

# Church of St. Raphael

## Funeral Guidelines



**Church of St. Raphael**  
**7301 Bass Lake Road**  
**Crystal, MN 55428**

**763-537-8401**  
**[straphaelcrystal.org](http://straphaelcrystal.org)**

## **Before Death**

If it is known that a loved one is in danger of dying, a priest should be called so that he may offer the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to the one dying. If the patient is in a hospital, the hospital chaplain may come to anoint the dying person.

## **After Death**

“At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the Eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of her confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and sacrament of the Eucharist.” (Order of Christian Funerals, General Instruction #4.)

We, at the Church of St. Raphael, extend our prayerful condolences and support to all those who have lost a loved one. May the love of God and the hope of everlasting life bring encouragement as preparation is made to celebrate the funeral rites for the one who has passed from this life to the next.

## **After Death – First Steps**

After the death of a loved one, the family may choose to spend some time with the deceased. If death has occurred in a hospital or other medical facility, the coroner does not need to be contacted. If death has occurred in a home or in an accident, the first call which should be made is to the paramedics. If necessary, the paramedics will call the county coroner so that the cause(s) of death can be determined. After the coroner has made his or her determination (or if a coroner is not required), the next call to be made is to the funeral home of the family's choice. At St. Raphael, we work with all the funeral homes in the Twin Cities. The funeral home will then come with a vehicle to move the body from wherever death occurred to the funeral home's facility.

## **Meeting with Funeral Director**

The next step is that the family meets with the funeral director to make arrangements for the funeral. Together with the funeral director, the family makes a number of decisions.

For example, if a cemetery and gravesite have not already been chosen, the funeral director will assist the family in choosing one.

The family chooses the coffin and a vault. (The vault is a container into which the casket is placed.) The church recommends against cremation, but allows it for serious reasons.

The family decides what prayer card is preferable or decides not to have a prayer card.

The family chooses the parish where they wish the funeral to be held and they also chose, together with the help of the funeral director, the date and time of the funeral. (The funeral director then contacts the parish to find out if that date and time works for the parish.)

Together with the funeral director, the family decides whether or not to order flower arrangements to honor the deceased.

The family chooses the pallbearers.

The family decides whether a luncheon will be held either following the interment at the cemetery or before interment. (At St. Raphael, the funeral luncheon is held in Marian Hall.) The family or funeral director then contacts the funeral luncheon coordinator and arranges for the lunch. The family also is asked to give an estimate on the number attending the luncheon so that enough food can be prepared.

The family decides whether or not a procession to the cemetery is desired.

The family decides whether or not to have a wake at the funeral home—usually held the day before the funeral. The family also

decides if they would like a priest to lead a prayer service at the wake. At St. Raphael we try to make a priest available for a wake when desired and when possible.

The family decides whether to have a visitation beginning an hour before the Mass at the church. At St. Raphael, there is a possibility of using the East Gathering Area on the east side of the church for a visitation.

## **Wake**

The wake is usually scheduled the day before the funeral. It is usually held at the funeral home. A priest, deacon, or funeral director may lead prayers at the wake. If the family wishes, if a priest or deacon is present, he will recite the Rosary together with all those present. In the case of the death of a member of the Knights of Columbus, often the Knights attend to lead a Rosary.

Either before or after the prayers, but not during, the family may choose to show a DVD regarding the deceased. The family may also post photographs at the wake or have a show running continuously with important remembrances of the deceased. Mementoes significant to the deceased may be placed near the casket or at other appropriate places in the room where the wake is held.

Eulogies may be given at the wake. Sometimes, the family decides to invite anyone at the wake to share their memories of the deceased—these talks are usually a little less formal than a prepared eulogy. Stories about the deceased may be told and even songs and hymns may be sung if the family wishes. The wake is an opportunity for personal sharing. Of course, one should avoid mentioning anything detrimental about the deceased. There is an old Latin phrase: “De mortuis, nisi bonum.” Translated into English, this line reads: “Concerning the dead, nothing but good!”

