

Catholic Funeral Guidelines

The Church offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Christ's Passover for the dead so that, since all members of Christ's body are in communion with each other, the petition of spiritual help on behalf of some may bring comforting hope to others. (General Instruction of the Roman Missal 379). At the Funeral Mass there should as a rule, be a short homily, but never a eulogy of any kind. (GIRM 382). However for pastoral reasons Words of Farewell, may be said at a non-liturgical moment in the Mass. The Words of Farewell should be brief and given by one person and should reflect the spirituality of the deceased person. At St Mary's we suggest that when a number of persons wish to speak of the life and experiences of the person who has died, this could be done during the wake in a more relaxed atmosphere.

The music for a Catholic funeral is liturgical. What is possible will be determined by the circumstances and available musicians. Hymns appropriate to the occasion may be chosen. At Mass, wherever possible the *Lord have mercy, Holy, Holy, Holy, and the Lamb of God* should be sung. Recorded music should be avoided. Secular items are never to be sung or played at a Catholic funeral, such as romantic ballads, pop or rock music, political songs, football club songs. At the funerals of children, pastoral care needs to be taken in the choice of music. Nursery rhymes and sentimental secular songs are inappropriate because these may intensify grief.