

§700 THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Introduction

The Order of Christian Funerals describes the Church's ministry to the deceased and their family in these words:

At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist. (Order of Christian Funerals, #4)

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.

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. (Order of Christian Funerals, #4, 5, & 7; Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1680-1684)

Ordinarily, Catholics bring the remains of the dead to the church. This is where their Christian journey began. In the waters of Baptism, they were joined to Christ who stands victorious over death. This is where they were formed by the Word of God and fed at the Lord's table. The parish church is a symbol of the ecclesial community to which they belong.

The funeral liturgy is not merely a celebration of the bereaved family. It is a celebration of the whole church joined in prayer over the death of one of its members. This is especially important to remember in those times when the members of the bereaved family have not been active members of the Church.

Praying for the dead is an expression of communion with them, our love for them, and our desire for their final glory. Comforting those who mourn is a truly Christian response to the unique suffering of those affected by death.

§701 PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN BURIAL

The ministry of consolation is a preeminent part of the ministry of the Church. Caring for the dying, praying for the dead, and comforting those who mourn are elements of a ministry of consolation. The Church calls each member of Christ's Body --priest, deacon, religious, lay person -- to this ministry. (Order of Christian Funerals #8)

"Each member of the Christian faithful shares in this ministry according to the various gifts and offices in the Church." (OCF #9) The parish community should also recognize that some families have their own circle of family and friends who likewise exercise a ministry of consolation to the bereaved.

The principal means of the community's involvement in the ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love are often liturgical: the vigil service at the funeral home or in the church, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal.

Since the funeral liturgies are a crucial part of the Church's pastoral care of the grieving, it is essential that they be well prepared and that they include the various roles and ministries that are part of the life of the Church.

When the deceased has not been an active Catholic, the presider at the funeral rites needs to make the necessary adaptation in the words that are spoken so as to be sensitive to the reality of the deceased person's life. This can be especially accomplished, in the texts which are indicated "in these or similar words," as well as the homily, the intercessions, and the choice of music.

Ministers should avoid any language that might convey a personal judgment of the deceased, remembering the words of eucharistic prayer IV "whose faith is known to you alone."

At the time of death, families who may not have been active members of the Church need to be welcomed in a Christian spirit and helped to feel at home with the Church. This can be a fruitful time of evangelization. Through sensitive pastoral care the faith of bereaved family and friends may be rekindled.

Part of the priest's ministry to the grieving family may include the offer to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. This is especially appropriate in cases where the family has not attended church for some time. However, conditions do not warrant the offer of general absolution.

The ministry of consolation should extend beyond the liturgy to include the days and weeks following Christian burial. The formation of a bereavement ministry in all the pastorates/parishes of the Diocese is strongly encouraged. However, the services that the ministers of bereavement offer should never be perceived as an imposition on the grieving family.

This entire document on Christian funerals should be read in conjunction with the Order of Christian Funerals, 2023. All previous editions of the Order of Christian Funerals should be retired.

§701.1. Entitlement to Church's Ministry at Time of Death

701.1.1. Policy Every Catholic, unless specifically excluded according to the norms of law, is entitled to the Church's ministry at the time of death .

Procedures

- a) In coordination with the parish priest and the funeral director chosen by the family, the family of the deceased arranges the place and sets the time for the visitation and funeral. The specifics of liturgical details, such as scripture readings and music, as well as the use of Church space will be done according to Church and pastor/parish standards to respect the religious nature of a Catholic Church funeral.
- b) The Church encourages the celebration of the funeral Mass for one of its deceased members. Sometimes people will hesitate to have a funeral Mass because of doubts about their own faith or worthiness or that of the deceased. In such cases, the judgment of the pastoral minister is essential. It should be explained that the funeral Mass is a prayer for God's mercy for the deceased and solace for the living and does not presume a life of exemplary faith or virtue.
- c) An individual cannot be denied the full rites of Christian burial because of intellectual or physical challenges.
- d) Catechumens are entitled to the full rite of Christian burial. Even though they are unbaptized, they are to be considered members of the Christian Faithful. (Canon 1183.1)
- e) In the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, Catholic burial, including the funeral Mass, is permitted for a baptized non-Catholic who might reasonably be presumed to desire or prefer Catholic burial services. Such a decision would be appropriate where the non-Catholic party worshipped regularly at the Catholic Church or identified with the Catholic Church more than any other. It would not be appropriate if the deceased were an active member of a non-Catholic Christian Church, except in cases where the minister of the deceased was unavailable. (Canon 1183.3)
- f) To avoid breaking close family ties, non-Catholic members of Catholic families may be interred in a Catholic cemetery. Clergy of other communions, vested if they desire, may conduct the cemetery rites according to their own tradition, if the family so desires or it was the expressed wish of the deceased.
- g) The Church encourages the burial of Catholics in Catholic cemeteries. (Canon 1180.1) Parish ministers should attempt to make Catholics aware of the profound reasons for this.

