

**GUIDELINES FOR
THE
ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS**

**DIOCESE OF OAKLAND
MAY 2004**



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. The society in which we live is often uncomfortable discussing death. And still, death is the common experience that enters every home and touches all lives. Despite death being so common, the mystery and fear of the unknown pervades. Such experiences are faced by all people, including those who share faith in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. Yet, the richness of our Catholic Christian faith strengthens us to face the end of our earthly life with hope and confidence. We believe: “Just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever, so after death the righteous will live forever with the risen Christ” (CCC 989). In the liturgy of Baptism, the Church welcomes a person into the new life of faith; in the liturgy of the funeral rites the Church accompanies the faithful on their way to a new life of glory. This hope, rooted in the waters of baptism, is expressed succinctly by the Church’s liturgy:

*Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended.
When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death
We gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.*

2. The guidelines for the Diocese of Oakland on the **Order of Christian Funerals** facilitate integrated and culturally sensitive norms for the exercise of the *Funeral Rites*, the parish’s relationship with funeral homes and the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland. Part I of the Oakland Guidelines provides particular outline and application of the Funeral Rites. Part II maps considerations for parishes on interaction with funeral homes. Part III charts the links between parish life and the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland. The guidelines conclude with a series of appendices appropriate to specific elements in the guidelines.

PART I

THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS: FUNERAL RITES

3. *The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in one great communion of saints. At the rite of final commendation and farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way, it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heavens and the new earth, where death will be no more (OCF 6).*

Integrity of the Funeral Rites

4. The *Funeral Rites* of the Order of Christian Funerals contains three related areas that correspond to three ritual movements: "Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers," "Funeral Liturgy," and "Rite of Committal." When the rites are fully celebrated, they ritualize the journey from life through death to fullness of life in God. To refuse any one of the rites denies the deceased and their family and friends the consolation offered by the Lord through the ministry of the Church. However, "The Order of Christian Funerals makes provision for the minister, in consultation with the family, to choose rites and texts most suitable to the situation... (OCF 43)."

5. In addition to the three ritual movements, the Church provides still other opportunities for family and friends to gather in prayer at the death of a loved one.

"Related Rites and Prayers" include three brief rites that may be used on occasions of prayer with the family: "Prayers after Death," "Gathering in the Presence of the Body," "Transfer of the Body to the Church or the Place of Committal." These rites are examples or models of what can be done and should be adapted to the circumstances. (OCF 45)

6. The only Catholic Funeral Rite approved for use in the Diocese of Oakland in English is ***Order of Christian Funerals*** (USCCB, 2 November 1989). In Spanish, the only approved rite for use in the Diocese is ***Ritual de Exequias Cristianas*** (USCCB, 2 November 2001). In languages other than English and Spanish, ritual texts approved by other conferences of bishops are approved for use in the Diocese of Oakland. A compendium of general norms for the Diocese of Oakland is offered as an immediate reference for the pastoral minister (Appendix 1.1).

Entitlement to the Ministry of the Church at the Time of Death

7. The Catholic Faithful are to be provided the funeral rites of the Catholic Church, which ordinarily include the Vigil, Funeral Liturgy and the Rite of Committal. If a family hesitates to request a Funeral Mass, it should be explained to them during funeral planning that the Eucharistic liturgy is the central element of the Catholic funeral rites. The Church's funeral rites should not be refused to a member of the Church without consultation of the diocesan bishop and in strict accordance of canon 1184.

8. The Church's funeral rites should be granted to those in the Order of Catechumens. Also, the funeral rites may be offered to those who are preparing for full reception in the Catholic communion. Those who are baptized members of other Christian traditions, in the event that their minister is not available, can be afforded elements of the Catholic funeral rites. According to canon 1183 §2 (CIC 1983) the Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a child who died before baptism and whose parents intended to have the child baptized. (Cf. OCF 18).

Support of those who Mourn

9. More and more parishes are providing bereavement ministry in order to journey with the mourners before, during and after the funeral rites. Together, members of the parish community and Catholic cemetery personnel can provide one ministry of consolation. "Members of the community should console the mourners with words of faith and support and with acts of kindness (OCF 10). Bereavement ministry, when available, has supported families and in some cases reconciled families with the Church and a more active participation in the faith community (Cf. OCF 13). These ministers of consolation may be present at the funeral rites to support the family and friends of the deceased. In turn, presence at the funeral rites can facilitate ongoing ministry to those who mourn. Thus, the rites should be scheduled at times that permit as many of the community as possible to be present. (OCF 11). The Diocese of Oakland commends the parish community to explore such a pivotal ministry if one does not exist.

Presiding Minister

10. Priests, given their particular exercise of sacramental ministry for the Church, preside at the funeral rites, especially the funeral liturgy. Deacons, also as ministers of word and charity, preside at the Vigil Liturgy and the rite of Committal. A trained layperson can preside at the Vigil and other related rites as well as the Rite of Committal (OCF 14).

Other Ministers

11. Family members should be encouraged to take an active part in the Funeral rites, especially those who are trained and authorized as readers, greeters and extraordinary ministers of communion. During funeral planning, parish leadership should not demand the family exercise any ministry that is deemed too burdensome. The parish community – offering a ministry of reconciliation, healing and peace to the family and friends of the deceased – can provide trained ministers to fulfill various roles in the enactment of the Order of Christian Funerals.

