

# ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS FOR PRIESTS

## Office for Worship Archdiocese of Philadelphia

### Vesting of the Deceased Priest

The deceased priest is vested as for the celebration of Mass. The underclothing of the priest should be a cassock or black clerical suit and collar. All of the vesture should be cleaned and pressed beforehand, with vesting corresponding to the directives found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 336-337/340. The deceased priest may be vested in the archdiocesan vestment or another appropriate white vestment. Nothing should be placed in the coffin which is contrary to the dignity of the holy priesthood or to the burial of a Christian.

### Preparation of Liturgical Music and Liturgical Ministers

The parish director of liturgical music prepares the music for the *Vigil for the Deceased*, the *Parish Mass*, the *Funeral Mass* in accord with the norms and directions for liturgical music in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, and the *Order of Christian Funerals*, with the additional consideration of the time or season of the year. The copyright regulations found on the website of the Office for Worship are to be observed in the reproduction of music and texts.

Liturgical ministers—readers and servers—should be practiced beforehand for the *Vigil for the Deceased*, the *Parish Mass*, and the *Funeral Mass*. Notes for the servers for the *Funeral Mass* are found below. Parish ushers and greeters should be on hand for all celebrations to assist with directions and the distribution of booklets.

The biblical texts for the *Liturgy of the Word*, the *Parish Mass* and the *Funeral Mass* should typically be chosen beforehand by the homilist.

### Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church

The *Vigil for the Deceased* may include the celebration of the *Liturgy of the Hours* (Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer depending on the time of day) or a Liturgy of the Word as described in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. All priests should be invited to participate in the *Vigil for the Deceased*, vested in choir dress.

The *Vigil for the Deceased* may be preceded by the prayers for the *Transfer of the Body to the Church* as found in the *Order of Christian Funerals* (nos. 121-127). These prayers may be prayed in the Rectory or in the Funeral Home prior to the *Vigil for the Deceased*.

*For the Vigil for the Deceased:*

Celebrant:	Regional Bishop or another celebrant identified by the Office for Clergy
One Deacon:	For Intercessions at the <i>Liturgy of the Hours</i> or the Gospel at the Liturgy of the Word
One Lector:	For the Reading at the <i>Liturgy of the Hours</i> or the Reading at the Liturgy of the Word
Cantor/Psalmist:	For the hymns/psalms/canticles
Five Altar Servers:	Cross/Ritual Book/Holy Water/Miter/Crosier

- The celebrant greets the body at the door of the church for the Introductory Rites and the Sprinkling with Holy Water.
- An appropriate psalm or hymn is sung during the procession from the church door (see no. 403). The celebrant and other ministers precede the coffin.
- The coffin is placed on a bier at the head of the center aisle with the head of the deceased toward the altar. The lit Easter candle is placed near the coffin.
- Seating should be reserved for the priests in procession and for the family as well.
- The celebrant makes the customary reverence, venerates the altar and then continues at the chair with the *Liturgy of the Hours* or the Liturgy of the Word, found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*. The celebrant gives a brief homily.
- After the Concluding Prayer of the *Liturgy of the Hours* or the Liturgy of the Word, a member or friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased.
- After the Concluding Prayer or the words of remembrance, the lid is removed from the coffin. The celebrant goes to the coffin for the Blessing, signing the forehead of the deceased priest at the appropriate time. After the Blessing, all make the customary reverence and recession. A hymn may accompany this recessional.

### **Parish Mass**

In some cases an evening Parish Mass follows the *Reception of the Body* and the *Vigil for the Deceased* when this is scheduled the day before the Funeral Mass. The *Parish Mass* may be a Mass for the Dead, if the liturgical calendar permits it. Otherwise it is the Mass of the day. The *Parish Mass* may not be the *Funeral Mass* which will take place the next day. The coffin lid is replaced for the Parish Mass and the pall may be used.

## Funeral Mass

When the viewing period resumes prior to the *Funeral Mass*, the prayers for the *Gathering in the Presence of the Body* (nos. 112-118) may be used.

Parking should be reserved for the Archbishop. A vesting area should be prepared for the Archbishop in the rectory and additional vesting areas for concelebrating Bishops and priests. The deacon of the Mass vests in a convenient place and joins the procession ahead of the other clergy. In the absence of a deacon, a concelebrant assumes all of the diaconal roles.

Before the Funeral Mass begins, the coffin lid is replaced, the pall is placed on the coffin by family members or parish members or other priests, and a Christian symbol such as the *Book of the Gospels* or a cross may be placed on the coffin (see no. 400).

