

TO OUR LOVED ONES

This portfolio contains all the necessary information regarding our personal preferences for funeral arrangements, as well as the location of any important documents you will need. It is our hope that you will find comfort and confidence in knowing our wishes and desires as you plan for the funeral.





INTRODUCTION

The death of a loved one can be one of the most distressing and emotional events that a person can experience. When a loved one dies, there are many important decisions that must be made, documents that must be quickly located and numerous persons who must be notified. Often, these decisions are made without guidance and under extreme duress from grief and confusion.

The Archdiocese of Seattle has created this book to offer focus and guidance, as well as to provide a central location for family members to record personal information, to convey your particular desires and wishes, and to identify the location of important documents that will be needed when there is a death in the family.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH



Death is first and foremost a moment of great religious significance, marking the end of our stewardship on earth and the beginning of eternal life, which the body one day will share.

This thought is reflected in the Church's continuing concern for the final resting place of the faithful departed. After the funeral directors complete their role in the drama of death, the Church commences an obligation that has endured through the centuries.

This beautiful commemoration starts with the Vigil, follows in the church with the Funeral Liturgy and continues in the cemetery where the community joins the priest or deacon in the final liturgical prayers at the place of burial.

The cemetery staff completes the sacred task of burial and then assumes the care of the burial place, maintaining it in dignity through all the years of the future.

After the first sharp impact of grief when someone dear is laid to rest, subsequent visits to the cemetery remind us that death is really sad only for those who live without God.

The Catholic cemetery is a silent but serene symbol witnessing to the whole world the Good News of Jesus Christ and the hope we share in resurrection.

A FUNERAL

Just as you have given thought to selection of a cemetery, mausoleum or cremation space, you should also think about what occurs prior to the final disposition of your body.



IN ADVANCE OF NEED

Talking about death is often difficult, but discussion and pre-planning can eliminate stress and confusion when the time comes to make funeral arrangements for a loved one.

Funeral and burial arrangements should be discussed openly and frankly. Some people choose to pre-arrange their own funeral. This is especially helpful if there are no relatives or friends who will assume the responsibility for arranging the funeral, the final disposition and the completion of the required forms.

NEEDS, CONCERNS, AND DECISIONS

When a death occurs, there are needs to be met, concerns to be faced and decisions to be made. It is important that personal wishes be made clear now so that unnecessary confusion and stress can be avoided later.

The funeral is a ceremony of worth and value for those who mourn. The funeral has existed since the beginning of humanity.

It provides an opportunity for the survivors and others who share in the loss to express their love, respect and grief. It permits facing openly, realistically and with dignity the crisis that death presents. Through the funeral, the bereaved take that firm, first step toward adjustment to their loss.

CHOOSING A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Many families choose a funeral director who has served them previously. Others will have various reasons for preference, such as reputation, religious affiliation, personal acquaintance, referral or location.

The funeral director counsels the family, providing information and offering advice with which they can make meaningful decisions. The funeral director then implements these decisions using professional knowledge and experience.

THE VALUE OF A FUNERAL

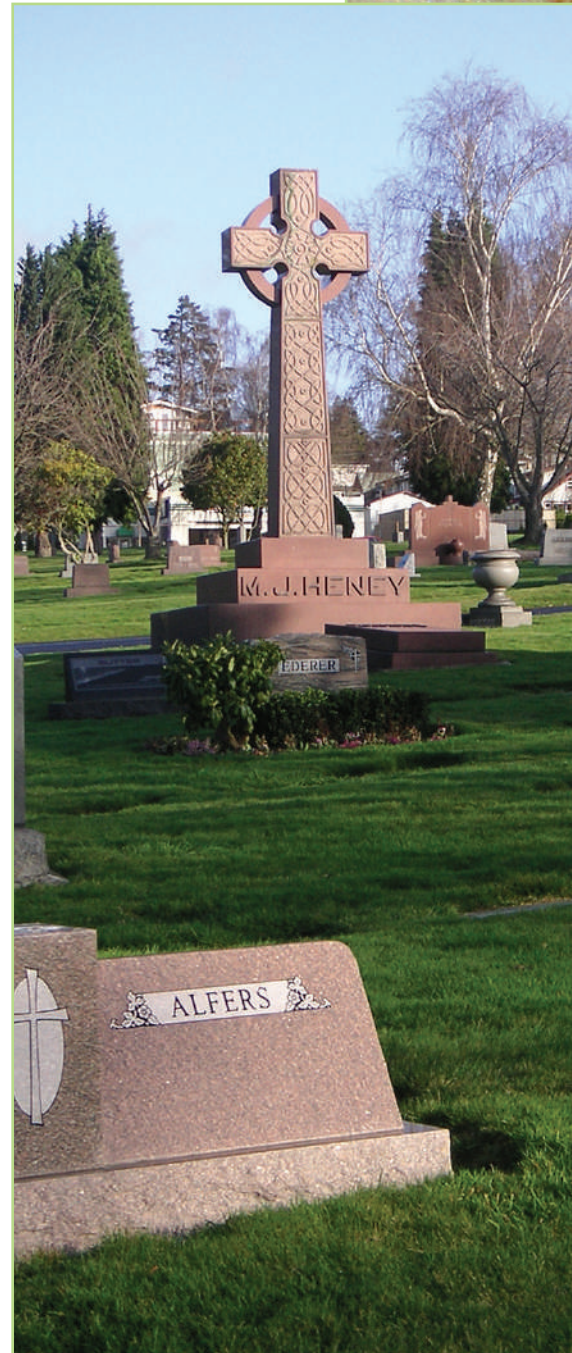
Throughout the ages and in every culture, people have relied on the comforting rituals of a funeral. A funeral provides meaningful ceremonies that bring together families and friends and encourages thoughts and feelings to be shared. A funeral gives the community a chance to offer its support and share the sorrow of the immediate family of the deceased.