Music

12. *Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love (OCF 30).*

13. An instrumentalist, cantor/song leader, and choir if possible, should be present to assist and support the assembly in singing the hymns, responses and acclamations for the Rites of Christian Funerals. This may require the parish to provide worship aides so that the gathered assembly can engage in full, active and conscious participation.

14. The choice of music for the funeral rites can be a sensitive issue for all involved. The principles of liturgy as found in the *Order of Christian Funerals (OCF)*, *Music in Catholic Worship (MCW)*, and *Liturgical Music Today (LMT)* govern the choices of music.

15. The music discerned and chosen should speak about our life in Christ, hope in eternal life, consolation, and resurrection; music is intended to help people pray. If a piece is requested that is not appropriate for the funeral rites, another time and place for the use of this music can be offered, e.g., before or after the Vigil, a family gathering, before the funeral liturgy, or at a meal reception.

16. As with the other rites that shape the Order of Christian Funerals, live music affords the gathered family and friends of the deceased the opportunity to experience part of the broader parish community's giftedness and ministry. It is imperative to recall,

The liturgy is a complexus of signs expressed by living human beings. Music, being preeminent among those signs, ought to be "live." While recorded music, therefore, might be used to advantage outside the liturgy as an aid in the teaching of new music, it should, as a general norm, never be used within the liturgy to replace the congregation, the choir, the organist or other instrumentalists (LMT 60).

The parish is responsible for providing music ministry and an appropriate compensation is requested from the families (Cf. Appendix 2.1).

Liturgical Signs and Symbols

17. Because liturgy involves the entirety of the person – body, spirit and mind – the funeral rites afford numerous opportunities for dynamic inculturation. The Diocese of Oakland is a network of peoples and cultures. Ritual through sign and symbol can be integrated into the funeral rites (Cf. Appendix 1).

Liturgical signs and symbols affirming Christian belief and hope in the paschal mystery are abundant in the celebration of the funeral rites, but their multiplication or repetition should be avoided. Care must be taken that the choice of signs and symbols are in accord with the culture of the people (OCF 21).

Cremation

18. The funeral liturgy proceeds by means of signs that are perceptible to the human senses. The body of a deceased Christian is revered as a temple of the Holy Spirit, even in death. The present Code of Canon Law *strongly* recommends that the custom of burying bodies be observed. However, cremation is not forbidden unless chosen for reasons that are not harmonious with Christian teaching (Can. 1176, par. 3). If cremation is chosen, the Church encourages that the body be present for the Vigil and Funeral Liturgy. Cremation follows. If this is not possible, then the cremated remains may be brought to the funeral liturgy.

19. The cremated remains are to be treated with respect and reverence. They should be kept in an appropriate urn or container that is placed during the Rite of Committal in a mausoleum, columbarium or proper grave. The Order of Christian Funerals' appendix for Cremation with Reflections on the Body, Cremation, and Catholic Funeral Rites provides guidelines for the celebration of the funeral liturgy when cremation takes place following the Funeral Liturgy and for the Funeral Liturgy in the Presence of the Cremated Remains,

as well as adaptations for the liturgy when cremation and committal take place before the Funeral Liturgy. Additional texts for use when the Funeral Liturgy is celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains can be found in the appendices.

Ecumenical Norms

20. Ecclesial communion finds its ground in the intimate life of God brought to visibility in Eucharistic communion. Fidelity to the Spirit of communion demands that we not simply accommodate divisions between churches and other ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church, but that we strive to be one. Because of our imperfection, ministers may offer an appropriate word to the gathered assembly on reception of the Body and Blood of Christ. While the visible communion will always be fragile and imperfect we are called through the grace of God to foster the visible unity of the Body of Christ.

21. As we strive to strengthen our communion, the Diocese of Oakland offers certain ecumenical norms that are not an accommodation to divisions, but a pastoral action that works toward a hoped-for unity of churches and communities. Catholic clergy and trained lay persons may, when requested by the family and after consultation with proper pastor of the deceased, participate in the funeral services conducted by the minister of the deceased. Catholic clergy, out of respect for other ecclesial communities, may not officiate at funerals from that tradition. Catholic clergy may officiate at committal rites in other than Catholic cemeteries, both for Catholics and members of other churches. Clergy of other churches or communities may offer prayers or share reflections during the Funeral Mass, if invited by the family, but they may not exercise a role in the Liturgy itself.

Donation of the Body or Organs

22. Modern medical science has made it possible for organs to be taken from our bodies after death to save the health and lives of others. Such organ donation is not only permissible but commendable. It is also permissible for persons to donate their bodies for scientific research. In such cases, the bodies of the deceased and all portions are to be handled with the greatest respect and pastoral decisions must be made to celebrate effectively the appropriate funeral rites, including a Rite of Committal at an appropriate time, in accord with the sound judgment of those who are professionally responsible.



The Vigil for the Deceased

23. *The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy, or if there is no funeral liturgy, before the rite of committal (OCF 54).*

Introduction

24. The OCF contains two clear options: The Vigil for the Deceased and the Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church. A further option for those involved in funeral planning is to utilize prayers of the Office for the Dead (Cf. OCF 54).

