

Cost is a factor for us, what is the offering for a Funeral Mass and can it be waived in case of hardship?

The offering for a Funeral Mass is \$300 (\$100 goes to the organist, \$100 to the singer; \$65 to the parish and \$35 to the priest). In case of hardship, the pastor can waive the offering. No one will be denied the baptismal right to Christian burial due to a lack of finances.

What if we are making arrangements for cremation, does that prevent a funeral Mass?

No. While the preference is that cremation takes place after a Funeral Mass, if the cremation takes place beforehand, the ashes may be brought into the Church for the Funeral Mass before they are interred at a cemetery. In any event, because of our belief in the dignity of the human body and its future resurrection, ashes should not be scattered but should be interred promptly in a grave or crypt at a cemetery. It is sad and lacking in the respect due our loved ones when, as is happening more and more, cremated remains are abandoned in funeral homes or crematory basements or brought home instead of being reverently interred in consecrated ground or in a blessed crypt.

What if I want to have a Funeral Mass at a parish that wasn't the one my loved one attended?

Normally, a Funeral Mass would be celebrated at the deceased's parish church and amidst the community that the deceased was part of. However, there certainly are legitimate reasons why another parish might be appropriate. Your funeral director can speak to the pastor about this.

What if I want some special music, poetry and personal remembrances?

The Catholic Funeral Rites consist of three services---the wake service, the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal at the gravesite. Secular music and poetry might be incorporated along with personal remembrances at the wake, at the funeral home or at the graveside. Scriptural readings and sacred music are most appropriate for the sacred space of the Church and Funeral Mass. However, a brief remembrance may also be offered at the Funeral Mass in the Church.

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Prayer for the Deceased

V. Eternal Rest grant unto him/her O Lord.
R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.
V. May he/she rest in peace.
R. Amen.
V. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
R. Amen.



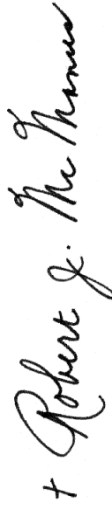
Questions & Answers about Funeral Masses

A Message from Bishop McManus:

At this time of loss, I extend my condolences to you over the death of your loved one. When death robs us of the physical presence of those we love, our hearts grieve. But as Christians, our faith in Jesus Christ affords us the hope that the faithful departed journey on to God where, one day, we may yet again be reunited with them in the joy of Heaven.

We believe that our prayers, good works and, above all, our Masses offered for our beloved deceased assist them on their journey to God as they encounter God's merciful and loving judgment. The Funeral Mass is the most appropriate and effective way of continuing our love and care for our loved ones who have died. I hope that this brochure assists you as you make arrangements for you beloved deceased.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

Why should I have a Funeral Mass for my loved one?

The Mass of Christian Burial is the privileged time when we pray for our beloved dead, asking God to forgive his or her sins and to render a merciful judgment to our brother or sister who has gone before us marked with the sign of faith. It is through the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ that sin and death have been definitively destroyed and that we who have been united to this redemptive mystery through faith and baptism have been given the hope of eternal glory in heaven. The saving effects of Christ's Passion, death and Resurrection are made present in each Mass. At the Funeral Mass we implore God to apply those saving effects for the soul of the deceased.

What if my loved one hadn't been attending Mass regularly, isn't it hypocritical to have a Funeral Mass now?

No. At Baptism we become members of the Church and the adopted children of God. God never forgets us or stops loving us. Our souls are indelibly marked for God. None of us responds fully to God's love in our life. None of us gets to Heaven on our own merits. We all need the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Like St. Martha who, even after her brother Lazarus had died, turned to Jesus and trusted in Him, we turn to Jesus at the Funeral Mass out of faith in Him and love for our deceased.

But what if I'm not Catholic?

At a time of loss, we all need a reminder of God's love, a love that is stronger than death. But the Funeral Mass is first about the *spiritual good for the person who has died*. We thank you for considering that and we welcome you to the Church for the Funeral Mass. The priest will understand if you are not familiar with the Mass. He will be happy to answer your questions. Your funeral director will be present and will prompt you when to stand, sit and the like. Although non-Catholics cannot join us in Holy Communion, your presence to us and joining us in prayer is a privilege for us and a powerful appeal to God for the good of the deceased.

But what if there may not be many people in attendance?

Frequently, elderly people outlive their contemporaries and surviving friends may no longer be able to get out to Church. The essential point is that God is present at the Mass and He comes to reassure us.