A Catholic funeral is normally celebrated for Catholic Christians using the *Order of Christian Funerals* as the primary and principal resource. The Church's funeral rites are adaptable, recognizing the life of the deceased and the needs of the mourners. This booklet will provide you with additional information to plan a Catholic funeral.

Deciding whether or not to have an open casket viewing is another important decision. Viewing serves several helpful purposes: realization, recall and expression. This is done during the visitation or vigil and aids in the management of grief.

PRE-FINANCING

Some people will want to pre-arrange and pre-pay for funeral and cemetery needs. You will find your local Catholic cemetery and funeral director most willing to counsel you on the best arrangements to suit your particular desires and financial needs.



THE CATHOLIC FUNERAL



In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. (*Order of Christian Funerals*, #1)

VIGIL

When Christians gather at the Vigil, they show their respect and reverence for the deceased. They recall and share their memories of the person who has died. The community comforts the family with love and friendship, the assurance of prayer, and the offer of assistance. The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides two formats for Vigils for adults and one format for children.

At the Vigil, the Christian community prays that God may give the bereaved strength to bear their grief and faith to trust in the promise of eternal life.

THE FUNERAL LITURGY

Catholics bring the body of the deceased to the church. This is where their Christian journey began. In the waters of Baptism they were joined to Christ who stands victorious over death. This is where they were formed by the Word of God and fed at the Lord's Table.

The Funeral Liturgy is the central celebration of the Christian community for the deceased. The Church encourages the celebration of the Mass. When the Mass cannot be celebrated, the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass is used. (cf. *Order of Christian Funerals*, #128) Questions about this should be discussed with the pastor.

The Funeral Liturgy is not merely a celebration of the bereaved family. Each time the Church celebrates the Mass, the Church proclaims to the entire world its belief in Christ's death and resurrection. These sacred rites, in turn, shape and form the Christian community and deepen its convictions.

THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

The Rite of Committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, is the final act of caring for the body of the deceased member of the Church. In committing the body or cremated remains of the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection.

THE CEMETERY

Catholic cemeteries are sacred places. These cemeteries exist as witness to our belief in the resurrection of the body and are a sign of the entire Christian community, living and dead, gathered together in faith. Therefore, Catholics ordinarily are buried in Catholic cemeteries. Burial in a Catholic cemetery is a long-standing sign of the Church's reverence for the human body. Appropriately the ground in Catholic cemeteries is dedicated and blessed to receive sacred remains. Burial in a Catholic cemetery recognizes baptismal commitment and gives witness, even in death, to faithfulness to the Church.



The Church maintains Catholic cemeteries because both in life and in death we belong to the Lord (Romans 14:8). Just as the faithful have shared and celebrated faith in the community of the Church, so too in death their bodies rest with other deceased members of this community awaiting the day when God will raise their mortal bodies to glory. Catholic cemeteries also stand as a sign to the world that even in death, Christians believe in life. The images of saints in Catholic cemeteries and mausoleums are not mere decorations; they are a sign of belief in the communion of saints.



The Rite of Committal, celebrated at the place of burial, is designed to gather the community for prayer as an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. Catholic cemetery personnel who prepare such sites minister the concern, the love, and the support of all the faithful.

The celebrant of the Funeral Liturgy ordinarily conducts the committal service. When it is not possible for the celebrant to conduct the committal service, another priest or a permanent

deacon may be asked to preside at the committal service. In the absence of a priest or deacon, a suitable parish minister should lead those present in the Rite of Committal. The committal service may, and should, reflect and adapt the customs and language of the family heritage of the deceased.

Military services and certain fraternal rites are also permissible in the cemetery. These other services should be arranged in advance with the local priest and coordinated in such a way that they do not disrupt or detract from the integrity of the liturgical service.