Place of Celebration

25. *The vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place. It may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy, so that the funeral liturgy will not be lengthy and the liturgy of the word repetitious. (OCF 55).*

26. On many occasions, the vigil serves as the central event the evening before the funeral when the family and friends gather to honor the body of the deceased, to share with one another and to console one another in prayer. In many instances in recent times, the family has chosen to omit the vigil all together and to simply gather quietly as a family the night before the funeral liturgy. The parish ministers can use this opportunity to explain the importance of the three principal ritual movements – Vigil and related Rites and Prayers, Funeral liturgy, and Rite of Committal. In some cases according to pastoral need, the minister and family may determine “from within these

groups of rites those that best correspond to the particular needs and customs of the mourners” (OCF 50).

27. In the vigil for the deceased with reception at the church, the rite of reception shapes the introductory rites. In this case the family and others who have accompanied the body are greeted at the entrance of the church. The body is sprinkled with holy water, and, if it is the custom, the pall is placed on the coffin by family members, friends or the minister, etc. (Cf. OCF 82-86).

28. In the event of an open casket for viewing at the Church, the family and the deceased are greeted at the door using a simple greeting to offer the compassion and mercy of Christ to the mourners. The coffin and mourners enter the Church. The Invitation to Prayer follows. Sprinkling the body and those gathered with Holy Water, placing of the pall and other Christian Symbols takes place at the funeral liturgy instead of the Vigil due to the open casket.

The Minister of the Vigil

29. The ordinary minister of the Vigil is a priest or deacon. A trained layperson can preside at the Vigil. The minister of the Vigil should be discussed with the family so that they are not unaware of who will be leading them in prayer.

Vesture

30. When the Vigil is celebrated in the Church, the proper vesture for the priest or deacon would be alb or surplice and stole. For a layperson, clothing appropriate to culture and/or parish custom is advised. In the funeral parlor, or some other venue, clergy and laypersons should use discretion when determining proper vesture: a clerical suit or alb and stole for the priest; coat and tie or alb and stole for the deacon; for the layperson, clothing appropriate to culture and/or parish custom is advised.

Selection of Readings

31. It is always advisable to have the family as involved as possible in choosing the readings and prayers used at all the vigil. However, no pressure should be put upon them to be involved in selecting readings or serving as a lector for the vigil. The parish can provide trained lectors for the Vigil to aid the family and friends of the deceased as well as illustrate the parish’s solicitude for those who grieve (Cf. OCF 66).

Devotional Practices and Cultural Rituals

32. There are certain devotional and ritual practices particular to specific generational, national or ethnic groups. Oftentimes, these particular practices afford those gathered an opportunity to enter more deeply into our Christian faith. As long as these rituals are in conformity with faith in the paschal mystery, the vigil can be an appropriate venue for their incorporation. Such rituals can precede the vigil or take place after the concluding prayer of the Vigil. In addition, during funeral planning the ministers can encourage particular groups to celebrate various prayer services for the deceased at distinct times within the waking period and before the funeral liturgy. Not all rites and devotional practices need be included in the Vigil itself.

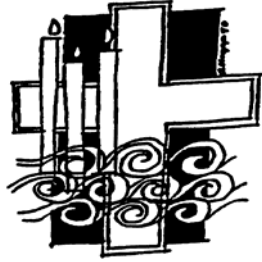
33. For many generations, the vigil was simply referred to as “the Rosary.” This form of prayer was standard for many years and some Catholics are not familiar with the more recent rites of the Church, especially the Vigil. “The Rosary” is no longer the approved rite for the Vigil. The Liturgy of the Word is now normative according to the Order of Christian Funerals. However, adaptation to local circumstances and sensitivity to the family of the deceased may warrant some inclusion of the rosary, in whole or in part. The Church commends the rosary as an opportunity to gather for prayer before or after the Vigil. This is particularly true when the deceased and/or their family have a life-long devotion to this form of prayer. When the prayer of the rosary is used in any way, some brief explanation of it needs to be given for the sake of people present who do not share the Catholic faith or who are not familiar with this form of meditative prayer.

Music

34. Music is vital to any vigil. “Whenever possible, an instrumentalist and a cantor or leader of song should assist the assembly’s full participation in the singing” (OCF 68). Preference should be given to a gathering hymn and the psalm.

Shared Reflections and Remembrances

35. Based upon pastoral need, the vigil is an appropriate time for family and friends to share stories and remembrances of the deceased. This can be incorporated into the Rite following the Liturgy of the Word and homily and before the general intercessions. Also, reflections can be shared after the concluding prayer and in this case can be relatively open-ended. It is preferred that the reflections provide an opportunity to remember the person’s life on earth as a witness to our living faith in the paschal mystery.



Funeral Liturgy

36. *At the funeral liturgy the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery (OCF 129).*

Introduction

37. The funeral liturgy, the central liturgical celebration for the deceased may be celebrated in either of two forms: Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass. The Funeral Mass is the usual and preferred form for active practicing Catholics in the Diocese of Oakland. Both forms of the funeral liturgy include a Reception of the body at the Church (if this is the first time the body has been brought to the Church or if the reception could not be done at the Vigil at the Church due to an open casket), Liturgy of the Word, and Final Commendation and Farewell.

Presiding Minister

38. Priests are the ordinary ministers for the funeral liturgy. A deacon can preside at the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass.

Vesture

39. For the Funeral Mass appropriate vesture for the priest is alb, stole and chasuble. When the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass is celebrated in the church, the proper vesture for the priest or deacon is the alb with stole appropriate to the clerical office. A cope may be worn in addition to alb and stole. The liturgical color chosen for the Diocese of Oakland is preferably white. Given cultural circumstances, other colored vestments can be worn based upon unique pastoral need. In a funeral home or other location where the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass is celebrated, the proper vesture is a clerical suit for the priest. For the deacon, clothing in accord with the culture and dignity of the presidential role is desired.



