



THE CHURCH OF
ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

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Dear Friend,

Please allow me to express our sorrow for you in this time of loss. I'm always struck that our Lord, even when he knew he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, still wept for him. We, too, can shed tears while still having hope in the resurrection.

As you begin this funeral planning process, it's worth taking a moment to consider what a Catholic funeral is intended to be and to do, because a Catholic funeral is different from any other type of ceremony in or outside of the Church. It is primarily a time to **remember**, to **pray**, and to **reflect**. Let me expound.

- The Catholic funeral is a time to remember what Christ has done in the life of your beloved deceased. During the funeral, you will hear prayers calling on the Lord to *remember* "not our merits but the faith of the Church", because the funeral is not a "remembrance of life"; rather, it is a remembrance of the victorious triumph of Christ! There will be plenty of time to recount personal stories and eulogies during the luncheon, however, that is not the purpose of the Mass (that would be like having the best man's speech during the wedding).
- A funeral liturgy is intended to give you an opportunity to really pray for your loved one. Your prayers actually have the power to speed your loved one through Purgatory, where every attachment to sin is melted away, and help your loved one see God in heaven sooner. The prayer of the Mass is the best prayer there is, because it is the offering of Christ on the cross and contains infinite graces! Listen for the prayer that says to the Lord "Command that this person's name be inscribed in the book of life!" What a consolation to your grieving heart to know that your prayers actually assist your loved one even after death.
- Finally, a Catholic funeral Mass gives you the opportunity to really reflect on what is most important. With the business of planning the funeral and the luncheon and hosting guests and planning travel, one can find it hard to find time to just sit and think, to grieve, and to mourn. The funeral ritual with its chants and readings, prayers and silence gives you that time. It is necessarily reflective, so you don't need to do anything; you can simply be still and let the God of the universe do his work of love. The Lord is loving you right now, even during this time of sorrow.

When done well, a funeral Mass can be a profound experience for you and for your family and friends in attendance; one that will help you to pray, grieve, and connect with God and others. This is my desire for you. I don't want to merely "have a funeral" at St. Max for you; **I want to facilitate a transcendent encounter with God for you, your loved one, and for everyone who steps foot in our church.**

We will walk with you through this process, and help you to prepare for a truly beautiful, holy, and Catholic funeral liturgy. The parish staff and I are here to accompany you during this time. Please let us know how we can assist you.

Peace be with you.

Fr. Kyle Kowalczyk
Pastor

Letting the Eucharist Lead: Allowing the love of Christ and the truths of His Church to transform our hearts and minds, and inviting others to journey with us.