

Funerals at Precious Blood Parish

We appreciate that you are grieving at this time, and might not want to face all the details of a funeral. We hope to help you by answering your most basic questions as briefly as possible, then provide detailed information below. We welcome you to call us to discuss anything further.

There are three sections below which should answer most of your concerns. They are:

1. **General Information**
 2. **Music**
 3. **The Order of the Funeral Mass**
 4. **Readings and Prayers**
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1. General Information

Why is a funeral important for a Catholic?

Through her or his whole life, the most important and holy thing a Catholic does is go to church for the Holy Eucharist, which we believe to be the Body and Blood of the Son of God, and which prepares us for eternal life. So at the end of a life prepared for eternity by Holy Communion, the Church brings the bodies of our loved ones to the Church one last time, for Holy Communion to be celebrated for their soul, and to feed those who gather to mourn with the Bread of Life. A funeral in the Church is deeply sacred for any Catholic. It is the greatest prayer the Church has to offer.

What makes up a Catholic funeral?

Catholic rites of farewell usually have 3 parts:

- the **Vigil**, a brief prayer service at the funeral home in the days before the funeral;
- the **Mass of Christian Burial** at the church;
- the **Committal** at the cemetery, which is a brief prayer.

The body is honoured in beautiful symbolic ways at the Funeral Mass. If **cremation** is involved, the cremation of the body is best done **after the funeral** whenever circumstances permit. More details on cremation can be found below.

How is the family involved at the funeral?

Nothing is expected of you, but there are ways to involve a few family members if you wish. All we expect of you is to be there and pray with us. Individual family members sometimes do one of the readings from the Holy Scriptures and/or Prayers of the Faithful. Usually six relatives and close friends are the pallbearers who escort the body in and out. (Note that the front steps are no longer used for the entrance at funerals, which now make use of the ramp to enter at the side of the church.)

Can someone from the family say a few words?

Words from a family member at the funeral Mass are permitted, but must be carefully prepared and pre-approved. The Funeral Mass is a sacred action and nothing should take away from the holy character of our time in prayer for our deceased loved ones.

Rather than having a eulogy at the funeral Mass, a better option is to provide some written notes on a few cherished memories which the priest can work into his homily, and especially mention the virtues, strengths and faith for which your loved one will be most remembered. If you are making a program, you may wish to print your remembrance in the program, which will be a keepsake for those who attend.

In this regard, some families prefer to leave the eulogy for the reception, but if it is given at the Funeral Mass, these guidelines will help ensure that the dignity of the Mass is respected:

- The remembrance in the church must have a reverent character, so it will be different than a speech given at a dinner.
- When speaking of the beautiful things you will remember about your loved one, be sure to mention something of their faith.
- The eulogy is given by only one person (though it might include written contributions from other family members)
- Humour must be used carefully so that nothing inappropriate is suggested, even indirectly. Similarly, politics or anything that might be divisive is to be avoided.
- It should be short – 3 minutes is about right; maximum 5 minutes. Please bear this mind.
- The eulogy should be submitted to the priest the day before the funeral for approval.

Eulogies are also appropriately made at the prayers in the funeral home the day before the funeral, or at the graveside.

What songs are permitted?

Sacred songs make the funeral beautiful even in the sorrow of the moment. **Only sacred music is permitted, and recordings are not used.** We are happy to include the most beautiful songs in this repertoire: *Ave Maria, Panis Angelicus, Prayer of St. Francis*, etc. Popular songs which do not have a Catholic origin are not permitted. Since choosing music involves a few more details, please see our other information page on this. If you prefer, we can simply ask our musicians to choose the most common and beloved selections for you.

- ***For many more details on music, please see the separate “Music” section below.***

I have not been to church in years. Will I know what to do?

It is a beautiful sign of your faith that you have come to us for a Catholic funeral for your loved one. We are aware that some things will be unfamiliar, and we are prepared to assist you in every detail of the funeral.

How do I choose the Bible readings and who reads them?

The readings from the **Holy Bible** will speak to everyone about eternal life, what happens to us after death, and what heaven is like. They are statements for us to hear about what we believe. God wants us to know about eternal life, and we respond to these sacred readings deep within our souls especially when we hear them proclaimed at a funeral.

Readings can be proclaimed by family members, but we can supply a reader if no one is comfortable. Ideally the reader has experience speaking in public, and has a deep respect for the sacredness of the words to be proclaimed. Readers must be at least 16 years of age.

You can choose one of these two patterns for the readings:

An Old **or** New Testament passage (read by a family member if desired)
The Psalm (sung by the solist/organist)
Gospel (chosen and read by the priest)

OR

An Old Testament passage (read by a family member if desired)
The Psalm (sung by the soloist/organist)
A New Testament letter (read by a family member if desired; it can be the same person
or another reader)
Gospel (chosen and read by the priest)

We are including the most common choices for a first and second reading with this package. You are welcome to consult the pastor about other possibilities from the Church's lectionary for funerals.

Prayer of the Faithful

These are short prayers read after the priest's homily. They can be read by a family member of the priest. (Only one reader is involved.) The text is provided with this package; please consult with the priest to fill in the blanks.