The Funeral Mass

40. *When one of its members dies, the Church encourages the celebration of the Mass. In the proclamation of the Scriptures, the saving word of God through the power of the Spirit becomes living and active in the minds and hearts of the community. Having been strengthened at the table of God's word, the community calls to mind God's saving deeds and offers the Father in the Spirit the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ's Passover from death to life, a living sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of reconciliation and atonement. Communion nourishes the community and expresses its unity. In communion, the participants have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet that awaits them and are reminded of Christ's own words: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood shall live forever" (John 6:55). Confident of Jesus' presence among them in the living word, the living sacrifice, the living meal, those present in union with the whole Church offer prayers and petitions for the deceased, whom they entrust to God's merciful love (OCF 154).*

Place of Celebration

41. As a communal action of the parish, the Funeral Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church to which the deceased belonged, the oratory of a religious community, or the oratory of a Catholic long-term care facility. It is possible to choose any Catholic church for the Funeral Mass, provided the pastor of that church agrees and the pastor of the deceased is notified (Cf. CIC 1177). The Funeral Mass is not to be celebrated in the funeral home or mausoleum. The Funeral Mass may be celebrated on any day of the year except Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, and holy days of obligation (Cf. GIRM 380-1). General law, determines that a funeral Mass should not take place on any Sunday during the liturgical year.

The Structure of Worship

42. **The Introductory Rites** of the Funeral Mass invite the community to gather around the Easter candle, water, the pall, the cross and the Word (Cf. OCF 35-38), symbols central to baptism and the life of the Christian community. These rites presume a greeting of the mourners who await and / or accompany the body in procession. Ritual planning must take into account the structure of the liturgy, the size of the assembly and the architecture of the church, so that all may see, hear and experience what is going on at this time. If the reception of the body is celebrated, precedence is given to the signs and symbols used for the Church's liturgy. When reception of the body takes place in the vestibule, the gathered community should be in the Church and the presiding minister may invite the assembly to face the Church's entrance.

43. Accordingly, the following must be remembered during funeral planning: National flags, flower sprays on the casket or other insignia are to be respectfully removed from the coffin at the entrance to the church; they may be replaced after the coffin is taken from the church (cf. OCF 38, 132). Other momentos that rest on the lid of the casket should be given to the family or the funeral directors.

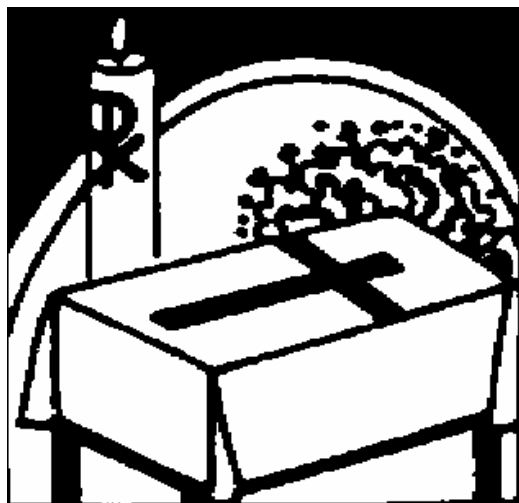
44. **The Word of God** is announced through readings which *“proclaim” the paschal mystery, teach remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together in God’s kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life*” (OCF 22). The Word is followed by a brief homily which may use examples from the person’s life. The homily is to *“illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ*” (CCC 1688) and calls the family and those gathered to face death with the hope supported by the proclamation of the Word of God. The following should be remembered:

In the celebration of the liturgy of the word at the funeral liturgy, the biblical readings may not be replaced by non-biblical readings. But during prayer services with the family non-biblical readings may be used in addition to readings from Scripture (OCF 23).

45. The OCF is very clear that “a brief homily should be given at the funeral liturgy, but never any kind of eulogy” (OCF 141). This does not mean that the deceased cannot be spoken about in the homily; it means that the Word of God must be primary. Through the scriptural word, the homilist helps the assembly 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.” (OCF 27) “Through the homily, the community should receive the consolation and strength to face the death of one of its members with a hope that has been nourished by the proclamation of the saving word of God.” (OCF 141)

46. **The Liturgy of the Eucharist** is celebrated “in the usual manner” (OCF 168).

47. **The Communion Rite** is celebrated and before the Final Commendation, shared reflections can be offered by a few members of the family or friends of the family (two or three), particularly if no reflections were offered at the Vigil for the Deceased. The reflection should be a brief (2-3 minute) prepared remembrance.



Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass

48. On those days when a Funeral Mass is not permitted, when a priest is not available, or when the pastor, pastoral administrator or parish life director and family judge that a Funeral Mass would not be suitable, then a Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may be chosen. The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass is composed of the Reception of the Body at the Church (if it is celebrated at the Church and the body is received for the first time) and a Liturgy of the Word.

49. The family may choose to celebrate a Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass, and schedule a memorial Mass at a later date if it is determined – in consultation with the pastor, pastoral administrator or parish life director – that this is a more suitable form of celebration.

Place of Celebration

50. The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass is normally celebrated in the parish church to which the deceased belonged, the oratory of a religious community, or the chapel of a Catholic long-term care facility. The liturgy, based upon extraordinary pastoral need, may be celebrated in the funeral home

The Structure of Worship

51. The Liturgy of the Word in a Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass follows the same format as a Funeral Mass (Cf. Oakland Guidelines, nos. 44-45, 47)

52. Although the Order of Christian Funerals allows for the distribution of Communion at the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass, this practice is not customary in the Diocese of Oakland.