Burial in a Catholic cemetery is a long-standing sign of the Church's reverence for the human body. Appropriately, the ground in Catholic cemeteries is consecrated to receive sacred remains. Burial in a Catholic cemetery recognizes baptismal commitment and gives witness, even in death, to our belief in the resurrection.

The Church maintains Catholic cemeteries because both in life and in death we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:8) Just as the faithful have shared and celebrated their faith in the community of the Church, so in death their bodies rest with other deceased members of this community, awaiting the day when God will raise their mortal bodies to glory. Catholic cemeteries stand as a sign to the world that even in death, Catholics believe in life. The images of saints in Catholic cemeteries and mausoleums are not mere decorations; they are a sign of belief in the living communion of saints.

- h)** A child who died before baptism may be given Christian funeral rites if the parents intended to have the child baptized. (Canon 1183.2) The family of the deceased child and the parish priest should determine the appropriate funeral rites for the child. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1261)
- i)** Burial in a Catholic cemetery is available to every Catholic who, at the time of death, is entitled to receive such burial. Inability to meet the cemetery costs is no deterrent to Christian burial in a Catholic cemetery.
- j)** When a family is faced with financial hardship, the parish priest or the funeral director should contact the Chancellor's Office. The Consultant will describe sources of public and private funds available for assistance and recommend the nature and degree of charitable assistance to be given by the Catholic Cemetery. Priests whose responsibilities include the spiritual care of patients or residents at various institutions and hospitals may initiate action for charity burials when the deceased has no relative to do this.
- k)** Effort on the part of parish staffs needs to be made for people with disabilities who live apart from their families in various residential settings so that their bodies are claimed for Christian burial.
- l)** There is no objection to Catholics making prior arrangements to donate their bodies or parts of them to advance medical science. The only limitation is that, upon eventual disposition of the body or its parts, there is some reasonable assurance that the remains will be disposed of in a proper, reverential manner.
- m)** The family of the donor should be encouraged to celebrate a memorial Mass as soon as possible after the person's death. Depending upon the circumstances of the donation, the donor's family may choose to have a time for visitation. Whatever remains of the donor's body after an organ transplant or medical research should be given appropriate burial. The rite of committal with final commendation (OCF, #224-233) might appropriately conclude our prayers for

the donor and for the donor's family. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2300-2301)

- n) With continual respect for the human body, the remains of a fetus or a stillborn child of Catholic parents and the amputated extremities of Catholic individuals are to be given reverent Christian burial. A Christian burial permit should be issued by the parish priest or deacon, authorized pastoral minister or hospital chaplain. These remains may be placed either in specific individual graves or in a common burial area.
- o) The Chaplain's Office at Catholic hospitals works closely with families in preparing such burials by contacting a funeral director when necessary and the parish of the family involved. When these burials are not handled directly through Catholic hospitals, families should be advised to make arrangements through a local funeral director.

§701.2. Involvement of Entire Community

701.2.1. Policy Since the ministry of consolation belongs to the entire Christian community, the entire community is to be involved in caring for the dying, praying for the dead, and comforting those who mourn.

Procedures

- a) Parish catechesis is encouraged to help parishioners understand their role in ministering to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.
- b) Parish policies, procedures, and ministerial resources are to be communicated to parishioners so that they can take full advantage of the services available to them in their time of grief.
- c) Parish staffs are to establish clear parish policies and procedures regarding the involvement of lay ministers in the Order of Christian Funerals. These parish policies should be established in consultation with the parish liturgy committee and parish pastoral council and conform to canon law and the policies and procedures of the Diocese.
- d) Funeral directors provide an invaluable service to families. The family chooses the funeral director based upon professional standards, long-service in the community, Church participation or friendship.
Individual funeral directors may perceive and conduct their work for a family as a true pastoral service. Oftentimes the funeral director is the first person in communication with a family who has experienced the death of a loved one. It is important for parish staff and funeral directors to work together in order to provide the best pastoral care for the bereaved family.

