

## The Pall

The pall is a reminder of the white baptismal garment. Just as a new Christian was clothed in a white garment when he/she became a member of the Church at baptism, the casket is covered with a white cloth as the person enters into a new life in the resurrection of Jesus. Covering the casket is a statement about our dignity as baptized Christians - that we are brothers and sisters of Christ and members of the Church. The pall is also a sign of hope in the resurrection and of new life beyond this life. The pall is placed on the coffin during the rite of reception at the entrance of the Church.

When persons of military stature die, family and friends often wish to drape the national flag over the coffin as a symbol of national service. However, baptism remains the fundamental identity for Catholics and so other emblems should not displace Christian symbols reminding the community of the person's baptism.

If the family desires the flag placed on the coffin, it can be done when the coffin is being transported to and from the church where the main funeral liturgy is to be celebrated. The flag is removed and folded with respect during the entrance rites and the pall is placed on the casket. The pall will be removed after the liturgy, and the flag can again be placed on the coffin as it is being transported from the church.

## Cremation

### *Points to Consider before Cremation is chosen*

Inspired by the entombment of Jesus, celebrating the Eucharist in the presence of the body with burial is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. In the Funeral Liturgy, the prayers and liturgical texts presuppose this presence of the body which, being a temple of the Holy Spirit, still retains its dignity. Thus, the Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless this is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching (i.e. denial of the resurrection, denial of immortality of the soul or denial of Christian doctrine).

Nevertheless, cremation is a permissible option for hygienic or economic reasons which include: transfer of the remains to a distant place, lack of space for earth burial, tradition or custom, severe psychological fear of burial in the ground or a tomb, or possible avoidance of considerable expense. However, if cremation is chosen for economic reasons, it must be noted that the differences in costs are relative only.

### *What if I choose Cremation?*

The ordinary way of celebrating the Funeral Liturgy is with the body of the deceased present. If cremation is chosen for the deceased, it is preferable that cremation take place following the funeral service. In this way the body can be honoured by the community and the bereaved are allowed proper time to mourn.

However, in the Diocese of Ottawa it is permitted to celebrate a Funeral Liturgy in the presence of the ashes of the deceased. The ashes are to be placed on a table at the front of the Church (not in the sanctuary) before the Liturgy begins. The usual signs of reverence toward the body such as Holy water and Paschal Candle are retained, but the use of incense is omitted.

### *Internment of ashes*

Due to the dignity of the ashes, for a Christian, customs such as keeping the ashes in a house, burying them in gardens or scattering them in the air or over the water are inappropriate. The cremated remains deserve the utmost reverence and respect and must be interred in a cemetery or columbarium.

# Preparing for a Funeral at St. Maurice Parish



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## The Three Stages of a Catholic Funeral

### *The Visitation or Prayer Service*

The visitation with the family of the deceased and viewing the body usually occurs at the funeral home during the afternoon or evening. During this time, there can be a short liturgy of biblical readings and prayers chosen from the funeral ritual, a traditional recitation of the rosary or another act of devotion.

### *The Funeral Rite*

For those who have lived in Christ and with Christ, death is the beginning of eternal happiness with our Creator. 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. The Mass - the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection - is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral. Please note, when a funeral service is held at the funeral home, the celebration of Mass is not permitted. This service consists of prayers, scripture readings and a homily but excludes the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion). However, Mass (without funeral rite) may be offered in the Church at another time for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

### *The Burial Rite*

This service at the cemetery is the last farewell with which the Christian community honours one of its members before the body is buried or entombed. The priest and/or deacon and mourners accompany the body to the cemetery where the rite is celebrated at the grave or tomb.

### **Music**

At a Catholic Funeral, the music must give honour and glory to God, whose grace and blessing we invoke for all in attendance. For this reason, St. Maurice Parish does not allow any songs originating from secular composers. Liturgical music should always express the life, death and resurrection of Christ and help us unite with the sacred.

In consultation with the priest, the family may request particular hymns for the funeral liturgy, but at the discretion of the pastor and music ministry they may or may not be used. The parish will provide a list of appropriate hymns to choose from.

### *Who provides the music for the funeral?*

St. Maurice has musicians and cantors who will provide the music for the funeral service. The stipend for the musicians is included in the fee paid to the funeral home.

Pipers may be used when the body of the deceased is processed from the funeral coach to the entrance of the church, as a recessional song at the end of the liturgy and at the grave site.

### *Can we use pre-recorded music at the funeral service?*

We do not permit recorded music. The liturgy is a collection of signs expressed by *living* human beings. As such, voices and instruments of the gathered assembly should not be replaced by recorded music.

### **The Readings and Participation in the Funeral Liturgy**

The family may select the readings from this booklet; or the selection of readings may be delegated to the priest. Family and friends of the deceased are encouraged to proclaim the readings and *prayers of the faithful* (minimum age is 15 for these two functions), to serve as pallbearers, including placing the pall on the casket during the entrance rites and offer the gifts of bread and wine when Mass is celebrated.

### **Holy Communion**

As Catholics, we believe that after the prayers of consecration at Mass, the bread and wine become the True Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### *For Non Catholics*

In the Catholic Church, receiving Holy Communion is a sign of our belonging to (communion with) the Catholic Church and unity of faith. For those who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church, we kindly ask you to respect our beliefs by refraining from receiving Holy Communion.

However, if you wish, you may come forward in the Communion line to receive a blessing. Please indicate that you wish to receive a blessing by approaching the priest or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion with both arms across your chest (in the form of an X).

### *For 'Non Practicing' Catholics*

Likewise, Catholics who have committed serious sin or who have lapsed in the practice of their faith should approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Holy Communion. In the meantime, you may come forward for a blessing in the Communion line.

### **The Eulogy (Words of Remembrance)**

#### *Guidelines for the Eulogy*

It is preferable to deliver the eulogy at the visitation (wake) or at the reception following the Funeral Liturgy. However, it is permissible to deliver a eulogy at the Funeral Liturgy. When a casket and body are present, the eulogy will be delivered immediately following the entrance hymn. When the cremated remains of the deceased are present the eulogy will take place before the entrance hymn. The eulogy is given by **ONE** person and is to be no more than **FIVE MINUTES** in length. The content is to be befitting of a Liturgical and Christ-centred environment and you must provide a written copy of the eulogy to the presiding priest prior to the funeral. If you desire more than one person to deliver words of remembrance, it will take place at the reception or visitation.

#### *An alternative to a Eulogy*

The family might consider preparing a printed leaflet that can be handed out at the funeral or at another appropriate time. This leaflet would include an account of the deceased person's life in the form of biographical details and a summary of his or her activities.