



## ORGANISING A FUNERAL AT THE CATHEDRAL

Information  
for Next of Kin

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## INTRODUCTION

At this time of loss the Cathedral community would like to offer our condolences and assure you of our prayers.

Preparing the funeral service of someone who has died can be a difficult thing to face. This booklet has been prepared to make things easier. May the time you spend reflecting on the Word of God strengthen your trust and faith in God's love and mercy.

This booklet summarises much of what the Cathedral Chaplain will explain to you when he meets with you, and will be a useful reference point for you when considering what form the funeral should take. The priest will have a lot of experience of preparing and celebrating the Funeral Liturgy of the Church. He will welcome your suggestions and consider how he can then best prepare the Liturgy in line with the Church's tradition, appropriate to the one who has died and respectful to those who gather to pray for them. We hope you find what follows helpful at this difficult time.

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## PREPARING A FUNERAL

The purpose of the Funeral Liturgy is to offer worship and thanksgiving to God, the author of life; to pray for the deceased, and to offer support to the bereaved.

The Church encourages us to celebrate a funeral in three main stages:

*The Vigil of Prayer:* a short service, usually the evening before the funeral, followed by time for prayer with the deceased.

*The Funeral Liturgy,* which is usually a Requiem Mass for the deceased.

*The Committal* at the cemetery or crematorium.

The Chaplain you are in contact with will help you to consider what is best and practical for your particular circumstances.

# THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The Order of Service for a Funeral Mass is typically set as follows:

Reception and Entrance of the Deceased  
Introit or Opening Hymn  
Collect (Opening Prayer)  
First Reading from the Old (or New) Testament  
Responsorial Psalm (or Psalm Hymn)  
[Second Reading from the New Testament]  
Alleluia (or another Gospel acclamation during Lent)  
Gospel (read by the priest or deacon)  
Sermon  
Bidding Prayers  
Liturgy of the Eucharist  
(with option of motet or hymn during offertory)  
The Lord's Prayer  
Holy Communion  
(with option of motet or hymn)  
Eulogy  
Final Commendation  
Procession to Place of Committal  
(with option of hymn, organ voluntary or 'In paradisum')

Two or three hymns can, if you wish, be sung at different points of the rite, as explained above. Music, played on the organ or sung, may also be used to good effect throughout the service at appropriate moments. In the Requiem Mass, parts of the Mass such as the Introit, Sanctus and Agnus Dei may also be sung. Particularly if some attending the funeral are not familiar with Catholic worship, it is important to make sure that everything the congregation is expected to say or sing is printed in the Order of Service. Though the Cathedral is not usually able to arrange the typesetting and printing of Orders of Service, the Chaplain who is assisting you will be able to offer advice on these matters.

The Chaplain with whom you are in contact at the Cathedral will be pleased to explain anything else that is not clear and to give further advice that you may need.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

The Word of God is a source of encouragement and consolation for the faithful of God. It is Jesus who speaks when the scriptures are read in Church. Even when we read these readings to ourselves privately we are invited to listen for the voice of the Lord.

The readings that follow, which contain a brief description of their content, are those which are approved for use at Catholic funeral services. They can also serve as a source of spiritual reading in the days and weeks that follow the funeral service.

At every Catholic Funeral Mass there are usually at least two readings from Scripture. This includes one Gospel reading and one reading from the Old or New Testament. It is also permissible to have a second reading from the selection of readings.

The Gospel reading is read by the priest or deacon. The other Scripture reading (s) may be read by family members or friends. Please be sure to choose a reader who is able to read clearly and audibly, so that those present will be able to hear the reading you have chosen. If you feel that family members or friends will not be able to read, then please let the priest know and he will happily arrange for one of the regular parish readers to read the chosen text at the funeral.

### FIRST READING (OLD TESTAMENT)

Job 19:1, 23-27	(He whom I shall see shall take my part)
Wisdom 3:1-9	(those who trust in him shall understand the truth)
Wisdom 4:7-15	(the virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest)
Isaiah 25:6-9	(the Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek)
Lamentations 3:17-26	(the favours of the Lord are not all passed... great is his faithfulness)
Daniel 12:1-3	(many will awake, some to everlasting life)
Maccabees 12:43-45	(Judas, leader of the Jews, takes a collection as offering to pray for the dead)

