

The Parish of the Sacred Heart and St Aldhelm



Information for Funerals

In this time of sorrow, the Lord is in our midst.

The parish offers its condolences and prayers at this time of sadness.

When you come to arrange a funeral, you may have had recent contact with your local Catholic parish in connection with the sickness of your loved one, or it may be a long time since you or the deceased had any contact with the Church. Either way, be assured that the Catholic priest and community will welcome you and do all they can to help you with the funeral arrangements.

It is probably best in the first instance to arrange the funeral through your undertaker. This is because it is necessary to co-ordinate the availability of the priest, the Church (if required) and the cemetery or crematorium, there is no longer any prohibition on Catholics being cremated. The main choice you will need to make is whether to have a funeral Mass at the Church beforehand or not. If in doubt, go and talk to your parish priest about this, and do go and see him anyway, or ask him to come and visit you at home, to discuss the details of the service.

A non-Catholic spouse who dies can have a Catholic funeral, if during their lifetime they showed a particular attachment to the parish of the Catholic spouse rather than the parish of their own church and/or requested a Catholic funeral.

The undertaker should be aware (but may need reminding!) that no firm arrangements should be made for the funeral until he / she has spoken to your priest. Especially in these days when priests are fewer than they used to be,

your priest may have other arrangements which he cannot change for the time you would like the funeral, or the Church may already be booked for something else.

In planning the service, bear in mind that secular music and readings are not normally permitted in a Mass, and that the homily is primarily an exposition of Catholic faith in the Resurrection rather than a tribute to your loved one. If you wish someone to speak briefly about the deceased, this is more appropriate after Holy Communion, while secular music or readings should be left to the service at the cemetery or crematorium.

When we gather for a funeral, many thoughts go through our minds - sadness and loss, memories - both happy and sad, thanksgiving for a life shared with us, support and sympathy for one another, but above all the church invites us to pray in hope for the one who has died, that God will raise them up.

Some pointers to help you prepare for the service

Is a Requiem Mass or a simpler funeral service more suitable?

Are there particular readings from scripture that you would like?

Are there members of the family or friends who might read a passage of scripture or some prayers?

Are there hymns that you feel suitable for the funeral?

Is there someone from the family or friends who might do the readings?

Is there someone to give a short eulogy - (a personal appreciation of the person who has died) -4-5 minutes

Be assured of the ongoing prayers of this community. Catholics remember to pray for the dead at every mass, and especially at certain times of the year - like All Souls and the whole month of November.

*Lord, for your faithful people life is changed not ended,
when our bodies lie in death,
we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.
The bright promise of immortality.*

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