## **Preparation for the Funeral Service**

A Funeral Mass in church is strongly recommended in most situations. The Funeral Mass is not a personal service in the sense that the family or some of its members plan every aspect of the funeral. The Funeral Mass is the prayer of the Church offered for the repose of the soul of the one who has died. The Mass is the “source and summit” of the Church’s life. Since the Funeral Mass is primarily a prayer of the Church, the Church’s norms must always be followed.

Since the saints in heaven have won the crown of victory, they have no need of our prayers. We have need of their prayers and so we often pray to the saints. Further, the souls in hell, if any, cannot be helped by our prayers. The Funeral Mass is a prayer for the deceased who may be in purgatory. If the deceased is already in heaven, then God may apply our prayers to a soul in purgatory.

The family may choose one or two readings for the Funeral Mass as well as the Gospel. However, the family must choose these readings from the liturgical and scriptural texts approved by the Catholic Church, and found in the official liturgical books. Sometimes, the family wishes that the priest choose the readings. These readings can be found on page 9nbv of this booklet.

Family members or other lay people may proclaim the scripture readings, except the Gospel. Lay people may also bring up the gifts at the Offertory if the family wishes. (In some cases according to the wishes of the family, the gifts are in the sanctuary and the altar servers bring them to the altar.)

It is normally requested for family members of the deceased to meet ahead of time with the priest who is celebrating the Funeral

Mass in order to plan the funeral celebration.

Music texts must be appropriate for liturgical use in general, and for a Catholic funeral in particular. This excludes secular music or songs.

Eulogies are not given at Mass at St. Raphael. Eulogies may be given at the wake or at the luncheon. The wisdom behind this is that the Funeral Mass is the best gift we can give our loved one because the Holy Sacrifice is offered for the repose of their soul. Jesus is made present on the altar. Additional comments after Holy Communion can often take away from the Sacred Mystery just celebrated. Occasionally one will hear comments that the “eulogy” was the highlight of Mass. You can see why that is not good theology. In a sense, things like “grandma loved her dog and liked to play cards” somehow become more important than Jesus Christ made present on the altar. The Funeral Mass is not first and foremost about giving a tribute to the person, it’s about praying for their soul.

### **Funeral Mass of Resurrection**

The priest begins the liturgy by sprinkling holy water on the casket or urn. Then a pall is placed on the casket. Both these symbols remind us of the Baptism of the deceased. Water is obviously a symbol of Baptism and the pall is a symbol of the white garment the newly baptized often wears as a sign of the cleansing of the soul which is one of the effects of Baptism.

Then the casket or urn is brought into the church where it is placed near the Easter candle in the north wing (the wing which faces the altar directly). The candle is a symbol of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, that shines past death.

After the casket or urn is placed in the north wing, the priest goes to the altar and prays the Opening Prayer. The Opening Prayer is followed by the first reading, a sung responsorial psalm, the second

reading (if the family desires it), an Alleluia, and then the Gospel reading. After the Gospel, the priest will give a homily. Next come the intercessions — sometimes called the Prayer of the Faithful. These may be led by the priest or by a family member. If the gifts are to be brought up, the priest goes to the north wing opening in the Communion rail (near where the casket is) to receive the gifts.

The Offertory proceeds as is customary with the offering of the bread to God. The priest then prepares the chalice by pouring some wine into the chalice and a few drops of water. He then offers the wine to God, prays a short prayer and purifies his hands. A prayer inviting the people to accept the sacrifice is said and the people respond according to the response given in the liturgical books and the missalettes or in the hymnals.

Following the prayer for the Lord to accept our gifts offered to Him, there is the Prayer over the Gifts, and then the Preface. The Preface is followed by the Eucharistic prayer. It is during this prayer that the bread and the wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Christ.

After the Eucharistic prayer, the Communion rite follows beginning with the “Our Father” which the priest and all present pray together. The “Our Father” is followed by two priestly prayers, and the sign of peace. The cantor leads us in the Lamb of God and Holy Communion follows.