The Rite of Committal



53. The Order of Christian Funerals contains two options for the Rite of Committal. The first form is used when the commendation prayers are offered during the funeral liturgy. The second is used most appropriately when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal (Cf. OCF 205).

Place of Celebration

54. The Rite of Committal should be celebrated at the location where the deceased will be interred whether the earth, tomb, or niche. At times, weather considerations may cause a change of venue. Nevertheless, according to the *Order of Christian Funerals*, “Whenever possible, the rite of committal is to be celebrated at the site of committal, that is, beside the open grave or place of internment, rather than a cemetery chapel (OCF 204).”

55. Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland will apply the guidelines on the place of celebration for the Rite of Committal. To facilitate the enactment of diocesan

norms for the Rite, there is no extra charge for graveside committals. Cemetery personnel will ensure that the gathered assembly for a crypt or niche interment can go directly to the locale. In the event of interment of cremated remains, Catholic cemeteries, when notified, will provide a table at the site so that the actual committal of the deceased can be situated and celebrated according to the Rite. The guideline on the Structure of the Rite will provide further reflection upon this norm.

Presiding Minister

56. The ordinary minister of the Committal is a priest or deacon. A trained layperson can preside at the rite. In all cases, the family should be aware of the minister who will lead them in prayer. On a rare occasion and only “in the absence of a parish minister, a friend or member of the family should lead those present in the Rite of Committal” (OCF 215).

Vesture

57. The minister should be vested according to local custom. For the priest or deacon, alb and stole according to office can be worn. If custom is otherwise, a clerical suit or other appropriate vesture for a priest is worn. A deacon or lay person should wear proper attire befitting the presidential role.

Structure of the Rite

58. When examining the content of the rite, the timing of certain actions and the appropriateness of various cultural signs that express both the sadness and hope of those gathered must be underscored. If there is an action of committal – lowering of the body, entombment of the body or placement of cremated remains in a niche or in the ground – the Rite notes that the action of committal may follow the words of prayer. It is recommended that the minister in consultation with the family of the deceased during funeral planning consider integrating the corresponding actions into the rite so that the words of committal and the ritual action are fused more closely together. Thus, after the words of committal, the body is lowered into the grave, entombment occurs or cremated remains are placed in a niche or in the ground. Other gestures may be integrated as well. For example, those gathered may wish to place dirt in a grave, flowers upon a casket or in a niche or other signs of affection can take place at this time. Once the committal actions are concluded, the minister continues with the general intercessions prayed on behalf of the deceased and those who mourn. The Lord’s Prayer, Concluding Prayer and Prayer Over the People conclude the rite.



PART II

PARISH MINISTRY, FUNERAL HOMES AND THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

59. The Diocese of Oakland is fortunate to have positive affiliations with funeral homes throughout the jurisdiction of the local church. In fact, the funeral directors, themselves, speak to positive interactions with parish leadership. According to the *Order of Christian Funerals*, it is the responsibility of the parish leadership, the pastor and other ministers, to ensure that funeral directors appreciate the values, beliefs and rites of the Christian Community. (Cf. OCF 20)

The following items are considerations of parish/funeral home interaction to help facilitate even more fluid exchanges.

Fee Schedule

60. According to the *Survey on the Arrangement of Catholic Funeral Liturgies*, there is great discrepancy on funeral costs, parish to parish. Confer Appendix 2.1 for new guidelines.

Contact

61. Open lines of communication between parishes and mortuaries will help to alleviate delayed planning and scheduling which can result from difficulties in reaching parish staff. Parishes should provide funeral homes with updated phone and pager numbers on a regular basis.

Parish Ministry to the Family of the Deceased

62. It is the parish's responsibility to provide ministers who lead the Order of Christian Funerals. It is not the role of the mortuaries to choose or plan elements of the Order of Christian Funerals with the family (i.e. the family just wants a graveside service). The death of a loved one provides the parish with an opportunity to provide

formation in the Order of Christian Funerals. Knowledge of the various aspects of the Order may facilitate richer and more appropriate decision-making with the family. Likewise, funeral directors should not determine when a funeral will take place. Such a determination should be made once the family has met with the parish ministers in consultation with the funeral home. It should not be the responsibility of funeral directors to plan and provide what should be the parish's initiative and response to families.

Clergy Contact List

63. In the unlikely event that a parish does not respond in an appropriate timeframe, funeral directors should first contact a neighboring parish. By way of last practice, funeral directors should be afforded a list of priests in good standing who are available to do the various rites of the Order of Christian Funerals. The list will be updated annually and distributed to the funeral homes as a last alternative. The Office of the Bishop will compile the list.

Cremation

64. Funeral Directors need formation from the Diocese on cremation and the Catholic funeral liturgy since in some cases the decision for or against cremation is made prior to the family's encounter with parish leadership. The Church's preference for bodily burial or entombment should be underscored. "[She] earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying bodies of the dead be observed; it does not however forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching" (CIC 1176). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's committee on liturgy issued *Reflections on the Body, Cremation and Catholic Funeral Rites* to clarify the importance of the body, even in death. Cremation is chosen for a variety of reasons and in such cases, the pastoral ministers should compassionately instruct the family when possible to have the body present for the funeral liturgy. In the event that the presence of the body is not possible, adaptation is appreciably made to have the cremated remains present at the liturgy. The disposition of cremated remains is a point of confusion for some mortuaries and parishes alike. As the United States bishops note, "The practice of scattering cremated remains at sea, from the air or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." Cremated remains should be disposed of with the same respect as a body: placed in an appropriate niche or buried in the ground at a Catholic Cemetery.



