

## When Someone Dies

Who will need to be informed as soon as possible?

- next of kin, if not present
- family doctor, if the person dies at home
- priest
- funeral director, if the family is using one (the deceased may already have made arrangements)
- (police, in unusual circumstances)

## What happens next?

If the cause of death is clear, the doctor will issue a medical certificate and a formal notice confirming that he or she has signed the certificate. This notice gives information on how to register the death.

### ***Registering the death.***

The death will need to be registered within eight days unless it has been reported to the procurator fiscal. Further detail concerning these procedures can be found on the website of Aberdeen city council.

### ***What are the financial implications?***

If the family wishes to use a funeral director, it is quite proper to invite estimates from various firms. There is a considerable financial difference between cremation and burial, and those choosing burial will also need to consider the upkeep of the grave.

There may be a fee for an organist or other musician. It is determined by the musician, therefore it is not under the control of the church. An offering to the minister (priest or deacon) or to the church is customary, and you may wish to check it with the priest or deacon.

# CATHOLIC FUNERALS

## A Guide

*O Lord, support us all the day long of  
this troublous life, until shadows  
lengthen, and evening comes, and the  
busy world is hushed, and the fever of  
life is over, and our work is done. Then  
, Lord, in thy mercy, grant us a safe  
lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last.*

*Amen.*

*St. John Henry Newman*

This Leaflet was prepared by St. Mary's Deanery  
City of Aberdeen, UK, 2019  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Aberdeen, SC005122



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

*May they rest in peace!*

Christians celebrate funeral rites to offer worship and thanksgiving to God, the author of all life. We pray for the deceased, and support the bereaved.

The model for Catholic funerals is the Easter journey of Jesus Christ from death to resurrection. This is why we are encouraged to celebrate the funeral in three stages: prayer vigil, funeral service, and committal.

Funeral practice varies considerably, and the Church provides several options from which we can choose freely. There is greater flexibility and involvement possible than we sometimes imagine. Please speak to the priest or deacon before any funeral decision!

## Prayer Vigil

This is the principal rite celebrated between death and the funeral itself. It is the first stage of the farewell journey; its mood is one of quiet support which helps to prepare the bereaved for the final leave-taking.

The Vigil or wake may be held in the home of the deceased, the funeral home, or in another suitable place, for instance a hospital chapel. It is usually celebrated in the church. The body of the deceased is normally present, but this is not necessary. The form of the service is a simple service of Scripture reading and prayers.

## Funeral Service

This is the main celebration of the Christian community for the deceased person. It is usually celebrated in the church of the deceased or another Catholic Church. Sometimes people may celebrate the Funeral service in a crematorium. Two forms

are possible: a funeral Mass, (also called the Requiem Mass) or a Funeral service. The Church encourages a Requiem Mass since in it we remember and celebrate Christ's own death and resurrection.

## Committal

The rite of committal usually follows on immediately from the church funeral. This final act of leave-taking is celebrated at the graveside or at the crematorium. When a crematorium service is held the funeral is concluded with the interring of ashes sometime afterwards, in an approved location.

While we are encouraged to celebrate a funeral over these three stages, for a variety of reasons this model is not always possible or appropriate to the circumstances. Many combinations of funeral rites are possible.

*Lord, in our grief we turn to you. Are you not the God of love always ready to hear our cries? Listen to our prayers for your servant ...whom you have called out of this world: lead him/her to your Kingdom of light and peace and count him/her among the saints in glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## ***What choices can I make?***

More than you think. Not only can you choose hymns but also scripture readings and prayers. The priest or deacon will give you a selection to choose from. You can also suggest music that is appropriate for a Christian funeral.

## ***How do I plan a funeral?***

The priest, deacon, or other members of the parish community will be happy to help. Scripture readings are available on our Diocesan website at <https://www.rcda.scot/>.

## ***Can I have a poem or favourite song?***

Favourite poems, songs and pictures are more appropriate at the reception. There is an opportunity for a 'Tribute' immediately before the funeral service (Requiem Mass or Funeral service). Care should be taken that the words of any material are in keeping with our Christian faith.

## ***Special circumstances***

In case of a still born baby, miscarriage, suicide, etc. the Church provides a special service within her collection of liturgies. If you wish to have a funeral for a non-Catholic Christian, please speak to the priest or deacon.

***What about the ashes?*** Catholics in this country can be cremated. The ashes should be buried, not scattered, after the funeral, in an approved location.

*'I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord, whoever believes in me will never die.' Jn 11:25*