*For the Funeral Mass:*

Celebrant:	Archbishop or one of the Auxiliary Bishops designated by the Archbishop
One Deacon:	If two deacons are available, then the roles are divided between them. The deacon sings/reads the Prayer of the Faithful. (The <i>Book of the Gospels</i> is not used.)

*If dalmatics are needed, please contact the Cathedral Sacristy (215-561-1313).*

Two Lectors:	For the First and Second Reading
Cantor/Psalmist:	The psalmist sings the psalm from the ambo.
Eight Altar Servers:	Thurifer/Cross/Two Servers/Holy Water/ Miter/Crosier/Book
Gift Bearers:	At least three ciboria and wine cruet

- The Archbishop sits in the presidential chair. [A seat is placed nearby for the Master of Ceremonies]
- The deacon only sits next to the Archbishop. If there are two deacons, they may sit next to the Archbishop. If three deacons are available, two serve as chaplains and one as the deacon of the Mass.
- The Auxiliary Bishops sit in the sanctuary, if at all possible.
- Concelebrants sit typically in a reserved section in the nave as a group. Designated concelebrants (and classmates) sit together first among the concelebrants. Concelebrants who cannot walk in the procession may sit beforehand in the first pew(s) of the section reserved for the concelebrants.
- The family should sit in reserved seats.

- Incense is used at the Entrance, the Gospel, the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts, and during the Final Commendation.
- Holy Water is used during the Final Commendation and in the narthex prior to the procession to the place of committal.
- The Act of Penitence, the Confiteor followed by the Kyrie, takes place as usual since the blessing of the body occurred earlier at the Reception of the Body.
- Lectors come from their place in the assembly to proclaim the readings.
- The homily is typically given by a priest.
- Additional petitions to the Prayer of the Faithful should include one for priestly vocations. All additional petitions should reflect the Church's faith in Christ's victory over death and the promise of eternal life.
- For the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts:
  - Sufficient hosts should be prepared for the both the concelebrants and the faithful. The concelebrants receive the typical communion host and not broken pieces of larger hosts.
  - Sufficient chalices (and purificators) should be prepared beforehand for all the concelebrants to receive the Precious Blood. All chalices receive a drop of water at the time of the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts.
  - All sacred vessels to be consecrated are to be placed on a corporal spread at the beginning of the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts.
- The Archbishop holds the paten for the Communion of the concelebrants. Communion stations for the faithful and the Precious Blood of the concelebrants are to be determined beforehand.
- Words of Remembrance typically do not take place at the Funeral Mass. They may take place at the Vigil, the Parish Mass and/or the Rite of Committal.
- The *Salve Regina* is typically sung after the Dismissal.

### **Rite of Committal**

The *Rite of Committal* as found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, conducted by a priest, typically immediately follows the *Funeral Mass*.

## Directions for the Altar Servers for the Funeral Mass with the Archbishop/Bishop

### *Miter and Crosier Bearer:*

Walk behind the Archbishop, shoulder to shoulder with each other. They wear vimps over their shoulders that will cover their hands when they hold the miter and crosier.

When they enter the sanctuary, they bow their heads as the Archbishop genuflects. The Master of Ceremonies (MC) will then hand them the miter and crosier. They go stand near the Archbishop's chair where they are accessible to the MC.

They remain near the chair until the reception of the gifts. At the homily, they may be seated at chairs set aside for them. During the Eucharistic Prayer they kneel. They return to the chair after the reception of Holy Communion.

For the Final Commendation, they stand to the Archbishop's left at the entrance to the sanctuary. When the Final Commendation concludes, they turn to altar and bow as the Archbishop genuflects. In the recessional, they follow behind the Archbishop as in the entrance procession.

### *Book Bearer:*

Walk behind the miter and crosier bearers. The book bearer will not carry a book in the procession. The MC will bring his own copy of the *Order of Christian Funerals* and give it to the book bearer when needed throughout the Mass.

The book bearer, when he reaches the sanctuary, bows as the Archbishop genuflects. He then stands near the Archbishop's chair and follows the directions of the MC. He remains near the chair until the reception of the gifts. At the homily, he may be seated at a chair set aside for him. During the Eucharistic Prayer he kneels. He returns to the chair after the reception of Holy Communion.

For the Final Commendation, the book bearer stands to the left of the Archbishop at the entrance to the sanctuary and follows the directions of the MC. When the Final Commendation concludes, he turns to the altar and bows as the Archbishop genuflects. In the recessional, he follows behind the miter and crosier bearers as in the entrance procession.