§702 THE MINISTERS AND THE RITE FOR THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

When speaking about the presiding minister, the Order of Christian Funerals #15 states:

Priests, as teachers of faith and ministers of comfort, preside at the funeral rites, especially the Mass; the celebration of the funeral liturgy is especially entrusted to pastors and associate pastors. When no priest is available, deacons, as ministers of the word, of the altar, and of charity, preside at funeral rites. When no priest or deacon is available for the vigil and related rites or the rite of committal, a lay person presides.

§702.1. Implementing the Rite

702.1.1. Policy In keeping with the norms found in the Order of Christian Funerals, priests and deacons are to share the responsibility for planning and implementing the Order of Christian Funerals with qualified lay ministers.

Procedures

If a priest or deacon or parish minister is present when the family first visits the body, the rite, "Gathering in the Presence of the Body" (OCF, #109-118), may be used.

702.1.2. Policy Every effort is to be made to implement the full range of ministries and promote active participation in the liturgies which comprise the Order of Christian Funerals.

Procedures

- a) The Order of Christian Funerals recommends that the full complement of liturgical ministers (readers, musicians, ushers, pallbearers, communion ministers, servers, etc.) be involved in the conduct of the liturgy. (OCF #15 & 33)
- b) The parish staff should invite family members to take an active role in the liturgical ministries to the extent to which they are able. (OCF #15 & 17) Ministers of consolation should consult the family in the planning and celebration of the funeral liturgy, sharing with them the available options. The preparation of the liturgy can be part of the ministry of consolation. The primary concern is to prepare the family for the liturgy, not just to select the options in the liturgy. The preparation of the liturgy should never become a burden for the family.
- c) The Order of Christian Funerals recommends that family members be involved in some of the liturgical roles, unless they prefer not to be involved. (OCF #15) For example, the family might be asked to designate the persons who will place

the pall or other appropriate symbols upon the casket during the rite of reception of the body at the church as well as the persons who will bring gifts of bread and wine to the altar at Mass. (OCF #152)

- d) Music selected for the Order of Christian Funerals should be appropriate for Christian prayer and complement the rite being celebrated. The texts of the music should express the paschal mystery of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection and be related to the Word of God. (OCF #30) Popular non-religious songs may not be used.

§702.2. Presiding at the Vigil

702.2.1. Policy When priests or deacons are unavailable to preside at the vigil, lay ministers or any fully initiated Catholic who has been properly prepared may appropriately preside. Parishes shall not exclude priests or deacons from presiding at these rites.

Procedures

- a) During the wake, the vigil service is the norm and should not be replaced by other forms of prayer. However, other additional forms of Catholic devotional prayer, such as the rosary, are permitted at another time during the wake.
- b) When a wake takes place in the Church and the funeral Mass is celebrated that same day or evening, the vigil service is not celebrated. Instead, the prayers for the reception of the body at church are used.
- c) Particular parish groups, e.g., the Parish Senior Citizen's Club, may be invited to celebrate a prayer service for the deceased in addition to the vigil service.

§702.3. Presiding at the Funeral Liturgy

702.3.1. Policy When one of its members dies, the Church especially encourages the celebration of the Mass. (OCF #46)

Procedures

- a) A parish cantor can be most helpful in leading the congregation in song. A parish funeral choir can also assist at the liturgy.
- b) Only an ordained priest or deacon is allowed to preach the homily at the funeral liturgy. Other individuals (with the permission of the family) may speak briefly before the funeral liturgy or at the end of Mass, at the wake service or at the beginning of the final commendation. A eulogy is never appropriate where a homily is prescribed (OCF #27), but examples from the person's life may be used in the homily.

702.3.2. Policy It is the custom in the United States for a priest or deacon to preside at the funeral liturgy, even if it is celebrated outside of Mass.

Procedures

The Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass (OCF #177-203) is celebrated when a Mass is not possible or not deemed appropriate. It is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church, but it may also be celebrated in a funeral home or cemetery chapel. (OCF #179) The pastoral judgment of the parish priest is essential in determining what is appropriate.

§702.4. Presiding at the Committal Service

702.4.1. Policy Priests, deacons, trained lay ministers, and any fully initiated Catholics who have been properly prepared are appropriate ministers at committal services when the presider of the funeral Mass is unable to be present at the committal.