PART III

PARISH MINISTRY, CATHOLIC CEMETERIES AND THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

65. The Catholic cemetery is an extension of the parish community and in particular is an icon the believing community who lived and died together in Christ Jesus. The Catholic cemetery's existence is rooted in the reality of the human person as an embodied spirit. By reverently laying to rest those who have died, caring for those who grieve, and maintaining cemeteries as sacred places for prayer and reflection, cemetery personnel provide a service to the Church by joining together the living and the dead. Thus, the Church encourages the burial of Catholics in Catholic cemeteries and prayerful visits thereafter.

Contacting the Catholic Cemetery

66. When diocesan Catholic cemetery personnel are contacted, the first inquiry regards parish affiliation. The personnel of a Catholic Cemetery want to encourage parish attachment. In the case where a family has no particular parish contact, cemeteries will encourage the family to contact the closest parish to their home. Moreover, cemetery personnel will make the parish contact for a family if there is discomfort. According to the 2003 study conducted by the diocesan Presbyteral Council, when families first contact cemeteries about 60% already have made funeral arrangements; 30% have contacted the mortuary, but not the church; 10% contact the cemetery first.

The Right and Timing of Interment at a Catholic Cemetery

67. All Roman Catholics are entitled to burial in the Catholic cemeteries. A baptized member of another Christian church or community may be buried in a Catholic cemetery when it is requested for a reasonable cause. Clergy from the other ecclesial communion may conduct the cemetery rite at the request of the family of the deceased.

68. Families are sometimes misled regarding policy and procedure at Catholic cemeteries. Information regarding Saturday or late afternoon interment is best gleaned from the parish during funeral planning. It is important to know that Catholic cemeteries

strive to provide the service that the family requires. Saturday interment is possible, although there is an additional charge. Extra staff is required, and the collective bargaining agreement requires significant pay incentive for Saturday work. Although late afternoon interment is discouraged, it can be done with proper notification.

Secular Cemeteries

69. Secular cemeteries are in nearly every community served by the Diocese of Oakland. They compete openly and directly with Catholic Cemeteries. Claims of “Catholic sections” and “sacred ground” are used to attract Catholic families. Through aggressive marketing, secular cemeteries offer Catholics a perceived alternative to consecrated Catholic burial space. In addition, because we are not for profit, it is important to make clear to families that Catholic cemeteries offer lower cost grave space.

70. Some funeral homes have a connection to cemetery property. Unless the family asks about a Catholic cemetery, the funeral director is inclined to recommend his own property. It is important for the parish minister to provide formation on Catholic cemeteries. To date, the parish outreach program of Catholic cemeteries is aiding and educating the Catholic community about the importance of Christian burial in a Catholic cemetery.

Catholic Cemetery Policy

71. Catholic cemeteries will support parish requests for families in need. Partial or total consideration is made at the request of the pastor, pastoral administrator or parish life director.

Indigent and Financial Assistance Burials

72. Canon Law states that any Catholic should be buried upon presentation of a Christian Burial Certificate. These certificates will be provided by the diocese for parish use. Pastors, pastoral administrators and parish life directors will determine when families are in need. The Catholic cemetery will respond accordingly (Cf. Appendix 3.1).

Employee Policy for Burial

73. Diocesan and parochial employees are offered specific policy on burial space, clergy and laypersons alike (Cf. Appendix 3.2, 3.3, 3.4).

Transfer and Refunds

74. No resale or transfer of Catholic cemetery property is allowed. Refunds will be made for the original purchase price less a documentation charge and endowment fee. In the case of disinterment, no refund will be made.

Disinterment

75. Only the Director of Catholic Cemeteries can approve disinterment. Except for special circumstances, disinterment is discouraged.

First Saturday Mass and Lenten Services

76. The liturgies held at Catholic cemetery chapels are intended to support the basic mission, to unite the dead and the living, to join the parish and cemetery families. At the respective liturgy, no plate collection is taken. Catholic cemeteries do provide a fee schedule for clergy and musicians (Cf. Appendix 3.5).

Bishop's Memorial Credit

77. Catholic Cemeteries began a new program in September 2003 to include memorials/plaques/headstones in the purchase price of cemetery space at reduced costs, which includes a \$500 "Bishop's Credit". This allows families to fulfill all of their needs at Catholic Cemeteries without going to monument companies to purchase any memorial. Every Catholic family should have the opportunity to memorialize their loved ones at a reasonable price. Contact Catholic cemeteries for more information.

