

Eternal Life

Catholic Teaching on Preparing for the End of Life

Death

- End of Earthly Life
  - Separation of body and soul
- Death is a consequence of sin
- Key point: Death is transformed by Christ

Judgement

- Particular
  - Soul is judged upon death
- Final
  - At the end of time, everyone will be resurrected

Hell

- Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1033
- State of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed

Purgatory

- Why is it not one of the 4 last things?
  - It is not eternal
  - It will not exist after the final judgment
  - Everyone there is going to heaven
- What is purgatory for?
  - State of purification for those who die in God’s friendshipyet are in need of purification before seeing him
  - Venial sin, attachment to sin, imperfection, temporal punishment
- Cleansing Fire

Heaven

- CCC 1023
- Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they “see him as he is,” face to face
- Fulfillment of our destiny
- Perfect communion with God
- Perfect happiness

Holy Death

How to Prepare to Meet the Lord

- Always Live Prepared
- Last Rites
  - Penance
  - Anointing of the Sick
  - Viaticum
  - Apostolic Pardon
  - Final Commendation

When to Call a Priest

- Anointing may be received as soon as someone “begins to be in danger of death” due to illness
- It may be repeated if a person worsens
- “Last Rites” when death is near
- Don’t wait until death is imminent before calling for a priest for the first time
- Sacraments are for the living

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

- Duty to preserve life
- The Church does not teach that anything and everything must be done in all circumstances
- Suicide and euthanasia are not morally permissible

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

Ordinary and Extraordinary Means

- Ordinary means
  - Basic care
    - Hygiene
    - Pain medication
    - Hydration and nutrition
  - Therapies that are considered effective and not overly burdensome/expensive
  - We are morally obligated to use ordinary means
- Extraordinary means
  - Disproportionate care
  - Excessive burden
  - Severe physical, psychological, financial burdens
  - Extraordinary means are morally optional

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

Morality of Discontinuing Certain Types of Treatments

CCC 2278: Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

- The intent is not to cause death
- Allowing nature to take its course vs directly killing the person

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

What About DNRs?

- Can be moral or not
- Ordinary vs Extraordinary
- Criteria (Taken from the Archdiocese of San Francisco)
  - The patient suffers from a very serious, advanced (or terminal) medical condition, and death is reasonably imminent in all medical probability.
  - A life-threatening condition exists in which resuscitation would not be expected to render substantial improvement in the patient's ultimate outcome. Stated differently, CPR would not be beneficial for the patient.
  - Given one's medical condition or advanced age, CPR itself would impose an extraordinary burden on the patient (broken bones, internal bleeding, etc.)
- DNR cannot mean "do not treat"

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

Documents

- A durable power of attorney is preferred over something like a living will
- Choose a person who is familiar with and will make decisions according to Catholic teaching
- This enables the person to respond to situations in real time

Catholic Teaching on End of Life Issues

Resource

- The National Catholic Bioethics Center offers free consultations with experts
- https://www.ncbcenter.org/



The Catholic Funeral

Purpose of the Catholic Funeral

- Worshipping God
  - Christians celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. (Order of Christian Funerals #5)
- Praying for the Deceased
  - The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice, the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of saints. Though separated from the living, the dead are still at one with the community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession. (OCF #6)

Elements of the Catholic Funeral

- Meeting us where we are in regards to death
- Hope in the Resurrection and Eternal Life!
- Consolation for Mourners
  - The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis. (OCF 7)

Elements of the Catholic Funeral

- Honor for the Body
  - Since in baptism the body was marked with the seal of the Trinity and became the temple of the Holy Spirit, Christians respect and honour the bodies of the dead and the places where they rest. (OCF 19)
  - Humans are body/soul composites
  - We met God in our bodies through the sacraments. Our bodies were:
    - Washed in baptism
    - Anointed with the Holy Spirit in confirmation
    - Ate the Sacred Body and drank the Previous Blood of Christ
    - Confession, anointing of the sick, matrimony, holy orders

Funeral Rites

- Vigil
  - Prayers with family and friends the night before the funeral
- Funeral
  - You want a Mass!
  - The Mass, the memorial of Christ's Death and Resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral. (OCF #5)
  - Funeral liturgy without Mass is possible
- Rite of Committal
  - At the cemetery/place of internment
  - Final act of caring for the body (OCF 204), committing the body to its resting place in the hope that the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection (OCF 206)

Ordinary Sequence of Events

- Vigil/Wake/Visitation preceding the funeral
  - Day before or day of
- Funeral Mass
- Rite of Committal directly after the funeral Mass

Funeral Mass

Reception of the Body - Holy Water

Blessed or holy water reminds the assembly of the saving waters of baptism. In the rite of reception of the body at the church, its use calls to mind the deceased's baptism and initiation into the community of faith. In the rite of final commendation the gesture of sprinkling may also signify farewell. (OCF 36)



Funeral Mass

Pall

If it is the custom in the local community, a pall may be placed over the coffin when it is received at the church. A reminder of the baptismal garment of the deceased, the pall is a sign of the Christian dignity of the person. The use of the pall also signifies that all are equal in the eyes of God (see James 2:1-9). (OCF 38)



Funeral Mass

Other Symbols

- A Book of the Gospels or a Bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life.
- A cross may be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism and through Jesus' suffering on the cross is brought to the victory of his resurrection.
- No non-Christian symbols (flags, etc)



Funeral Mass

Paschal Candle

- The Easter candle reminds the faithful of Christ's undying presence among them, of his victory over sin and death, and of their share in that victory by virtue of their initiation. It recalls the Easter Vigil, the night when the Church awaits the Lord's resurrection and when new light for the living and the dead is kindled. During the funeral liturgy and also during the vigil service, when celebrated in the church, the Easter candle may be placed beforehand near the position the coffin will occupy at the conclusion of the procession. (OCF 35)



Funeral Mass

Homily

- A brief homily based on the readings should always be given at the funeral liturgy, **but never any kind of eulogy.** (OCF 141)
- Focused on the death and resurrection of Jesus, and how this gives hope for the one who has died



Funeral Mass

Incense

- Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honour to the body of the deceased; which through baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also used as a sign of the community's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God and as a sign of farewell. (OCF 37)



Funeral Mass

Final Commendation

- At the rite of final commendation and farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heavens and a new earth, where death will be no more. (OCF #6)

Burial and Cremation

- The Church prefers the body be present for the funeral
  - For the final disposition of the body, it is the ancient Christian custom to bury or entomb the bodies of the dead; (OCF 19)
  - 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 rites,** since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites" (OCF 413)

Cremation

- Cremation is permitted
  - Cremation is permitted, unless it is evident that cremation was chosen for anti-Christian motives. (OCF 19)
- Cremated Remains Must be Interred/Buried
  - 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, and 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 on the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.** (OCF 417)

Funeral Planning

- Working with a Funeral Home
  - Since the Mass is the main event you or the funeral home will want to reach out to the church when scheduling before final arrangements are made
- Funeral Mass takes place in the church
- Depending on the parish, family remembrances may be given
  - Not a eulogy, focused on the faith life
- Choosing of sacred music
  - The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.” (OCF 30)