

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT are the Catholic funeral rites? There are many opportunities for prayer after death, such as gathering at the funeral home and viewing the body. The Church offers three formal services, all or some of which may be used:

Vigil for the Deceased: the evening before the funeral, a Vigil Service may be scheduled with visitation. The service, as given to us by the Church, is a service of the word. Remembrances of the deceased (i.e., a eulogy) are allowed during this service.

Funeral Mass: the Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal Mystery, when we celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord and our participation in that mystery. The Mass is offered for the person who has died. (Eulogies are normally not allowed during a Funeral Mass.)

Graveside Service: the Rite of Committal is celebrated at the place of burial/interment.

WHO assists with funeral preparations? The funeral rites are planned in coordination with the family of the deceased, the Parish Staff (including one of the priests, the Pastoral Minister, and the Music Coordinator.) With assistance of the funeral home, we help the family with funeral planning. Parishioners also assist with the funeral as sacristans and altar servers.

WHEN do funeral preparations begin? Families should contact the Parish Office before or immediately upon the death of a loved one. Advance preparation for funeral services is recommended. Please contact the church any time to make funeral preparations for yourself or a loved one.

Click here for a [Funeral Preparation Form](#) and the [Family Checklist for a Funeral](#).

Does the Church recommend a Funeral Mass?

Yes, a celebration of the Mass is strongly encouraged for any Catholic who has died, even though the family may not be Catholic. On days when a Funeral Mass is not permitted, a prayer service is celebrated (for example, Funeral Masses are not scheduled on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday).

Can I choose the Scripture readings or does the Church choose them?

The family is encouraged to select the readings from Sacred Scripture. Click here for a selection of possible [Old Testament](#), [New Testament](#), and [Gospel readings](#).

Can I choose the hymns for the Vigil Service and/or the Mass?

The family is encouraged to meet with our music coordinator, Mrs. Nancy Grundhoefer, to plan all music. Please be aware that there are a fixed number of liturgical texts at a funeral Mass, which affect what may be sung. Also note that recorded music or secular music cannot be used at Mass. A parish cantor will sing for the funeral. A list of many appropriate and commonly chosen hymns may be found by [clicking here](#).

What times are available for funerals?

St. Francis Xavier Church will make every effort to set a funeral time convenient for your family; however, the campus can be very busy, with both an elementary school and an early-learning

center. Weekday funerals normally take place at 10:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. Funeral Masses cannot take place on Sunday.

Can we use the chapel instead of the church?

Yes, for funerals at which fewer than 65 people are expected, the chapel is ideal.

If there is no visitation the evening before, can we have visitation one hour before the funeral?

With the permission of the pastor visitation can take place one hour prior to the funeral.

Can I have friends and family members offer a eulogy?

Yes, but not during a Mass. Eulogies are appropriate at the Vigil or at the Graveside.

If my family member wants to donate his/her body to science, what do we need to know?

The Church looks upon donation of organs as a commendable and meritorious act, as well as a donation of one's body. A Funeral Mass takes place in the presence of the body (before donation to science); otherwise, if the body is not present, a Memorial Mass is celebrated.

Does the Catholic Church allow cremation?

Yes, the Church permits cremation [CCC2301], but the Church still prefers burial or entombment of the deceased. [Click here](#) for a more detailed explanation.

Does the church charge for funerals?

There is no charge to use the church for a funeral or the parish hall for a meal after the funeral.

Can I bring flowers into the church?

Flowers may be brought into the vestibule of the church, but normally not into the nave and sanctuary of the church (with the exception of the casket spray or a small vase of flowers next to the cremains).

May I request a priest from another parish celebrate my funeral?

Yes, visiting priests are welcome at St. Francis Xavier.

Can we have a reception after the funeral?

Yes, teams of parishioners are available to provide lunch or refreshments for up to 50 people. A larger number may be accommodated by hiring a caterer. For further information, please contact: Sister Sara Burress, 803-5414 or email through our [Contact page](#).

Other information

Contact Nancy Grundhoefer, the Music Coordinator, to plan the music. Email through the [Contact page](#) or call her at (205) 803-5415). The office will help prepare a program.