



## Church of Our Lady of Lourdes Celebrating the Rites of Christian Burial



The Priests, Deacons and staff of Our Lady of Lourdes parish offer our condolences on the loss of your loved one. We know this is a very difficult time and if there is anything we can do during this time of grieving, please do not hesitate to call on us.

### **When a Loved One is dying**

The parish office should be contacted when a loved one is sick so that the Sacrament of the Sick may be celebrated. It is like-wise appropriate to call a priest as death draws near so that the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing may be celebrated along with Viaticum (Holy Communion administered for the journey through death to eternal life).

### **When a Loved One Dies**

The parish office should be contacted as soon as possible when someone dies. The Church responds in compassion to those who mourn and journeys with them during their time of grief. After the parish is contacted by the funeral director, parish representatives will meet with the family to offer condolences and hope and to assist in planning the funeral liturgy.

### **The Vigil (Wake Service)**

The community gathers on the evening before the Funeral Mass to pray and to keep watch with the family. The Word of God is proclaimed as a source of hope in the face of darkness and death. All pray for the deceased, in anticipation of the funeral Mass to be celebrated the next day. Prayers are also offered for the comfort and consolation of the bereaved. This prayer service may take place at the funeral home or at the church. It is a vigil and is to be celebrated in the evening. If a family member wishes to offer a eulogy, it would be appropriate at the Vigil. It is likewise appropriate to display at the funeral home pictures or those things that symbolize the life of the deceased.

### **The Funeral Mass**



The funeral for a Catholic Christian is ordinarily celebrated with a Mass. In the Eucharist the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery. For some valid reasons the family may choose a funeral liturgy without a Mass. This decision should be made in consultation with one of the priests or deacons at Our Lady of Lourdes.

The family and friends of the deceased are encouraged to participate in the funeral liturgy. Parish representatives will discuss the various ways in which family members can assist at the funeral liturgy (placing the pall, proclaiming the readings, presenting the gifts, etc.)



At a funeral liturgy we gather to thank God and to petition God on behalf of the deceased. We also gather to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus who is the “first of many brothers and sisters to rise from the dead.” We hope that our loved one will join Him. A Christian funeral looks to the future in hope. In accordance with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal number 382; “At the Funeral Mass there should be a short homily, but never a eulogy of any kind”. Therefore, a eulogy will not be permitted at the Funeral Mass. It is far more appropriate for a eulogy to be offered at the Vigil Service or at the reception that follows the funeral.

### **The Burial or Entombment**

Since Jesus’ own body was laid in a tomb after his death, it is the traditional practice of the Church to bury or entomb the bodies of our beloved deceased with full faith that our bodies will be glorified in the final resurrection of the dead.

It is most appropriate for Catholics to be buried or entombed in a consecrated Catholic cemetery or mausoleum. The Diocese of Camden maintains a number of cemeteries and mausoleums in all areas of South Jersey. Your funeral director or parish staff can assist you in making the necessary arrangements at one of the diocesan cemeteries. For valid reasons burials may take place in a sacred place other than a Catholic cemetery.

### **The Importance of the Body**

The body is the primary symbol of a person and the instrument through which we communicate during our lifetime. The care taken to prepare the body of the deceased for burial reflects our Christian belief in eternal life and the resurrection of the body. The prayers and gestures of the funeral rites also affirm the Church’s reverence for the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Church encourages the long-standing practice of burying the body in a grave or tomb in memory of Jesus’ own three days in the tomb.

### **Cremation**

The Church accepts the practice of cremation as long as the reasons for choosing cremation are not contrary to the Christian way of life. In most cases the cremation should take place following the funeral liturgies. These celebrations should take place with the body present. In this way the community can honor the body, and the bereaved are allowed the proper time to mourn. Death is the last passage of life and should not be hidden or negated by cremation prior to the funeral celebration.

In particular circumstances, it may be necessary for cremation to take place prior to the funeral. In these cases the Church permits the funeral to be celebrated in the presence of the ashes.



Ashes are the body of the deceased in a changed form. We honor them as we honor the body. They must be reverently buried or entombed in a place reserved for the burial of the dead immediately following the cremation. It is not acceptable to put off this burial and the Church does not permit the ashes of a Catholic Christian to be scattered or enshrined in the home. Likewise it is not acceptable to retain any portion of the ashes for these purposes. A funeral Mass cannot be scheduled at Our Lady of Lourdes without specification that the arrangements for a proper Christian burial of the ashes have been made.



## Memorial Service



### **A Memorial Mass**

If for some reason the body or the ashes of a loved one have been buried before the funeral, a memorial Mass or service may be celebrated. Please contact the parish office to make these arrangements.

### **Annual Memorial Mass**

It is the tradition of the Church to remember those who have gone before us in faith and death during the month of November. Our Lady of Lourdes celebrates a Mass each year for those who were buried from our parish during the previous year.

### **Scheduling a Funeral**

The funeral home will arrange for the date and time of a funeral. Our Lady of Lourdes attempts to schedule funerals at the convenience of the family. The Church however prohibits funerals and funeral Masses on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation as well as some other days. In addition, cemetery schedules may affect the choice of a date and time.

### **Preparing the Funeral Liturgy**

One of the priests or deacons or a member of the parish bereavement committee will contact the family to assist them in planning the funeral Mass.

Musical selections are to be made with the assistance of the parish staff. Secular songs are not permitted in Church celebrations and should be reserved to the reception that follows the funeral. If you have any questions please contact the parish office.

### **Donations**



People are encouraged to remember Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in their wills and in their choice of charities at the death of a loved one. All donations received are promptly acknowledged to the family. For more information contact the parish office.

### **In Closing**

All too often people say, "Funerals are for the living, not the dead." For faithful Catholics such a statement is not complete, because the Catholic funeral rites offer us the opportunity to praise and thank God for the love and mercy he has shown the deceased person. It is also a time where the community of believers prays for the repose of the soul of the deceased and offers consolation to the surviving family and friends.