Procedures

- a) The rite of committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, is the final act of caring for the body of the deceased member of the Church. (OCF, #204) The movement to the cemetery is a ritual procession to the final resting place of the deceased. For the continuity between the Mass and this part of the funeral liturgy, prayers, psalms, and songs are recommended for the journey. While this is difficult with an automobile cortege, individuals are encouraged to maintain a spirit of prayer from the church to the cemetery.
- b) The wishes of the family should be carefully considered in arranging for the presider at the committal service.
- c) As at the funeral Mass, every effort is to be made to assist the assembly in taking a full and active part in the committal by making the appropriate responses and by singing the appropriate hymns or acclamations.
- d) The committal service may reflect the language and customs of the family of the deceased.
- e) While the funeral director's services to the family certainly can be an expression of the larger community's compassion, the distinctive role of the funeral director does not ordinarily include presiding at the committal service. This is to maintain the integral connection between the pastoral care of the parish and the Church's liturgical rites, when a priest or deacon or parish lay minister is available.

§702.5. Funeral Liturgies for Children

702.5.1. Policy The Order of Christian Funerals provides a complete funeral liturgy for children which shall be used whenever a child is brought for Christian burial. (OCF, #234-342)

Procedures

- a) The Order of Christian Funerals provides a complete vigil service, funeral Mass with final commendation and a rite of committal for the funeral of a child. (OCF, #247-249, 319-336) Various texts for a baptized child or a child who died before baptism make the rites fully adaptable to a given situation. The eloquent prayers and words of comfort of the rites for children offer special consolation in this extraordinary situation of bewilderment and pain.
- b) A complete funeral liturgy outside Mass for children (OCF, #295-315) and a rite of final commendation for an infant (OCF, #337-342) are also provided for those circumstances when it is appropriate.

§703 ESTABLISHING FUNERAL LITURGY SCHEDULES

The parish community will want to accommodate the needs of a family by providing a flexible parish policy for scheduling the funeral Mass and other rites in the Order of Christian Funerals. Local and cultural or ethnic customs may have a bearing on when funeral rites are celebrated as well as how they are celebrated.

In many parishes, a large number of funerals will require special consideration and pastoral planning so that the community can sensitively and adequately respond to the needs of a grieving family.

Since it is good for the community to share in the ministry of consolation, the vigil service ought to be celebrated at a time when many of the community are available to participate. The vigil service may be celebrated in the parish church. The time for the vigil service may be published in the obituary.

Although the funeral liturgy will normally be celebrated in the parish church to which the deceased belonged, it is possible to choose any Catholic church for a funeral liturgy, provided the pastor of that church agrees and the pastor of the deceased has been informed. (Canon 1177) As a rule, the funeral rites of religious or members of societies of apostolic life are celebrated in their own church or oratory. (Canon 1179) The funeral Mass may also be celebrated in approved chapels of long-term care institutions and in other approved chapels. (Canon 1225)

§703.1. Restricting the Number of Funeral Celebrations

703.1.1. Policy Parishes with many funerals may limit the number of funeral Masses or funerals outside of Mass on any given day. A family might not always be able to have a funeral Mass on the day of preference.

Procedures

- 1) A policy limiting the number of funeral Masses on one day is to be set in consultation with the parish pastoral council and liturgy committee and is to be published regularly in the parish bulletin. (NB., Before setting a policy on the limitations of the number of funeral Masses celebrated on one day, a careful review of the daily Mass schedule, the times for funerals, and the availability of visiting priests should be made.)
- 2) This policy must be clearly communicated to the parish and the local funeral directors. Family and funeral directors should understand the reasons for the policy and be assured of the parish's commitment to minister to the grieving family.
- 3) If a funeral cannot be scheduled on a particular day, ordinarily the funeral will be celebrated on the next day.
- 4) If two or more families desire it, a funeral Mass may be celebrated for more than one deceased person.
- 5) Funeral Masses may be celebrated at one of the regularly scheduled daily Masses in the parish or in the afternoon or in the evening. The parish pastoral council and parish liturgy committee are to be consulted in establishing a parish policy.
- 6) The funeral Mass has first place among the Masses for the dead and may be celebrated on any day except solemnities of obligation, on Holy Thursday and the Easter Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season. In the United States, the Holy Days of obligation are the feasts of Mary, the Mother of God (January 1), Ascension Thursday, the Assumption of Mary (August 15), All Saints (November 1), the Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Christmas (December 25). (See the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #336)
- 7) On days when a funeral Mass may not be celebrated, the funeral liturgy outside Mass is celebrated. A memorial Mass may be offered on another day.

