these fundamental beliefs.

Mass or Service?

The first decision that needs to be made is whether the funeral will take the format of a service or a mass. A service is a shorter ceremony that does not include Eucharist. Mass is typically longer with additional readings and the Sacrament of Eucharist.

Components of the Funeral Ceremony

Introductory Rites:

The first ceremonial decision made by the family is typically the placement of the coffin. The coffin can be placed at the base of the altar or processed in from the entrance of the church toward the altar. The introductory rites are also where the coffin is sprinkled with holy water.

Placing of the Pall and Symbols:

The placing of a white cloth (otherwise known as a pall) over the coffin is mandatory at Catholic funerals serving as a reminder of the white garment received at baptism. The pall also symbolizes the equality and dignity we all are afforded in the eyes of God.

Other symbols can also be placed on the coffin or a side table. These symbols include crosses, bibles, rosary beads and flowers. Additional items can include family photos or treasured possessions of the deceased.

Words of Remembrance

The Words of Remembrance play an important part in a Catholic funeral and offers a chance to share treasured moments and profound impacts your loved one has had on the lives of those gathered.

We recognise the importance of this moment of the funeral, but we ask that a time limit of 5 to 7 minutes is followed in respect of the other parts of the ceremony.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the word is a time of listening and reflecting on scripture readings. Our bereavement team has selected a range of scripture readings that are meaningful and relevant to the passing of the loved one. When planning the funeral ceremony there is the option of having one or two scripture readings in addition to the mandatory responsorial psalm and Gospel reading. For a service, a single reading is typically chosen. When two readings are chosen one reading must be chosen from each testament (old and new).

In addition to the scripture readings the prayers of intercession are a short moment of prayer and thanksgiving for your loved one's life, family and those who cared for them in times of need. Bereavement teams will walk you through the selection of prayers of intercession and will strive to help you select prayers that best capture the essence of your loved one's life and character.

Liturgy of the Eucharist (Funeral Mass only)

This part of the ceremony mirrors the traditional mass format of the Eucharist.

Final Commendation

Through silence and prayer, the final commendation serves as the conclusion of the funeral ceremony as well as a final farewell by loved ones as they entrust the soul of the deceased to God. Typically, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the procession is formed and the remains are accompanied to the place of committal. However, there are other options available.

Rite of Committal

The rite of committal is the final act of loved ones caring for the body of the deceased.



Frequently Asked Questions

What music can be played during the ceremony?

The music for a Catholic funeral is to be chosen from the Catholic repertoire and be covered by our copyright license. If other music is desired, The Cathedral Parish of St Joseph is not responsible for sourcing the music and any additional music chosen must be appropriate for the occasion and setting.

Can a PowerPoint be presented?

A PowerPoint presentation featuring the life of the deceased is not appropriate during a Catholic funeral. An appropriate time for this is at the gathering after the funeral liturgy.

Can scripture be printed in the funeral booklet?

Due to copyright; scripture readings **cannot** be printed in a funeral booklet. It is also not permitted theologically as scripture is a ministerial function and therefore is to be listened to by everyone collectively rather than read individually. Scripture references e.g. 'St Paul to the Romans' are permissible in a funeral booklet.