## SECOND READING (NEW TESTAMENT)

- Romans 5:5-11 (having died to make us righteous, is it likely that Jesus will now fail us?)
- Romans 5:17-21 (the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified)
- Romans 6:3-9 (we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him)
- Romans 8:14-23 (what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory which is waiting for us)
- Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 (with God on our side who can be against us?)
- Romans 14:7-12 (the life and death of each of us has its influence on others)
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-28 (death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man)
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (we are not all going to die, but we shall be changed)
- 2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1 (we know that when the tent we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, and everlasting home in the heavens)
- 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10 (to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord)
- Philippians 3:20-21 (our homeland is in heaven)
- Thessalonians 4:13-18 (do not grieve like other people who have no hope)
- 2 Timothy 2:8-13 (If we have died with him, then we shall live with him...)
- 1 John 3:1-2 (we are already the children of God, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed)
- 1 John 3:14-16 (he gave up his life for us; and we too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers)

## GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12	(the beatitudes – happy are the poor in spirit...)
Matthew 11:25-30	(come to me all you who labour and are overburdened)
Matthew 25:1-13	(stay awake because you know neither the day or the hour)
Matthew 25:31-46	(he will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his right)
Mark 15:33-39, 16:1-6	(the stone rolled back from the tomb)
Luke 7:11-17	(Jesus raises the son of the widow of Nain from the dead)
Luke 12:35-40	(happy are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes)
Luke 23:33, 39-43	(Criminals taunt Jesus on the Cross)
Luke 23:44-46; 50, 52-53; 24:1-6	('Father into your hands I commit my spirit')
Luke 24:13-35	(Road to Emmaus)
John 5:24-29	(whoever believes in me has eternal life)
John 6:37-40	(whoever comes to me I shall not turn away)
John 6:51-58	(I am the living bread)
John 11:17-21	(I am the resurrection and the life)
John 11:32-45	(the raising of Lazarus)
John 12:23-28	(unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains but a single grain)
John 14:1-6	(there are many rooms in my Father's house)
John 17:24-26	(Father, the world has not know you, but I have known you)
John 19:17-18, 25-30	(the death of Jesus on the Cross)

For a full version of these readings that are read at the funeral please go to:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/diocese/liturgy/funerals/funeral-readings.pdf>

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*The following prayers of the faithful (bidding prayers) are set by the Church and may be read by a family member or friend. If you wish to add a prayer then please check it is acceptable with the Chaplain who will be celebrating the funeral.*

Priest: God, the almighty Father, raised Christ his Son from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save all his people, living and dead:

Reader: For [NAME] who in baptism was given the pledge of eternal life, that he/ she may now be admitted to the company of saints.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: For our brother/ sister who ate the body of Christ, the bread of life, that he/ she may be raised up on the last day.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: For [NAME] deceased relatives and friends and for all who have helped us. That they may have reward of their goodness.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: For those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising again, that they may see God face to face.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: For the family and friends of our brother/ sister [NAME]; that they may be consoled in their grief by the Lord, who wept at the death of his friend Lazarus.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Reader: For all of us assembled here to worship in faith, that we may be gathered together again in God's kingdom.

(Pause) Lord in your mercy:

All: **Hear our prayer.**

Priest: God, our shelter and our strength, you listen in love to the cry of your people: hear the prayers we offer for our departed brother/ sister [NAME]. Cleanse him/ her and all the faithful departed of their sins and grant them the fullness of redemption. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## MUSIC AT FUNERALS

Music in Westminster Cathedral takes place under the supervision of the Cathedral's staff of professional musicians. What follows in this booklet is a sample of suggested music that can be provided by this team, and any other requests can be discussed with the Music Department through the priest who is organising your funeral. Please note the Music fees that you are likely to incur which are noted on page 10.

You are kindly asked to note that the Music Department does not allow recorded music (CD's etc) to be played during funerals at Westminster Cathedral.

### SUGGESTED HYMN CHOICES:

#### *Entrance/ Recessional:*

Lord of all hopefulness  
The day thou gavest  
Abide with me  
Guide me, O thou great Redeemer  
Be thou my vision  
Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Make me a channel of your peace  
Love divine, all loves excelling

#### *Psalm:*

The Lord's my shepherd  
The King of love my shepherd is

#### *Communion:*

O bread of heaven  
Soul of my saviour  
Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all  
Sweet sacrament divine  
O Godhead hid

### POSSIBLE CHOIR (C) / SOLO (S) PIECES

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| C/S | Jesu, joy of man's desiring – J S Bach |
| C/S | Laudate Dominum – Mozart               |
| C/S | The Lord is my shepherd – Schubert     |
| C/S | Panis angelicus – Franck               |
| S   | Ave Maria – Schubert or Bach/Gounod    |
| S   | Pie Jesu – Fauré                       |
| C   | Ave verum corpus – Elgar or Byrd       |
| C   | Ubi caritas et amor – Duruflé          |