In accordance with the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist, the Catholic Church generally cannot offer Communion to non-Catholics or non-practicing Catholics. An exception is that members of the Orthodox Churches are welcome to receive Communion in the Catholic Church. Therefore a short announcement will be politely made by the priest stating this discipline. Those who cannot receive Communion are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Communion is followed by the cleansing of the vessels and then the Closing Prayer of the Mass.

After the Closing Prayer, the priest approaches the casket and offers the prayers of Final Commendation. During this final ceremony of the Funeral Mass, the priest incenses the casket or urn. The incense represents our prayers rising to the throne of God. Then the casket or urn is brought out of the north wing of church following the cross, the servers, and the priest.

The hearse is waiting in the driveway outside of the north wing. When the casket reaches the vestibule of the north wing the funeral director asks the pallbearers to carry the casket and place it in the hearse.

There can be an immediate procession to the cemetery or, sometimes, according to the family's wishes, the procession to the cemetery follows the luncheon.

### **Gravesite Ceremony**

A priest or deacon usually will recite the prayers at the cemetery, but in their absence the funeral director may do it.

The prayers at the gravesite begin with an introductory prayer followed by a short reading from Scripture. There is a prayer referring to the sanctification of all tombs by Christ who rested three days in his tomb. There is another prayer referring to the grave as the resting place of the deceased. Then an "Our Father," a closing prayer, a prayer for the deceased's eternal rest, and the final blessing are said.

In the case of cremation, the cremains are sometimes buried in a grave and sometimes in a mausoleum or columbarium—a building with niches where the cremains of the deceased can be placed. The cremains should be buried and never scattered or kept at home. This policy is a recognition of the dignity of the body. There are

also the practical ramifications of the cremains being misplaced or being buried on private property that may change hands in the future. For these reasons the Church requires that the cremated remains be either buried in the ground or placed in a mausoleum or columbarium, preferably in a Catholic cemetery.

## **Fees**

**Music:** There is a requested donation to the church of St. Raphael of \$300 for the musicians.

*(This fee is usually collected by the funeral director.)*

Music arrangements, including choices of music, can be made when meeting with the priest to plan the funeral.

**Mass Stipend:** In addition, if the funeral is a mass, there is a recommended donation of \$7.00. If the family wishes to make a donation of a greater amount; that can be applied to a specific area of the parish or left to the choice of the parish.

**Luncheon:** There is a nominal charge per plate. This includes meal, cake, coffee, punch, servers, set-up and clean-up. Please contact the parish office at 763-537-8401 to make arrangements for the luncheon.

## **FIRST READINGS**

Job 19:1, 23-27

Wisdom 3:1-9

Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

Wisdom 4:7-15

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

Lamentations 3:17-26

Daniel 12:1-3

Maccabees 12:43-46

## **FIRST READINGS DURING THE EASTER SEASON**

Acts 10:34-43

Acts 10:34-36, 42-43

Revelation 14:13

Revelation 20:11-21:1,

Revelation 21:1-59, 66-7

## **SECOND READINGS (OPTIONAL)**

Romans 5:5-11

Romans 5:17-21

Romans 6:3-9

Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

Romans 8:14-23

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

Philippians 3:20-21

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2 Timothy 2:8-13

1 John 3:1-2

1 John 3:14-16

## **GOSPEL READINGS**

Matthew 5:1-12a

Matthew 11:25-30

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:31-46

Mark 15:33-39, 16:1-6

Mark 15:33-39

Luke 7:11-17

Luke 12:35-40

Luke 23:33, 39-43

Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53, 24:1-6a

Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53

Luke 24:13-35

Luke 24:13-16, 28-35

John 5:24-29

John 6:37-40

John 6:51-59

John 11:17-27

John 11:21-27

John 11:32-45

John 12:23-28

John 12:23-26

John 14:1-6

John 17:24-26

John 19:17-18, 25-39

