



**LITURGICAL GUIDANCE  
WITH THE DEATH OF POPE FRANCIS  
OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**

Today, Monday, April 21, 2025, with the announcement of the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, the clergy and faithful throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are encouraged to pray in an intentional way for the happy repose of his soul. Liturgical guidance follows for parishes, institutions, religious communities and educational settings to observe fittingly the death of the Holy Father in the days leading up to his Funeral and the immediate days following.

- Clergy and faithful are asked to pray the customary *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Glory be to the Father* along with the prayer, *Eternal rest*, for the repose of the soul of the Pope during this period. *This practice should be communicated widely through social media.* Students in all our schools and religious education programs are especially invited to observe this practice. Additionally, the Holy Rosary, especially in communal settings, offered for this same intention is recommended. A portrait of Pope Francis may be displayed in churches, chapels, and institutions during this period. The use of black bunting on church entrances is optional.
- The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the happy repose of the soul of the Holy Father should be planned at some point leading up to the Funeral or during the immediate days following, keeping in mind the norms of the liturgical calendar, allowing for the attendance of as many of the faithful as possible. Several parishes and institutions can join together for the celebration of Holy Mass for this intention. *Please note, however, during the Octave of Easter, the Mass of the Octave Day is the only Mass that can be used, except in the case of a Funeral Mass.*
  - *Note that the first section of “Various Prayers for the Dead” in the Roman Missal includes three Mass formularies for a Pope (forms A, B, and C). As with all Masses for the Dead, the prayers of the various formularies are interchangeable.*
  - *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM] states:*

- *Number 381: A Mass for the Dead, on receiving the news of a death, for the final burial, or the first anniversary, may be celebrated even on days within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord, on days when an Obligatory Memorial occurs, and on weekdays other than Ash Wednesday or the weekdays of Holy Week.*
- *Other Masses for the Dead or “daily” Masses, may be celebrated on weekdays in Ordinary Time on which Optional Memorials occur or when the Office is of the weekday, provided such Masses are actually applied for the dead.*
- *In the United States, the vestment colors violet, white, or black may be used in Masses and Offices for the Dead (see GIRM, Number 346e). However, it is customary for red vestments to be worn at a Mass for the Dead offered for a Pope since we are mourning the death of the successor of the Apostle Peter.*
- *In the Eucharistic Prayer, any of the Prefaces for the Dead (I-V) may be used. The naming of the Holy Father is omitted in the Eucharistic Prayer. However, the naming of the deceased Pope may take place during the intercession for the dead, as provided in Eucharistic Prayers I-III: “your servant, Pope Francis.”*
- A Petition for the Universal Prayer should be included at Masses celebrated for the happy repose of the soul of the Pope. The following are provided as examples:
  - *That Pope Francis, called to the heavenly kingdom by the Lord, may rejoice forever at the banquet table of heaven, we pray to the Lord.*
  - *That Pope Francis, who served the Church as Supreme Pontiff, may worship God forever in the liturgy of heaven, we pray to the Lord.*
  - *That the tireless efforts of Pope Francis, now called to the Lord, may bear fruit in unity, peace and love among all men and women, we pray to the Lord.*

One of these or a similar petition should be included beginning today at all Masses and even after the Funeral of the Pope.

- Communities and individuals may pray the Office of the Dead, outside the Octave of Easter, in the Liturgy of the Hours for the intention of the Holy Father. In a public celebration of Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, a bishop, priest, or deacon could give a brief homily following the reading. A reflection on the life of the Pope might best be given prior to or following the Liturgy.

Thank you and God bless,  
 Father Dennis Gill, Director, Office for Divine Worship