

## The Funeral Mass

*Dear Friends,*

*Let us begin by offering our most heartfelt condolences on the death of your loved one. We are sorry for your loss and assure you of the prayers of the entire Holy Family Parish of Minersville. The death of a loved one is always difficult and it is impossible to be completely prepared.*

*One of the Corporal Works of Mercy is to bury the dead and so we have compiled this booklet to help you plan the Funeral Mass of your loved one. The staff of Holy Family Parish of Minersville is here to walk with you during these tough times.*

*Holy Family Pastoral Staff*

The Funeral Mass begins with the Introductory Rites and will start in the back of the Church for traditional coffin burials and at the front of the Church for cremations. The celebrant will invite the congregation to stand and begin the Mass in the normal way (Sign of the Cross and greeting). He will then sprinkle the casket or cremains and say the following:

**In the waters of baptism N. died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May he/she now share with him eternal glory.**

The Placing of the Pall follows (for coffin burials – omitted for cremation). The Pall is a cloth that covers a coffin and comes from the Latin pallium which means cloak. It is white in color and is another reminder of our baptism, that we died to our old lives of sin and were reborn in Christ. The family has the option of placing the pall on the coffin.

The Processional Hymn follows (see appendix A for a list of our Funeral Hymns), which is followed by the Collect (opening prayer).

The Liturgy of the Word follows the Collect. The family may choose someone (or up to 3 different people) to proclaim the Readings at the Mass of Christian Burial. Readers should be Catholics and have at least some comfort reading in a public setting. The family may also choose the First Reading from the Old Testament, the Second Reading from the New Testament, and the Gospel (see Appendix B – D for the Funeral Mass Readings). Those reading at the Funeral Mass should check-in with the priest 15 minutes before Mass for instructions (when and how to approach the sanctuary).

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The priest will offer a short homily after proclaiming the Gospel: “A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the Gospel reading at the Funeral liturgy... the homilist is to dwell on God’s compassionate love and on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. The homilist also helps the members of the assembly to understand that the mystery of God’s love and the mystery of Jesus’ victorious death and resurrection were present in the life and death of the deceased and that those mysteries were active in their own lives as well” (Order of Christian Funerals, 27). The homily is to indicate signs of the redeeming love of God as evident in the Scriptural readings and as made visible in the life of the deceased person.

The General Intercessions (or Prayer of the Faithful) follow the homily. The family may choose someone to read the General Intercessions (see appendix E). As with the readings for the Funeral Mass, the person reading the General Intercessions should check in with the priest 15 minutes before Mass for instructions.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows the General Intercessions. The family may select people to bring up the gifts to be used for the Mass. Those bringing up the gifts will retrieve them from the Offertory Table at the rear of the Church during the Preparation Hymn (see appendix A for a list of our Funeral Hymns). The priest will instruct the congregation as to when to sit, stand or kneel throughout the Mass.

Holy Communion follows the Eucharistic Prayer. While everyone is welcomed to all liturgies, only Catholics in a state of grace are able to receive Holy Communion. The Communion Hymn will be sung during the reception of Holy Communion (see appendix A for a list of our Funeral Hymns). A Meditation Hymn (optional) may be chosen after Communion (see appendix A for a list of our Funeral Hymns). The Prayer after Communion concludes the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Final Commendation completes the Funeral Mass. It begins with an invitation to prayer, which is followed by the priest incensing the coffin/ cremains while the Song of Farewell is sung. The Prayer of Commendation follows and then the Procession to the Place of Committal takes place while the congregation sings the Recessional Hymn (see appendix A for a list of our Funeral Hymns). The congregation will then travel to the cemetery for the interment.