### *Thurifer:*

*Incense is used at the Entrance, the Gospel, the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts, and during the Final Commendation.*

The thurifer, with incense burning on the charcoal, leads the procession. He carries the thurible in one hand, and the boat with the incense in the other hand. When he reaches the sanctuary, he bows before the altar and stands to the left side of the altar.

The thurifer follows the directions of the MC for the incensation of the altar at the Entrance. When the thurible is not in use it is placed on a conveniently located stand in the sanctuary or the sacristy.

During the Second Reading, the thurifer prepares to bring the thurible and boat to the Archbishop. Following the period of silence after the Second Reading, he bows before the altar, if he passes in front of it, and comes before the Archbishop. He hands the boat to the MC, then kneels and opens the thurible for the Archbishop to impose incense. Then he takes both the thurible and boat and leads the deacon or concelebrating priest, after the blessing, to the ambo for the Gospel. After the Gospel, the thurifer returns the thurible and boat to the stand. *After the Gospel, the charcoal is added to the thurible so it is ready for the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts.*

At the conclusion of the Prayer of the Faithful, the thurifer prepares to bring the thurible and boat to the Archbishop. After the bread and wine have been prepared, the thurifer goes to the top altar step, hands the boat to the MC, and then opens the thurible for the imposition of incense by the Archbishop. He then closes the thurible, hands it to the deacon or concelebrating priest, and goes to the bottom of the altar steps. After the incensation during the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts, the thurifer returns the thurible and boat to the stand.

Toward the end of Communion, the thurifer lights and adds another charcoal to the thurible and prepares to bring the thurible and boat to the Archbishop. After the Prayer following Communion, he and the Holy Water bearer bow in front of the altar and stand to the right of the Archbishop at the entrance to the sanctuary.

The Archbishop will come and stand at the entrance to the sanctuary for the Final Commendation. After the invitation to prayer, the thurifer comes before the Archbishop for the imposition of incense, and then steps back to his place. After the Archbishop sprinkles the coffin with Holy Water, the thurifer presents the thurible to the MC. When the incensation of the body is complete, the thurifer takes the thurible back from the MC and stands at the head of the procession behind the cross bearer and servers.

When the Archbishop genuflects, the thurifer bows and leads procession into the narthex.

*Cross Bearer:*

The cross bearer follows the thurifer and bows when he enters the sanctuary. The cross is placed in its typical location. The cross bearer goes to the seat arranged for him.

Following the Prayer after Communion, the cross bearer comes before the altar with the two servers, bows, and then moves past the coffin several pews, stops and turns, facing the altar.

When the Final Commendation is completed, he bows as the Archbishop genuflects. He then follows the thurifer.

*Servers:*

The servers carry their candles next to the cross bearer in the procession. When they reach the sanctuary, they bow and place their candles where they are typically located. The servers go to the seats arranged for them.

Candles are not used in the Gospel procession.

The servers assist the deacon or concelebrant with the preparation of the altar. They go to the Archbishop to receive from him the gifts brought forward by the people, which are then taken to the altar (the ciboria) and to the credence table (the wine cruet). The servers assist with the wine and water and the washing of the hands in the usual way. When this is completed, they return to their assigned places and kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer. One of the servers rings the bells during the Eucharistic Prayer.

The servers, after the Blessed Sacrament has been reserved, take the basin, pitcher and towel, and go to the Archbishop to wash his hands after the distribution of Holy Communion.

After this, the servers, with the cross bearer, prepare for the Final Commendation. After the Prayer after Communion, the servers go with candles to the front of the altar, bow with the cross bearer, and then move past the coffin several pews, stop and turn, facing the altar. They remain in this place for the Final Commendation. When the Final Commendation is completed, the servers bow as the Archbishop genuflects. They then follow the cross bearer.

*Holy Water Bearer:*

The holy water bearer (without holy water) follows the cross bearer and genuflects when he enters the sanctuary. He goes to the seat arranged for him. During the Eucharistic Prayer he kneels.

Following the Prayer after Communion, the holy water bearer with holy water comes before the altar, bows, and takes his place next to the thurifer. The holy water bearer follows the directions of the MC.

When the Final Commendation is completed, the holy water bearer bows as the Archbishop genuflects. He walks with the book bearer. *The Archbishop will use Holy Water in the narthex to sprinkle the coffin.*

**Notes:**

*For further information, please call:  
Father Dennis Gill, Director  
Office for Worship  
215-587-3537*