

A Catholic Funeral

A time of healing, consolation, acceptance and hope.



*From Death
to New Life*

Funeral information for **Immaculate Conception Catholic Church**

709 Franklin Street
Clarksville, TN 37040
931-645-6275
(24 hour number)

The goal of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church is to serve as the instrument of support for Catholics who desire to provide a Service of Farewell for their loved ones.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE A CATHOLIC FUNERAL?

Our journey of faith begins with Christ, His Church and the Sacrament of Baptism. This sacrament of initiation marks us as members of the Church and incorporates us into the Body of Christ. With a white garment symbolizing the dignity of a Christian's new creation, our journey of life began. However every journey is a progression towards the Creator who made us. God is calling us home and thus every journey ultimately ends in death marking not an end, but a beginning of eternal life.

The Church was present in the beginning of the journey, therefore it is only fitting that it be with us at the earthly end to offer prayers for the deceased and comfort for the living.

Along the life of Catholics, the sacraments strengthen us and guide us. The height of these sacraments is the Eucharist; the source and summit of the faith. All spirituality flows from the Eucharist as light streams from a source, and all spirituality is ordered towards and realized in the Eucharist. The Catholic Funeral ceremony is an integration of the Eucharist; drawing the comparisons of the Christ, the perfect human to the deceased's dignity.

The three stages of a Catholic funeral help lessen the pain and prepare for closure; the wake service consisting of biblical reading, prayers and usually a rosary interceding for comfort and guidance from the Blessed Mother, the Funeral Mass, and the final committal and the place of repose give a

progression of purpose in the funeral service for the deceased and mourners alike.

The Church stands ready to offer its spiritual graces of comfort for the deceased and the mourners. In the event of a death, please contact a Catholic Church.



Typically, after a person's death, the call is placed to the funeral home, and soon afterwards, planning the funeral begins. For many people this experience can be a great ordeal. There are options available whereby the experience may be less traumatic.

In the death of a Christian, particularly a Roman Catholic, questions about a Catholic Funeral Service become a topic of concern. The focus of this booklet is to provide Catholics with a general overview of options that are available within the scope of the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding a Catholic Funeral Service, also known as a Service of Farewell.

The Liturgy of the Word demands very careful preparation because the assembly gathered for the funeral may include some who rarely attend the Sacred Liturgy, and some friends of the deceased may not be Christians. Therefore, the homily must avoid the appearance of a eulogy, but rather illumine the mystery of a Christian death in the light of the Risen Christ (Catechism of the Catholic Church#168)

When the funeral takes place in Church: The Eucharist Is the heart of the reality of Christian Death. (C.C.C. #189). In the Eucharist the Church expresses her communion with the departed: offering to the Father and the Holy Spirit the sacrifice of the death and resurrection of Christ and she (The Church) asks that God purifies this child of His-of their sins and the consequences of them—and to admit the deceased to the fullness of the table in the Kingdom. (C.C.C. 190)

It is by this Eucharistic celebration that the faithful, especially the family of the deceased, learn to live in communion of the one: “who has fallen asleep in the Lord” by communicating in the Body of Christ, of which he/she is a living member. (1)

A farewell to the deceased is their final commendation to God. It is the - last farewell of the community; before the body is brought to the tomb. (C.C.C.#191)

At this final greeting the community sings for the departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there will be a final reunion. For even dead, we are not separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ and belong to Him in this life and are united with Him, as we go forward because we shall all be together in Christ forever. (C.C.C. # 192)

The church clearly teaches that Catholics should desire this service for their loved ones who have preceded us on the journey we all must make. (1-Heb. 9:27) and the Universal Catechism (CCC)#1680 informs us that all of the sacraments point to our own last passover and #1685 tells us: At the moment of death, our sacramental life has ended and quotes 2 Cor. 2,5 which says that

we are away from the body and at home with the Lord, in whom resides our only hope.