APPENDIX 1.1

GENERAL NORMS ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

1. The Catholic faithful departed have a right to an ecclesiastical funeral, with the rites normally to include the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Mass and the Rite of Committal.
2. Care is to be taken to ensure that the poor are given equal access to the funeral rites.
3. Those in the Order of Catechumens are to be considered members of the Church.
4. The Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a child who dies before baptism whose parents intended to have the child baptized.
5. The Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a baptized member of another church or ecclesial community insofar as this action is not contrary to the wishes of the deceased and provided the minister of the deceased is unavailable.
6. A properly trained lay person may preside at the Vigil of the Deceased or at a Rite of Committal when clergy are unavailable.
7. A Funeral Mass may be celebrated only in a church, an oratory of a religious community or in a Catholic long-term care institution. A Funeral Mass is not to be celebrated in a private home, funeral home or a mausoleum chapel.
8. Regarding cremation, the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass may be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased person. The Church's preference is that the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body before cremation. The cremated remains are to be treated with respect and reverence. They should be kept in an appropriate urn or container that is placed during the Rite of Committal in a mausoleum, columbarium or proper grave.

APPENDIX 2.1

THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS STIPEND AND STOLE FEE

Introduction

The approved fee schedule for the exercise of the *Order of Christian Funerals* is based upon stipend and stole fees recommended to the bishop by the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Oakland as of 1 June 2003. Additional fees were forwarded to the bishop on 14 October 2003 by the Presbyteral Council . The schedule will be sent to all priests, deacons, parish life directors and funeral directors for implementation. Allowance must be made for those who cannot afford the usual donation. The stipend and stole fees are considered donations which are customary but freely given.

Parish Fee

When and if a parish determines a donation schedule, the fee is not to exceed the following schedule according to the rites celebrated from the *Order of Christian Funerals*. The full offering goes to the parish.

Integrated Rites (Vigil, Funeral Mass or Liturgy, Committal).....	\$300.00
Funeral Liturgy and Committal	\$200.00
Funeral Mass or other Liturgy.....	\$150.00
Expanded Rite of Committal (Cf. OCF 211).....	\$150.00

Clergy Stipend

To be paid to the priest presider by the parish.

Funeral Mass Offering	\$10.00
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Any other honorarium is per the desire and generosity of the family of the deceased.

Fee and Stipends for Extra Clergy

In the event that a parish's clergy are unable to celebrate all or any part of the funeral rites, especially the funeral liturgy, the following scale of recommended stipends is offered. The source of the fee and stipends for extra clergy is the parish, not the family of the deceased.

Vigil.....	\$50.00
Funeral Mass.....	\$50.00+ stipend
Committal.....	\$50.00

Any other honorarium is per the desire and generosity of the family of the deceased.

Cantor and Accompanist Fees

When and if parishes determine the appropriateness of fees for musicians, the following fee schedule should not be exceeded per rite. Priority should be given to the parish's musicians.

Cantor.....	\$125
Accompanist.....	\$125

APPENDIX 3.1

GUIDELINES FOR PARISH CONSULTATION *Indigent and Financial Assistance Burials*

The following guidelines are presented by the Advisory Board of Catholic Cemeteries to parish leadership. In order to arrive at just decisions that respect the precepts of Canon Law regarding burial in a Catholic Cemetery – A Catholic has the right to burial upon presentation of a Christian Burial Certificate – the Directors of the various Diocesan Cemeteries need to consult with Pastors and Administrators in the event that the fees for the burial cannot be paid, in full or in part. Below are the various categorical distinctions followed by specific guidelines for the clergy to consult as necessary.

Indigent Burials

Indigent burials are granted for persons who have neither funds available from any source nor anyone to accept financial responsibility.

Limited Funds

Such burials are granted to individuals when the grave and burial charges are not covered in full. No spouse and/or responsible party are able or willing to assume the balance due.

Pay When Able

An agreement is forged between the cemetery and the responsible person making burial arrangements which notes that monies due cannot be paid in the foreseeable future.

Guideline for Clergy and/or Parish Life Directors

1. The Director of any given diocesan cemetery will contact the pastor, pastoral administrator or parish life director regarding the parochial status of the deceased. This status report is intended to aid the Cemetery Director to determine qualifications for indigent or financial assistance burial.
2. If there is no awareness of parish affiliation, the director will contact the territorial parish, *de jure*.

3. Various criteria can be used by clergy to determine parochial status of the deceased:
 - Registered parishioner.
 - Knowledge of the deceased or the deceased's family through some form of parish involvement.
 - Knowledge of the individual through parish assistance.
4. If the minister is aware of the financial situation of the deceased according to the description of indigent or financial assistance burials, he should make note of this in a letter to cemetery personnel.
5. If the deceased qualifies for indigent or financial assistance burial, the responsible parties for the deceased should not incur any parish costs for rites celebrated at the parish. The waiving of costs would underscore the financial situation of the deceased or other responsible party. If costs have been incurred and payment made, please notify the cemetery director.

APPENDIX 3.2

PRIEST BURIAL BENEFIT

Scope and Purpose

To set forth Catholic cemetery organization policy regarding priest burial benefits.

Burial Benefit:

Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland provides a free burial plot in designated sections for priests in good standing. The burial benefit also includes all opening and closing charges along with endowment funds, burial vault, and recordation fee. If the priest based upon personal choice chooses a more expensive plot, crypt, or niche, then the current charge (value) for a priest's plot (including fees) will be applied as a credit against the desired plot, crypt, or niche. The balance of the purchase for a more expensive plot, crypt, or niche may be paid for based upon the standard credit terms of the Catholic Cemeteries.

Headstone

The Catholic Cemeteries will subsidize the purchase of a memorial headstone by reducing the standard price by 50% to the priest and his family.

Procedure

A priest may designate his plot by selecting one location at a diocesan cemetery of his choice. Once selected, the family service counselor at the selected cemetery shall process a standard contract. The contract must be submitted to the central office for final approval and recordation. A priest may reserve a burial space for 30 days before entering a contractual agreement. Reservation cannot occur in more than one cemetery.