### ORGAN PRELUDES

- Bach – BWV 622, 654, 731, 670, 678, 552 Pt2  
Elgar – Nimrod from Enigma Variations

## REQUIEM MASS SETTINGS

Soloist/cantor – Plainsong Missa pro defunctis

5 singers – Anerio / Byrd Mass for Four voices / Mass for Five Voices

10 singers – Mozart / Fauré

12 singers – Victoria / Duruflé

*Music Fees are reviewed annually on 1st January.*

*Video Recording of music incurs a 100% fee from our professional musicians.*

## EULOGY

Eulogies are permitted at a funeral of a loved one, but are not an essential part of the service. If you are going to have a Eulogy please discuss this further with the officiating priest. A few basic points to reflect on:

- The Eulogy should be read by one person, who you know will be able to read it clearly and audibly. If they are nervous, then a second person is able to come and stand by their side to support them.
- The Eulogy should be no longer than 5 minutes.
- The content of the Eulogy must be appropriate to the sacredness of the Service and the building in which it is being read.

# PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND SCHEDULE OF FEES

## CATHEDRAL FEE

A charge of £800 (£400 for a Parishioner, who lived within the geographical boundaries of this Parish) is made to cover the basic facilities provided by the Cathedral for a funeral or Memorial Mass, as well as the stipend for the priest.

## SACRISTAN FEE

A charge of £100 is made to cover the overtime of a sacristan to assist in preparing and clearing up after a funeral in the Cathedral.

## SECURITY OVERTIME

A charge of £80 per hour (or part thereof) per security personnel is made for use of the Cathedral outside the normal hours of operation, or outside their normal hours of work (including when extra staff are needed to cover a Special Service).

## MUSIC

There are a number of combinations of musicians that are possible. The following are the Cathedral's suggested options and the fees payable for each, both currently.

Organist	£328
Organist + Soloist/cantor	£535
Organist + Director + 5 singers	£1,640
Organist + Director + 8 singers	£2,132
Organist + Director + 12 singers	£2,788

Please note that these fees are doubled if a video recording of any sort is made, including use of the Cathedral's live-streaming facility.

Music fees are reviewed annually on 1st January.

For further information and some suggested music for funerals please go to pages 8 and 9.

## LIVE-STREAMING

The Cathedral now has its own live-streaming feed, which you may use via the Cathedral website if they wish. If live-streaming takes place in the Cathedral there will be a £550 fee. Please note if the Cathedral musicians are taking part in the Special Service this will also incur the recording cost.

## ALTERATIONS TO LAYOUT OF CHAIRS, LIGHTING, AND OTHER MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT USE

The cost of hiring the Cathedral's Maintenance team depends on the nature of the required work. Please ask for details. A charge of £170 is made for cleaning if required.

## TYPESSETTING AND PRINTING

If your funeral director has facilities to produce an Order of Service for your Funeral Service, then please in the first instance go to them. If you need the Cathedral's assistance, please notify the Cathedral Chaplain with whom you are in contact.

The Order of Service must be approved by the Precentor of the Cathedral: this includes the choice of readings and music. Please ensure that the person designing the Order of Service sends a draft Order of Service to the Precentor ([precentor@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:precentor@rcdow.org.uk)) to proof-read before it is printed.

## ALTAR SERVERS

When the Mass or service requires the presence of a Cathedral Master of Ceremonies, a fee of £300 is charged. This is usually only necessary when a Bishop is presiding at the funeral or the funeral is particularly large.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Victoria and St James's Park stations are less than five minutes' walk from the Cathedral. Buses 11, 24, 148, 211 and 507 (Victoria-bound) stop immediately in front of the Cathedral on Victoria Street.

## PARKING

There is no parking on the Cathedral site. A limited amount of 'pay by phone' parking is in the immediate vicinity. The nearest large off-street car park is on Semley Place, London, SW1W 9QL, about ten minutes' walk from the Cathedral.

## CATHEDRAL HALL

All arrangements regarding the use of the Cathedral Hall must be made through the Cathedral Manager. He may be contacted by phone on **020 7798 9055** or email [petermcnulty@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:petermcnulty@rcdow.org.uk).

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,  
for this I long,  
to live in the house of the Lord,  
all the days of my life,  
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,  
to behold his temple.

*from Psalm 26*

January 2026

[www.westminstercathedral.org.uk](http://www.westminstercathedral.org.uk)