The Catholic Church's concept of the Service of Farewell is that it is one service, divided into a trinity of parts: (2)

The Wake (Vigil)
The Funeral Liturgy
The interment



This order of the Celebration is common to all Catholic Liturgical Traditions, and Catholics are encouraged by Canon Law(3) to seek funeral services from their own parish church because the home parish is required to enter into the parish records the name, date, and burial site of their own parishioners.(4)

The First Part — Wake/Visitation (5) *An Act of Faith*



The Wake, or Visitation, is the principal Rite celebrated by the Christian Community in the time following the death, and before the funeral liturgy begins. The last journey our loved one will make in this world starts when our loved one is brought from the funeral home to the parish church, the spiritual home of all Catholics, to begin the transition from life in this world to life in the eternal “now” of God. Jesus told us in the Gospel (Mark 12:26 & 27) that when we die, we will live like angels in heaven, for God told Moses, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob*. He is the God of the living, not of the dead (Matt. 22:29, 30 and: Luke 20:37, 38).

The Wake Service begins at the door of the church where deceased Catholics are met with the symbols of their baptism; acknowledging that we believe that they have, indeed, taken their souls into eternity. The family and the deceased are met at the door of the church with a greeting by the celebrant in the name of the whole church. The body is sprinkled with Holy Water, and the casket is covered with the pall which symbolizes the white garment given to us at the time of our baptism.

The celebration continues with a song as the procession proceeds to the front of the church where the service will take place in the presence of the Easter candle. When everything is in place, and the family and mourners who came from the funeral home are seated, the congregation is invited to pray and the opening prayer is said by the celebrant, again in the name of the parish. The Wake Service continues much like Mass including the Liturgy of the Word, responsorial psalm, Gospel,

Homily, prayer of intercession, the Our Father, remarks by family and friends, closing prayer and blessing...

Praying the Rosary is encouraged, and when it is included is said at this point.

The body will rest in its spiritual home, the church, for visitation usually after the Wake and on the day of the funeral, up to the hour of the Sacred Funeral Liturgy begins.

The Second Part — the Funeral Liturgy (6)

An Act of Hope



Christ has said our hope lies in Him. The Mass is the Alpha and the Omega (the beginning and the end) of our spiritual life.

Our being here in the presence of the body of the person who was once the temple of the Holy Spirit and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. It shows our belief that this person has attained the Beatific Vision.

The Funeral Rite for most Catholics includes the Liturgy of the Eucharist (Mass); however, if, after consulting with the clergy, the decision is made not to include this Liturgy, there is a Funeral Rite outside of Mass which may be used.

The Third Part — the Catholic Committal (Graveside) (7)

An Act of Love

We continue the journey to the place of committal. We show our love and respect for the one who has left us with fitting (appropriate) dignity and symbolism. The deceased was the human home of the Holy Spirit (the Tabernacle of Christ) when he/she walked with us, and we bestow as much honor as we can give to such a hallowed being as we commit the body to the earth.

Dust to Dust — Ashes to Ashes, and we leave in peace because the words of the poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his *Psalm of Life*, reflect the Catholic belief that ***Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Dust Thou are, to dust thou returnest was not spoken of the soul.***

The community continues to show its concern for the mourners by participating in the rite of Committal. The rite marks the separation in this life of the mourners from the deceased, and through it the community assists them as they complete their care for the deceased and lay the body to rest.

The act of committal is a stark and powerful expression of this separation. When carried out in the midst of the community of faith, the *committal can* help the mourners to face the end of one relationship with the deceased and to begin a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude, and the hope of resurrection and reunion.

By their presence and prayer, members of the community signify their intention to continue to support the mourners in the time following the funeral.

If there are circumstances such as the funeral liturgy celebrated previously or in another community, the clergy may opt to use a longer committal rite than when the committal immediately follows the Funeral Liturgy.

Cremation-Order of Christian Funerals

412 The body of a deceased Catholic Christian is also the body once washed in baptism, anointed with the oil of salvation, and fed with the Bread of Life. Thus, the Church's reverence for the sacredness of the human body grows out of a reverence and concern both natural and supernatural for the human person. The body of the deceased brings forcefully to mind the Church's conviction that the human body is in Christ a temple of the Holy Spirit and is destined for future glory at the resurrection of the dead. This conviction in faith finds its expression in a sustained and insistent prayer that commends the deceased person to God's merciful care so that his or her place in the communion of the just may be assured. A further expression is the care traditionally taken to prepare the bodies of the deceased for a burial that befits their dignity, in expectation of their final resurrection in the Lord.