Flowers

In order that the sacred action at the altar is not obstructed, please note that large sprays on stands are not placed in the centre but can be placed to at the far right and far left of the altar area.

2 sprays in pots which rest on the floor can be placed in front of the tall candles beside the altar, but nothing is placed directly in front of the altar.

Photos

A photo display can be placed at the entrance to the church (not in the sanctuary), along with a guest book. A photo of the deceased is not placed in the altar area.

Cremation

We recommend that funerals take place before cremation of the body, in order that all the signs of honour given to the body in a Catholic funeral truly stand out. Waiting for cremation can delay a funeral, whereas we normally want to offer the Holy Mass for our departed loved ones within a few days. However, we recognize that in some circumstances, families will legitimately opt for cremation before the funeral.

Since the family usually brings the cremated remains to the church, there is usually no funeral home involved at the church, which requires the family to look after the use of the urn in the funeral.

To keep your concerns about what to do to a minimum, please bring the cremated remains of your loved one to the church the day before the funeral, where we will bless the urn when you come, and give it a place of honour overnight. We will place the urn in front of the altar ahead of the start of the funeral, which will allow you to enjoy a quiet moment of prayer before the funeral. This eliminates some concerns about how to process in, who are pallbearers, where to sit etc.

We will provide a stand for the urn which will also accommodate an 8X10 portrait if you wish, and a vase of flowers. A portrait up to 16X20 can be placed on one of our stands, but any larger portraits will block the altar. One arrangement of flowers can be placed in front of the stand if the arrangement is up to 2' tall. In order that the sacred action at the altar is not obstructed, please note that large sprays on stands are not placed in the centre but can be placed to at the far right and far left of the altar area.

A photo display (i.e. something other than the portrait with the urn) can be placed at the entrance to the church (not in the sanctuary), along with a guest book.

Offering to the Church / Organist / Soloist

Please bring these offerings to the church office the day before the funeral, or ask the funeral home to handle it for you. It will be one less thing for you to remember on the day of the funeral, which will already be taxing on you as it is.

The typical offerings are: Church - \$400; Organist - \$250.

Filming / Live Streaming

For live streaming considerations, please speak to the pastor.

Prayer cards, programs

Our parish does not prepare prayer cards. The funeral home will assist you with these. However, we are happy to discuss the images and prayers often used in the Catholic tradition.

If you are planning to make a program, please discuss the details with the pastor.

2. Music

Sacred Music is an integral part of a Catholic funeral. Songs in which God is worshipped are permitted. This criteria will exclude many popular songs due to the sacred character of the Holy Mass. Our organist is ready to assist you in selecting music which is familiar, comforting and beautiful, from among a carefully chosen repertoire which we use in our sacred rites of farewell.

Precious Blood's organist for funerals is Brian Serant (416-698-4344). Our parish office will give Brian your contact information and he will contact you once the date and time of the funeral have been confirmed with the priest. We are very fortunate to have a choir that sings at funerals, giving the Mass a dignity and beauty which is appropriate to our sacred rites.

Recorded music and non-religious popular music is not used.

Before the Funeral

Although the organ is the instrument of choice, the use of a violin, flute or any other chamber instrument is permitted, accompanied by the organist. The use of a member of the choir as a cantor, or a vocal soloist is also strongly encouraged. Recorded music is not permitted.

1. The Entrance Procession

A familiar hymn from the parish hymnbooks is recommended, such as:

- Here I am, Lord
- Be Not Afraid
- O God, Our Help in Ages Past
- Amazing Grace

2. The Responsorial Psalm (between the two readings)

This is normally sung, however it may be read if necessary. The Psalm of choice is Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd." Usually it is sung by the Cantor and choir or Soloist.

3. Offertory/ Preparation of the Gifts

This is an appropriate time for an instrumental selection or a short sacred song.

4. The Ordinary of the Mass (the parts of the Mass)

The Holy Holy Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen and Lamb of God are usually sung at a Funeral Mass, in order to provide the full beauty and solemnity of Catholic worship at this most special Eucharist for your loved one. The choir or soloist will sing these parts, and people may join in the singing as they are able.

5. Communion

Music is very appropriate at this time. A Communion hymn from one of the parish hymnals is often sung, or the choir or soloist may sing a sacred song. The following are some of the more popular choices for music during Communion:

- Ave Maria
- I Am the Bread of Life
- Panis Angelicus
- On Eagle's Wings
- Prayer of St. Francis

6. Final Commendation

A short hymn is normally sung by the Cantor or choir during the incensing of the body.

7. Recessional

Usually, the Recessional is a hymn chosen from one of the parish hymn books, such as:

- On Eagle's Wings
- Be Not Afraid
- How Great Thou Art
- We Shall Go Out

Popular music which would not normally be sung at a Sunday Mass is not permitted. Recorded music is not used. If you are not sure if a piece you are requesting is appropriate, please consult with the priest.

Brian Serant, organist: 416-543-6399

3. The Order of the Funeral Mass

You may find it helpful to know what to expect at the Funeral, so we have included a detailed description of the funeral Mass in case it is of assistance to you.