§703.2. Funeral Outside of Mass Followed By Memorial Mass

703.2.1. Policy The family may choose to celebrate the funeral outside of Mass and schedule a memorial Mass at a later date, as is the practice during the Triduum. (OCF #178)

Procedures

- c) The Order of Christian Funerals provides an entire ritual to be celebrated outside Mass whereby the community gathers to hear the message of Easter

hope proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word and to commend the deceased to God. (OCF, #177)

- d) The ritual for a funeral celebrated outside of Mass may be used for various reasons: when the funeral Mass is not permitted; when in some circumstances it is not possible to celebrate the funeral Mass before the committal, for example, if a priest is not present; when for pastoral reasons the funeral liturgy outside Mass is a more suitable form of celebration. (OCF, #178)

§704 STYLE OF CHRISTIAN FUNERAL CELEBRATIONS

While a community has many ways of showing support for the bereaved and respect for the dead, the Church's liturgy enables all to move from grief to hope by focusing attention on the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. These sacred rites shape and form the Christian community and deepen its convictions.

The Order of Christian Funerals provides three brief rites that are models of prayer at significant moments: Prayers after Death (OCF, #101-108), Gathering in the Presence of the Body (OCF, #109-118), and the Transfer of the Body to the Church or the Place of Committal. (OCF, #119-127)

In the United States, the Church ordinarily celebrates the funeral in three principal ritual moments: the vigil (wake), the funeral Mass, and the committal. Although each has its particular ritual, the funeral liturgy is a single movement beginning with the viewing of the body and the greeting of the mourners and culminating in the prayers and farewell gestures at the cemetery. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1686)

The entire assembly should be encouraged to participate in word and song in response to the customary prayers. Parish priests are encouraged to instruct parishioners, musicians, and parish liturgy committees for full participation.

Special attention should be given to the numerous options offered in the Order of Christian Funerals to meet the particular circumstances of the deceased.

§704.1. Principal Ritual Moments

704.1.1. Policy In the United States, the principal ritual moments in the Order of Christian Funerals are the vigil (wake), the funeral Mass, and the committal. Every effort shall be made to implement the services provided for these occasions in the Order of Christian Funerals.

Procedures

- a) It is presumed that the only rite currently used is the Order of Christian Funerals, 1989.

- b) A pastoral visit with the family by the priest celebrating the funeral Mass is an expected part of the Church's ministry of consolation.
- c) Ordinarily, there is only one wake service. When a visiting priest or deacon is asked to say a prayer, he can select an appropriate prayer from the Order of Christian Funerals or make use of traditional Catholic prayers (i.e., the Lord's Prayer or the Rosary) as may be the custom of the place.

§704.2. Place for Committal Service

704.2.1. Policy The committal service shall be celebrated at the place of burial or interment and not at the church. (OCF #204)

Procedures

- a) The place for the rite of committal, whether in an interment chapel or at graveside, is designed to gather the community for prayer. Most of the Catholic cemetery personnel who prepare such sites are also members of the Church community, extending the concern, love, and support of all the faithful.
- b) Military services and certain fraternal rites are also permissible in the cemetery. These other services should be arranged in advance with the local parish priest and coordinated in such a way that they do not disrupt or detract from the integrity of the liturgical committal service.
- c) Every parish is to keep a physical book (Death Register) listing those who have died and have been buried from that parish. (Canon 1182) (See §902.5. *Death Registers*)

§704.3. Cremation

704.3.1. Policy While the Church recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed, cremation is permitted as long as it had not been chosen for reasons contrary to Church teaching. (Canon 1176.3; Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2301)

Procedures

- a) If cremation is to take place, it is recommended that the funeral liturgy be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased prior to its cremation. (OCF, Appendix, #418)
- b) The significance of having the body of the deceased present for the funeral liturgy is indicated throughout the texts of the Order of Christian Funerals and in the ritual actions of the funeral liturgy. Therefore, when arrangements regarding cremation are being made, the parish priest is to recommend that:

