

Catholic Cemeteries Parish Engagement

Proclaiming the beauty of the funeral liturgy & the right to a Christian burial *(Adult)*



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

The Catholic Cemetery Conference (CCC) strives to provide information, training, best practices and guidance for Catholic Cemeteries throughout the United States and Canada. CCC's mission is to promote, to educate and to inculcate a culture of Catholic burial. Burying the dead is a Corporal Work of Mercy and an essential part of the Church's mission.



We live in the hope of the resurrection promised by Christ who spoke of the human person as a temple of the Holy Spirit. For that reason care and respect for the deceased matters greatly. The Church strives to assist grieving families in laying their loved ones to rest and provides support and comfort to the family and loved ones of the deceased.

These materials and videos presented by the CCC spell out what that care and respect needs to look like through the whole burial process. From pre-planning for death to the Vigil, to the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal, these materials and videos provide information on how Catholic Cemeteries accompany families in this difficult time.

Likewise, lesson plans are presented in order to introduce children and young people to the Rites of Christian Burial, outlining how and why the Church treats the human body in death with the utmost respect and dignity.

The burial or entombment of the deceased person's body or cremated remains is central to the Church's mission. The hope of CCC is that these materials will assist bishops, priests, Catholic cemeterians and pastoral educators to inform our Catholic people of the Church's approach to death and burial of loved ones.

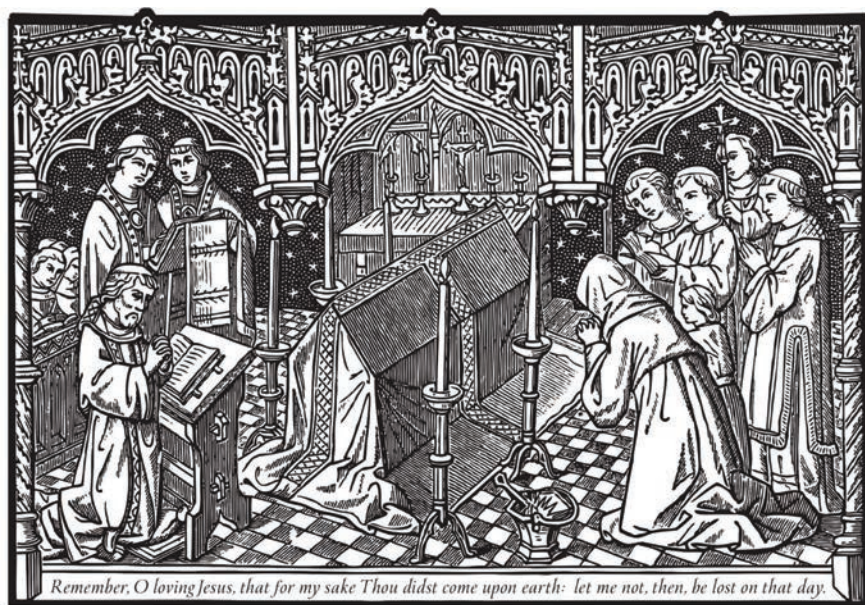
Choicest blessings!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald Kicanas".

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas

Episcopal Advisor for the Catholic Cemetery Conference
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Tucson



Nihil Obstat

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas
Bishop Emeritus,
Diocese of Tucson
Episcopal Moderator of the
Catholic Cemetery Conference
April 2020

Imprimatur

Most Rev. Gerald F. Kicanas
Bishop Emeritus,
Diocese of Tucson
Episcopal Moderator of the
Catholic Cemetery Conference
April 2020

RCIA & Adult Faith Formation – Preparation

Catholic Funerals

Please read before the lesson to prepare

Nearly all adults will have attended a funeral or known someone who has passed away. It is likely they have experienced multiple types of funerals and may not immediately understand the traditions of the Catholic funeral.

Below are some Bible and Catechism quotes that will help you to prepare for this lesson.

Bible Quotations

“By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” – *Gen 3:19*

“But now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” – *2 Tim 1:10*

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” – *John 3:16*

“Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” – *Romans 6:3-4*



Catechism Quotations

CCC 1032 – “From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.”

CCC 1055 – “By virtue of the ‘communion of saints,’ the Church commends the dead to God’s mercy and offers her prayers, especially the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, on their behalf.”

CCC 1685 – “The different funeral rites express the Paschal character of Christian death and are in keeping with the situations and traditions of each region, even as to the color of the liturgical vestments worn.”

CCC 1686 – “The Order of Christian Funerals of the Roman liturgy gives three types of funeral celebrations, corresponding to the three places in which they are conducted (the home, the church, and the cemetery), and according to the importance attached to them by the family, local customs, the culture, and popular piety. This order of celebration is common to all the liturgical traditions and comprises four principal elements. [The Greeting of the Community, the Liturgy of the Word, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the Farewell]”

CCC 1689 – “The Eucharistic Sacrifice. When the celebration takes place in church the Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death. In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious communion with the departed: offering to the Father in the Holy Spirit the sacrifice of the death and resurrection of Christ, she asks to purify his child of his sins and their consequences, and to admit him to the Paschal fullness of the table of the Kingdom. It is by the Eucharist thus celebrated that the community of the faithful, especially the family of the deceased, learn to live in communion with the one who ‘has fallen asleep in the Lord’ by communicating in the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him.”

