

## Additional Info

### Pre-planning:

Anyone who wishes to pre-plan a Funeral Mass may contact the parish office to arrange for a meeting with a parish representative.

### Funeral Luncheon:

The Parish will provide a meal in the Parish Hall following the Funeral Mass and Burial if the family wishes. This is also an appropriate time for the family to share remarks of remembrance.

### Mass Cards:

One way to remember our deceased loved ones is to request that a Mass be said for them. Mass cards are available in the parish office.

### Mass of Remembrance:

Each November, the Parish remembers those who have died during the past year at a special Mass.

### Parish participation:

Parishioners are always welcome at any Funeral Mass to support the family and pray for the deceased.



### Catholic Community of the Epiphany

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#### Resources for this brochure:

*A Parish Guide for Bereavement Ministry & Funeral Planning* by Jill Maria Murdy  
*US Catholic Catechism for Adults* by the USCCB

## Catholic Community of the Epiphany Planning Guide for Funerals



**Catholic Community  
of the Epiphany  
Sayre, PA**

## What We Believe

As Catholics, we believe in everlasting life. When we die, our life is changed, not ended. We live in hope that we will see God, and we believe that we will rise again on the last day just as Jesus himself rose from the dead. The Church teaches us that the bodies of the dead must be treated with great respect.

The Catholic Funeral Rites provide courage and comfort for those mourning the death of a loved one. By taking part in the planning of these liturgies, the family will find consolation and strength.



## Practical Considerations

After the death of a loved one, we ask that the family contact the funeral home of one's choice instead of calling the Parish. The funeral director will then contact the Parish to make arrangements for a Funeral Mass, a Memorial Mass, or a prayer service at the funeral home. Soon after, you will be called by a parish representative who will assist in planning the funeral liturgy.

## Catholic Rites

### Sacrament of the Sick/Last Rites

The sick may be anointed any time one has a serious illness. When someone is dying, the family may contact the parish to ask that a priest confer "Last Rites" which consists of the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Either a priest or a lay person may offer a dying person Holy Communion, which in this case is called "Viaticum", the last sacrament of the Christian.

### The Catholic Funeral

The Catholic Funeral has three parts: a **Vigil**, a **Funeral Liturgy** and a **Rite of Committal**.

The **Vigil** typically takes place at the funeral home the day before the funeral. It is a brief service that can be done before, during, or after the visitation period. A time for visitation is an opportunity for the family to share remarks of remembrance about their loved one, to tell stories, show photos, or even play favorite songs.

The **Funeral Mass** is a beautiful rite where the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God and to pray for the soul of the deceased. It is not so much about the deceased but about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is why we can all hope for eternal life. The Funeral Mass is rich in symbolism: sprinkling of holy water, placing of the pall, use of the Easter Candle, incensing,

and a final commendation for the loved one. If no remains are present at the Mass, it is called a Memorial Mass and some aspects of the Funeral Mass will not take place. Remarks of remembrance, often referred to as a eulogy, are not recommended by our Bishops at a Funeral Mass, but may be permitted after the closing.

**The Rite of Committal** usually takes place at the cemetery. The priest presides over a brief prayer service.

### Burial Customs and Guidelines

The Church's guidelines on cremation have evolved over the years. Although still recommending the custom of burying the bodies of the dead, the Church does not forbid cremation. It is also greatly preferred that the body be present for the Funeral Mass even if it will eventually be cremated. When cremation is chosen, it is important that the remains are given the same respect as a body. This includes placing remains in a respectful vessel (urn) and burying the vessel in a grave or entombing it in a mausoleum or columbarium. As with a body, the cremated remains should be interred in a sacred place. Scattering the ashes, dividing the ashes, or keeping the urn at home are not respectful ways of handling the human body. The Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body by teaching us to treat each human body with great dignity.