



FUNERAL
GUIDE
ST JOSEPH'S
PARISH



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEWTON ABBOT

Firstly please accept our sincere condolences for your loss. We know how difficult a time it is and we will keep you all in our prayers.

At a time when you're in mourning it is sometimes hard to know the answers to some questions about what happens at a Catholic funeral so please take the time to read this guide which we hope will alleviate any worries or concerns you have with regard to what your loved one, as a Catholic, will have hoped for at the time of their passing.



ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, KINGSKERSWELL

What happens before a Catholic funeral?

After a Catholic has died their family may hold a prayer vigil on the evening before their funeral, sometimes called reception of the body. At the prayer vigil, mourners are encouraged to pray in remembrance of the person who has died. This gathering is usually led by the Priest. If you would like a Vigil please speak to your funeral director who can arrange this with us.

What happens at a Catholic funeral?

The format of a Catholic funeral service depends on whether it includes a Requiem Mass, which includes the Eucharistic Prayer and Holy Communion. Requiem Masses are very much encouraged by the Church and are often the wish of Catholics, whether practicing or not. If the coffin was not received by the church the evening before the funeral it will be greeted at the door on the day by the Priest. He will sprinkle the coffin with holy water and lead it into the church.

The coffin will be placed at the altar and is covered with a special cloth, called a pall.

A Catholic funeral service without Mass usually lasts 45 minutes. A funeral with Mass often lasts about an hour.

The funeral liturgy will include at least one reading from the Old Testament and a Psalm, which are read by family or friends, or a member of the congregation. The Priest will read a passage from one of the Gospels and afterwards deliver a homily (insight into the meaning of the scripture).

If the funeral includes a Requiem Mass then bread and wine will be placed on the altar for Holy Communion.

Mourners will form a procession to receive Holy Communion or, if they are not a Catholic, a blessing from the Priest. If you would like a blessing please place your arms across your chest when approaching the Priest.

After Holy Communion there might be a eulogy (usually 3 to 5 minutes) read by a member of the family or friend of the deceased. This is followed by special prayers, called the Final Commendation. Afterwards, the coffin is sprinkled with more holy water and friends and family say goodbye to their loved one.

What type of music is included in a Catholic funeral?

Music at a Catholic funeral is restricted to Catholic funeral hymns or sacred music. Usually there are three or four hymns.

Can we meet with the Priest before the funeral?

Families are encouraged to meet with our Priest so that we can talk about what readings and hymns are to be chosen. The Parish Secretary will contact you to make an appointment.

Can we have an Order of Service?

The Order of Service can be produced either by the funeral directors, ourselves or you may wish to do your own Order of Service. This includes all the readings, hymns and some photos. Please let us know if you would like us to produce one for you.

What happens at a Catholic burial or cremation?

The burial or cremation of a Catholic starts with a committal service called the Catholic Rite of Committal at a graveside /crematorium. It is presided over by a Priest or deacon. Sometimes families may decide that no Priest/Deacon will follow on once the Mass at the church ends. It is a personal choice.

What is the etiquette and dress-code for a Catholic funeral?

Mourners at Catholic funerals generally wear smart clothing in dark colours. A black or dark-coloured suit and tie for men is traditional, and smart black dress or suit for women. Again this is a personal choice. Head coverings are not required.

During prayers it is usually acceptable to bow your head and stay seated, but some people might kneel. The congregation might stand during parts of the service, for example when they are singing hymns. You do not have to do this if you are not physically able to do so.

If you are not a Catholic you do not have to participate in the procession for Holy Communion, but are welcome to do so. You should not take communion, but be blessed by a Priest.

Do I need to book an organist for the service?

Yes we will need to know if you require us to book our organist.

How much do I need to pay for the organist and the church?

We will liaise with the funeral directors to ensure all fees for the church and organist are met.

Can I hire your church hall for a wake?

Yes, we have a hall available for hire at the back of the church. Please contact the Parish Secretary if you would like more information. We can also put you in touch with caterers who can have refreshments ready for the mourners directly after the funeral.

Can I Make a Donation to the Church?

As a charity we are very grateful for donations which in turn supports our chosen charities. If you would like to have a retiring collection, please do let us know.

WE DO HOPE THIS GUIDE HAS ANSWERED SOME OF THE QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE. WE ARE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY OTHER QUESTIONS THAT ARE NOT COVERED IN THIS GUIDE, SO PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO ASK US AS WE WANT YOUR FAMILY MEMBER'S SERVICE TO BE A WONDERFUL CELEBRATION OF THEIR LIFE AND A LASTING MEMORY FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL CAROLINE FULLALOVE, PARSH SECRETARY 01626 365231 OR EMAIL newtonabbot@prcdtr.org.uk