

FUNERAL RITES

Guidelines for the Diocese of Dodge City

Order of Christian Funerals, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, August 15, 1989 (*OCF*)
Order of Christian Funerals Appendix: Cremation, National Conference of Catholic Bishops,
July 30, 1997 (*OCF Appendix*)

Planning

1. Whenever possible, ministers should involve the family in the planning of the vigil and funeral liturgy: the choice of readings, prayers and music, and in the designation of ushers, pallbearers, readers, acolytes, musicians and ministers of the eucharist. (*OCF* 65, 152)

Music

1. Music should be provided for the vigil and funeral Mass. Whenever possible, music should accompany the funeral processions and the rite of committal. (*OCF* 32, 41)
2. Sacred music has an integral role in the funeral rites, since it can console and uplift mourners while, at the same time, uniting the assembly in faith and love. (*OCF* 30)
3. Since music can evoke strong feelings, it should be chosen with care. The music at funerals should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory. (*OCF* 31)
4. Music for the assembly should be truly expressive of the texts and at the same time simple and easily sung. (*OCF* 21)
5. In judging the appropriateness of music, its liturgical, pastoral and musical qualities are but aspects of one evaluation, which answers the question: "Is this particular piece of music appropriate for this use in the particular liturgy?" (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, USCCB, 2007, 126)
6. Secular music, even though it may reflect on the background, character, interests, or personal preferences of the deceased or mourners, is not appropriate for the Sacred Liturgy. (*Sing to the Lord* 126)
7. If solos are used, they are most appropriate as preludes, although instrumental music is preferred. The Lord's Prayer is never appropriate as a solo during the Eucharistic liturgy in the Church. (*Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage: Guidelines for the Diocese of Dodge City*, revised 2009)
8. Recorded music is not appropriate on its own or as an accompaniment. (*ibid.*)

Homily

1. A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the gospel reading at the funeral liturgy and may also be given after the readings at the vigil: but there is never to be a eulogy.
 - a. The homilist should dwell on God's compassionate love and on the paschal mystery.
 - b. The homilist should help 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 these mysteries are active in their own lives as well.

- c. Through the homily the family and members of the community should receive consolation and strength to face the death of one of their members with a hope nourished by the saving word of God. (*OCF 27*)

Praying the Rosary

1. Although not included as an element of the vigil, praying of rosary is a custom among many Catholics. If the rosary is to be prayed, possible placement includes either before the vigil begins or at the conclusion of the vigil. If a large number of non-Catholics are present, the family may consider praying only one decade of the rosary.

Sharing of Memories

1. After the prayer of intercession and before the blessing or at some other suitable time during the vigil, a member of the family or a friend of the deceased may speak in remembrance of the deceased. (*OCF 62*) While it is preferable that the sharing of memories occurs at the vigil, an allowance is provided in the funeral Mass for a member or friend of the family speaking in remembrance of the deceased following the Prayer after Communion and before the final commendation. (*OCF 170*)

Symbols Placed on the Casket

1. A pall may be placed over the coffin when it is received at the church. A reminder of the baptismal garment of the deceased, the pall is a sign of the Christian dignity of the person. (*OCF 38, 131*)
2. Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any national flag or flags or insignia of associations to which the deceased belonged are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church. They may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church. (*OCF 38, 132*)
3. If a symbol of Christian life is to be placed on the coffin during the funeral liturgy, the symbol may be carried in procession and then placed on the coffin. (*OCF 134, 163*)
 - a. A Book of the Gospels or a bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life. (*OCF 38*)
 - b. A cross may be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism and through Jesus' suffering on the cross is brought to the victory of his resurrection. (*OCF 38*)

Cremated Remains

1. The Diocesan Bishop allows in the Diocese of Dodge City the celebration of the funeral liturgy in the presence of cremated remains. Care is to be taken that all is carried out with due decorum. (*OCF Appendix 427*)
2. Cremated remains should be treated with the same respect given to the human body. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. (*OCF Appendix 417*)
3. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. (*OCF Appendix 417*)

4. During the funeral Mass, prayers which do not make reference to the honoring or burying of the body should be chosen instead of those which have these themes. Following the Prayer after Communion, the Rite of Final Commendation takes place. The alternate form for the dismissal is used. (*OCF Appendix 428*)

Flowers

1. Fresh flowers, used in moderation, can enhance the setting of the funeral rites. (*OCF 38*) So as not to be obstructive or overpowering, the “wall of flowers” should not be placed in front of the main liturgical furniture, the casket or the cremated remains of the deceased.

Pictures of the Deceased

1. Large displays of photos of the deceased are not appropriate in the sanctuary.

Video Taping

1. Videos may or may not be permitted depending upon the architecture and arrangement of the worship space and the judgment of the pastor. (*Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage: Guidelines for the Diocese of Dodge City*, revised 2009)
2. If video taping is permitted, great care is to be taken to respect the grieving process of the family and loved ones of the deceased.