CCC 1690 – “A farewell to the deceased is his final ‘commendation to God’ by the Church. It is ‘the last farewell by which the Christian community greets one of its members before his body is brought to its tomb.’ The Byzantine tradition expresses this by the kiss of farewell to the deceased:

By this final greeting ‘we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion. For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ, and now we are united with Christ as we go toward him . . . we shall all be together in Christ.”

The Three Sacred Moments of a Catholic Funeral



The Vigil. The rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. It is a time when loved ones show their respect and greet the family and friends of the deceased. It is also the most ideal time to share their memories of the deceased through a eulogy or video tribute, usually held at the funeral home the day before the Funeral Mass.



Funeral Mass. This is the central liturgical celebration held with the deceased’s body present at a church. Part of Catholic belief is that those who follow the way of Jesus shall forever be in Heaven, body and soul, in the presence of God. We believe in the bodily resurrection. Also, the Church honors the body because it has been the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Church says that the body should be present at the funeral rites. If cremation is selected, the Church prefers that the body be present at the Mass.



Rite of Committal. This rite is the final act of our faith community in caring for the body of its deceased member. By our presence at this rite, we help the mourners face the end of one relationship with the deceased and the beginning of a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude and the hope of resurrection and reunion. The celebration, whenever possible, takes place not in a cemetery chapel but at the open grave or place of interment. The act of committal expresses that the grave, once a sign of despair, is now, through Christ’s own death and Resurrection, a sign of hope and promise. The Church encourages all Catholics to seek out a Catholic Cemetery that has been blessed and consecrated as a final resting place.

Opening Prayer

The prayer said at the graveside, modify to suit your use as needed

Lord Jesus Christ,
by Your own three days in the tomb,
You hallowed the graves of all who believe
in You
and so made the grave a sign of hope
that promises resurrection
even as it claims our mortal bodies.

Grant that our brothers and sisters may sleep
here in peace
until You awaken them to glory,
for You are the resurrection and the life.
Then they will see You face to face
and in Your light will see light
and know the splendor of God,
for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

1) Proclamation

(From the Order of Christian Funerals) At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist.



2) Explanation

Teaching

Witness

- If appropriate, share a story of a funeral you attended, share what happened focusing on the two most important aspects,
 - 1) The dead was commended to the mercy of God.
 - 2) The grieving were consoled and given an opportunity to mourn the loss of their loved one.

Catechesis (main points to cover)

- Jesus loves us so much that He died to free us from sin and death. He wants us to live with Him and all the angels and saints forever in heaven.
- When someone dies, we have a special way of remembering and honoring them called a funeral which prepares the person who has died to enter into new and everlasting life with Jesus and helps the family mourn their loss.

- Cemeteries are permanent resting places for the bodies of the dead. They can be buried in the ground, interred in a mausoleum (an above ground tomb), or their cremated remains can be put in a columbarium (a small niche). It's customary that families visit the burial place of their dead loved ones on special anniversaries and All Souls Day or Día de los Muertos.
- Usually the funeral has three distinct parts.
 - 1) The Vigil
 - 2) The funeral liturgy
 - 3) The Rite of Committal
- We pray for our family and friends who have died hoping that they will experience the love and mercy of God, and we ask for their prayers and intercession to help us grow in holiness and to love God with all our hearts.
- We believe that we will be reunited with our family and friends and all those who are in heaven.

3) Application

Guided reflection and discussion

- What are some of the common ways people approach funerals today? (Attempt to show the challenges that we as a society have with funerals and treating the death of family member with respect)
 - Does it respect the dignity of the person?
 - Does it honor their baptism and desire to be in heaven?

- Does it provide the family with the opportunity to mourn properly?
- Why does the Church provide for three moments of the funeral rite?
- How is the funeral rite a fulfillment or completion of baptism?
- Key points to reinforce.
 - Honoring and burying or interring the dead is a duty of every Catholic.
 - The funeral commends the dead to the mercy of God.
 - The funeral provides consolation and healing for those who mourn.
 - The funeral includes the Vigil, Funeral Mass, and Committal (Burial).
 - Visiting the gravesite of family members who have passed away is a longstanding custom in the Church.
 - Recommended Video Resource: Fr. Mike Schmidt "The Real Purpose of Funerals" ascensionpresents.com/video/the-real-purpose-of-funerals



4) Celebration

Finish the lesson by reinforcing any key points and offering a concluding prayer inviting adults to pray for any family members who have died.

Generously Supported in Part by:



Catholic
Communication
Campaign
CONNECT WITH CHRIST



Catholic Cemeteries &
Funeral Homes
Diocese of Phoenix

For more information, visit us at:
www.catholicburialtraditions.org