Before the Mass, the readers should check in with the priest, who will get them comfortable with the microphone in the ambo and show them the readings in the book used at the Mass.

Family and friends who gather before the funeral may enter by the front or the side door.

The funeral hearse will park at the end of the ramp on the east side, and the pallbearers will escort the casket up the ramp to the side entrance. (The front steps are not used.) The family can follow the pallbearers, or wait inside the foyer in inclement weather.

As the casket arrives inside the side foyer door, the family will gather around, and the priest will come to greet you and bless the casket with Holy Water. Then the funeral directors will place the pall on the casket. The family will follow the casket in the door. The family will be seated in the pews with the Pall bearers on the left of the altar and the other family members to the right of the altar. However if you wish to be seated together that is not a problem.

Father will begin with an opening prayer and ask everyone to be seated. Readers will all be invited by name, so that no one has to worry about when to come forward.

First Reading – the person reading should come up the centre aisle, bow to the altar before entering the sanctuary, and then proceed to the ambo. The priest will point out the reading in the book. When the first reader is finished the reading they should return to their seat after once again bowing to the altar.

The Psalm will be sung by the choir who will be in the choir loft.

Second Reading – When the soloist is finished singing the Psalm, the second reader will be called upon, and should approach the ambo the same as the first reader, then return to their seat after reading.

The Alleluia will be sung and everyone should stand as Father goes to the ambo to read the Gospel. He will ask everyone to be seated and then give the Homily.

After the homily he will return to the chair and invite the person reading the Prayers of the Faithful/General Intercessions.

Prayers of the Faithful / Intercessions – The reader should go to the ambo and wait for the priest's opening prayer, then begin to read the intercessions. They return to their seat once Father has said a concluding prayer.

The procession of the gifts (bread and wine) is not usually done at the Funeral Mass.

Sung parts of the Eucharistic Prayer – The Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, and Great Amen will be sung by the soloist, with the people singing along as they are able.

Holy Communion takes place as usual.

Final Commendation - After Communion, the priest or the funeral director will make any necessary announcements, such as going to the cemetery, or to a reception, or other information as required.

Father will bless and incense the casket as "I know by redeemer lives" is sung by the soloist. Then Father will give the final prayer and the procession begins to the side vestibule (top of the ramp.)

In the vestibule the pall will be removed and Father will present the cross to a family member, and then the funeral director will direct you from there.

4. Readings & Prayers

Notes:

- Due to copyright reasons, we cannot reproduce the complete set of readings from the Canadian Lectionary for Funeral Masses as part of this package.
- We are providing the most popular readings in our package. If you would like a more complete set of readings to look over, please contact us.
- At the funeral, please do not bring a printout. The reading will be set up for you ahead of time on the lectern. For the dignity of the Word of God, it is better to read from the lectionary book and not from a printout.

Old Testament Reading - option 1: Isaiah 25:6a,7-9

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

**On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food.**

**And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death for ever.**

**Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.**

It will be said on that day,

"See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.

**This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."**

The word of the Lord.

Old Testament Reading - option 2: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.11

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes.

**For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:**

**a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.**

**What gain have the workers from their toil?
I have seen the business that God has given everyone to be busy with.
He has made everything suitable for its time.**

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the book of Job.

Job answered:

**'O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!
O that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved on a rock forever!
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold,
and not another.'**

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brother and sisters:

If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not withhold his own Son,

but gave him up for all of us,

will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect?

It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn?

It is Christ Jesus, who died,

yes, who was raised,

who is at the right hand of God,

who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution,

or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.**

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,

nor angels, nor rulers,

nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,

will be able to separate us

from the love of God

in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

**Listen, I will tell you a mystery!
We will not all die,
but we will all be changed, in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.
For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised imperishable,
and we will be changed.
For this perishable body must put on imperishability,
and this mortal body must put on immortality.
When this perishable body puts on imperishability,
and this mortal body puts on immortality,
then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:
"Death has been swallowed up in victory."
"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"
The sting of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God,
who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The word of the Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL / INTERCESSIONS

(Wait for the priest to introduce the prayers:)

Priest: Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for his Church. Confident that God hears the voice of those who trust in the Lord Jesus, we join our prayers to his.

Reader:

In baptism _____ received the light of Christ.
Scatter the darkness now and lead (him/her) over the waters of death.
We pray to the Lord.

Your servant _____ was nourished at the table of the Saviour.
Welcome (him/her) into the halls of the heavenly banquet.
We pray to the Lord.

Many friends and members of our families have gone before us and await the kingdom, remembering especially _____
(*names of spouse, grandparents, etc.:*)

_____,
Grant them an everlasting home with your Son.
We pray to the Lord.

The family and friends of _____ seek comfort and consolation,
especially (*names of children, relatives, etc.:*)

_____,
_____.
Heal their pain and dispel the darkness and doubt that come from grief.
We pray to the Lord.

We are assembled here in faith and confidence to pray for _____.
Strengthen our hope,
so that we may live in the expectation of your Son's coming.
We pray to the Lord.

(Wait for the priest to conclude the prayers then return to your seat.)

Thank you for reading all the details above. Please go over them carefully and let us know of any remaining questions.