APPENDIX 3.3

DEACON AND SPOUSE BURIAL BENEFIT

Scope and Purpose

To set forth the Catholic Cemetery organization's policy regarding Deacon and spouse burial.

Burial and Benefit

Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Oakland provide a free burial plot (double depth) to accommodate a deacon and his spouse. The section of burial ground is designated to adjoin the priests' plots or be placed nearby. The burial benefit also includes all opening and closing charges along with endowment funds, burial vault, and recordation fee. If the deacon and spouse based upon personal choice choose a more expensive plot, crypt, or niche, then the current charge (value) for a standard plot (including fees) will be applied as a credit against the desired plot, crypt, or niche. The balance of the purchase for a more expensive plot, crypt, or niche may be paid based upon the standard credit terms of the Catholic Cemeteries.

Headstone

The Catholic Cemeteries will subsidize the purchase of a memorial headstone by reducing the standard price by 50% to the family.

Procedure

A deacon and spouse may go about designating their plot by selecting the exact location at the diocesan cemetery of their choice. Once selected, the family service counselor at the selected cemetery shall process a standard contract. The contract must be submitted to the central office for final approval and recordation.

A deacon and spouse may reserve a space for 30 days in anticipation of contract execution and may not reserve space at more than one cemetery.

APPENDIX 3.4

DIOCESAN AND PAROCHIAL EMPLOYEE BURIAL BENEFITS

Scope and Purpose

To set forth the Catholic Cemetery Organizations policy regarding diocesan and parochial employee benefits.

Responsibility

The Director of Catholic Cemeteries has overall responsibility for the policy.

Burial and Benefit

At Need

In an *At Need* situation, if an employee dies while working for the diocese or a parish, we will apply a 10% discount for the family.

Pre-Arrangement Program

All diocesan and parochial employees, full and part-time, receive a 15% discount on the price of a grave, crypt or a niche. Non-Catholic employees may also participate in this benefit as they have an established relationship with the Catholic community.

The discount will be applied only to the price of a grave, crypt or niche for the employee's use. If the employee purchases a large family plot to include interment of parents, children and other relatives, then the discount will be given on all graves in the plot. Parents, siblings or children buying individual graves, crypts or niches will qualify for the discount only if purchased at the same time as the employee purchase.

Once an employee has entered into a contract with the cemetery, it will be honored (Neither resignation nor termination would affect said contract).

This benefit will be available at the six diocesan cemeteries: Holy Sepulchre, Hayward; Holy Cross, Antioch; Queen of Heaven, Lafayette; St. Joseph, San Pablo; St. Mary, Oakland; St. Michael, Livermore

Financing for Diocesan and Parochial Employees

Financing is at 0% up to five years deducted from payroll. There is no down payment except for the 1st month's payment.

Enrollment is upon hire or during the open enrollment periods.

Resignation and termination within the first 12 months of employment allows for the individual employee to continue payment except that they would have to pay an additional 15% at the time of termination to keep the contract in effect. If money is paid and the former employee elects not to continue, their money would be refunded.

If the employee dies prior to full payment and the family cannot afford to pay the balance, the Catholic Cemeteries financial assistance guidelines can be implemented.

Financing for Cemetery Employees

In addition to the 15% discount afforded diocesan and parochial employees, cemetery employees receive the following benefits:

Active and retired management, full-time regular employees and full-time and part-time office employees of the cemetery organization will have their interment/entombment charges, recordation fee, burial box and setting fee charges waived (In the case of entombment, the inscription charge will be waived in place of a box).

Spouses of active management, full-time regular field employees, full-time and part-time office and retired employees will have their interment/entombment charges and recordation fees waived alone.

Dependent children (under the age of 18) of active management, full-time regular field employees, and full time & part-time office employees will have their interment/entombment charges and recordation fees waived alone.

APPENDIX 3.5

FIRST SATURDAY MASS, LENTEN LITURGIES AND DEVOTIONS AND SPECIAL MASSES

The Cemeteries Advisory Board approved the following policy at their meeting on December 5, 2002 and received the affirmation of the Presbyteral Council on 14 October 2003 and approval of the bishop:

Plate Collection

No collections are to be taken up at the monthly first Saturday mass. In the event that any money is left as an offering at the cemetery chapel, the money goes to the particular cemetery.

Clergy Stipend

The mass stipend is \$150 including Eucharistic liturgy for All Souls Day and Memorial Day. The stipend for Stations of the Cross during Lent is \$100 per Sunday.

Cantor and Musician Stipend

Cantors and accompanists each receive \$125 per rite.

Special Requests

Special requests, over and above the normal stipend schedule, needs to be approved by the Director.

SOURCES

The Diocesan Guidelines are based upon the following sources:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (SC)
The Code of Canon Law (CIC)
Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)
The General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM), 2002
The Order of Christian Funerals, 1989. (OCF)
The Order of Christian Funerals: Liturgical Commentary (FDLC)
The Appendix to the OCF on Cremation (USCCB)
The Reflection on the Body, Cremation and Catholic Funeral Rites
Liturgical Music Today (LMT), BCL, USCCB
Music in Catholic Worship (MCW), BCL, USCCB
Statutes of the Diocese of Oakland (SO, 71)
Survey on the Arrangement of Catholic Funeral Liturgies in the Diocese of Oakland, Fall 2002