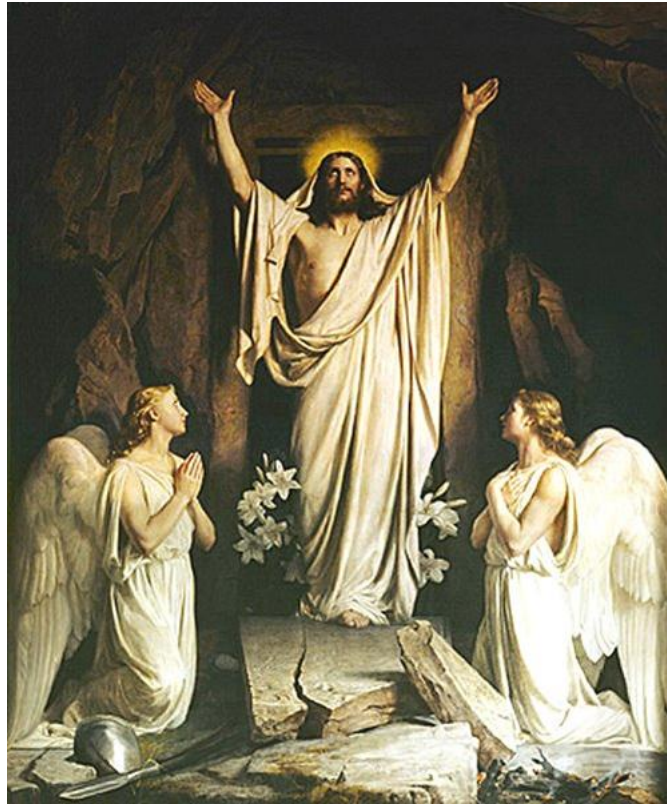
413 Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rite, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values the Church affirms in those rites.

415 Sometime, however, it is not possible for the body to be present for the Funeral Mass. When extraordinary circumstances make the cremation of a body the only feasible choice, pastoral sensitivity must be exercised by priest, deacons, and others who minister to the family of the deceased.

Respect for the Cremated Remains of a Body

417 The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body *from* which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a *grave or* entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires. Whenever possible, appropriate means for recording with dignity the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased.

418 When the choice has been made to cremate a body, it is recommended that the cremation take place after the Funeral Liturgy. 421 At the rite of Committal, the cremated remains of the body of the deceased are reverently taken to the place of burial or entombment. 422 The Code of Canon Law also provides rites to use if the cremation and committal take place before the Funeral Liturgy or if the Funeral Liturgy takes place in the presence of the cremated remains.



Because of Christ, Christians find a positive meaning in death.

May Almighty God give us a restful night and a peaceful death.
(From Night Prayer of the liturgy of the hours.)

**Questions & Answers
about funerals at Immaculate Conception**

Does the church have a preference for where the funeral services take place?

Yes, Catholics are encouraged by Canon Law to seek funeral services from their own parish.

What part of the services should be done at the church?

The Catholic Church's concept of the Service of Farewell is that it is one service, divided into a trinity of parts: *The Wake (Vigil), The Funeral Liturgy and The interment. The Wake and the Funeral take place in the church and the interment follows at the place of burial.*

If I want my loved one's wake and funeral service to be held at Immaculate Conception Church, what do I do.

When you notify the funeral home of the death, let them know that you want the wake and funeral held at the church. Call Immaculate Conception at 645-6275 and let them know about the death, which funeral home you are using, and that it is your desire to have the wake and funeral at the church.

Will someone from the parish help plan the funeral?

Yes, the parish will help you in every way possible to plan the service of farewell.

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St. Joseph, patron of the departed souls, pray for us.