- 1) Following a wake, or time of visitation, a funeral Mass is celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased person. Following the funeral Mass, the body of the deceased may be cremated.
 - 2) The funeral mass concludes with the final commendation followed by the alternate form of dismissal. (OCF, Appendix, #436)
 - 3) At an appropriate time, usually some days later, the family gathers at the cemetery for the burial of the cremated remains. The rite of committal takes place at this time with the inclusion of prayers for the committal of ashes. (OCF 406.3, or OCF, Appendix, #438)
 - 4) If a lengthy time has passed since the celebration of the funeral Mass, the Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (OCF #224-233) may be more appropriate.
- c) If cremation has already taken place before the funeral Mass, the pastor may permit the celebration of the funeral Mass in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased person.
- 1) The cremated remains of the body are to be placed in a worthy vessel. A small table or stand is to be prepared for them at the place normally occupied by the coffin. The vessel may be carried to its place in the entrance procession or may be placed on the table or stand sometime before the liturgy begins.
 - 2) Prayers which do not make reference to the honoring or burying of the dead are to be chosen. Following the prayer after Communion, the Rite of Final Commendation takes place. The alternate form of the dismissal is used. (OCF, Appendix, #437)
 - 3) The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the cemetery as soon as possible following the liturgy. The alternate form of the committal is used. (OCF 406.3, or OCF, Appendix, #438)
- d) Special circumstances, such as health concerns, or out-of-state transport, can prompt families to arrange for cremation before making final funeral arrangements. If cremation has taken place, the pastor is to recommend options depending on the particular circumstances:
- 1) Gathering with family and friends for prayer and remembrance of the deceased.
 - 2) Celebration of a funeral Mass without the final commendation if the cremated remains are not present.

- 3) Gathering with family and friends for the interment of the cremated remains at the cemetery. The Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (OCF #224-233) is celebrated.
- e) There may be pastoral reasons that make it inappropriate to celebrate a funeral Mass or a memorial Mass. In all circumstances, opportunities for prayer in which we join with the grieving family in placing our hope and trust in God are to be preserved.
- f) Cremated remains are to be treated with the same respect given to the remains of a human body and should be buried or entombed. The scattering of cremated remains on the sea or on the ground, or keeping them in the home, is not the reverent final disposition that the Church requires. (OCF, Appendix, #417) (Amended 2-8-99)

§704.4. Christian Burial Inappropriate

704.4.1. Policy Under certain circumstances Christian burial is inappropriate. Canon 1184 states that unless they have given some signs of repentance before their death, the following are to be deprived of ecclesiastical funeral rites:

- (1) notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics;
- (2) persons who had chosen cremation of their own bodies for reasons opposed to the Christian faith;
- (3) other manifest sinners for whom ecclesiastical funeral rites cannot be granted without public scandal to the faithful.

Procedures

- a) Before denying Christian funeral rites to anyone or granting funeral rites to someone with a "notorious" reputation, the parish priest is to consult the Office of the Chancellor. The decision of the Bishop or his delegate in this matter is determinative. (Canon 1184.2)
- b) Two extremes are to be avoided: 1) harshness toward those who have been estranged from the Church, and 2) scandalous leniency toward notorious criminals. In some cases, Christian funeral rites may be allowed but publication prohibited. If a Mass of Christian Burial is denied, no funeral Mass whatsoever may be offered for the deceased, whether at the funeral home or any other place. (Canon 1185) A memorial Mass may be scheduled for a later date.

§704.5. Funeral Offering

Policy The Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana has not set a limit on the voluntary offerings given on the occasion of administering sacraments and sacramentals. However, the suggested voluntary offering **will be set by each parish**, exclusive of expenses related to liturgical cost of special ministries (musicians, cantors, altar servers, funeral planners, etc.) (Canon 1264, §2)

Procedure

It is appropriate for a parish to request an offering to the Church at the time of Christian burial. (Canon 1181) (also see §203.3. *Offerings for Weddings and Funerals*, herein) Sacramental offerings for funerals are customary and in accord with canon law.

The term "limit" as used herein indicates the maximum donation that a parish in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana may accept for a funeral. A person's inability to make an offering would not preclude their receiving the Rite of Christian Burial.

RESOURCES

Preparation

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7. Ministry to the Widowed, Guide to Groups: For the Widowed and Bereaved in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. Chicago: Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, 1992.

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3. John Allyn Melloh, Order of Christian Funerals, a Commentary, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989.

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2. Flor McCarthy, Funeral Liturgies, Long Island: Costello Publishing Company, 1987.
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