

Funerals at Sacred Heart Parish Murwillumbah

Welcome! Our prayers and thoughts are with you ...

We welcome you to our Parish. Should you have suffered the death of a family member or close relative, we extend to you our deepest sympathies and the promise of our prayers.

While there is normally little time between a death and the ceremony that follows, we nevertheless ask you to be patient as we explain the nature of a funeral liturgy in the Catholic Church.

Focus of Catholic Funeral

The central focus of a Catholic funeral is a solemn prayer that God will grant eternal life to the deceased. We pray that God, in love and forgiveness, will welcome the deceased into Heaven "where there are no more tears, no more pain, but joy and happiness forever".

... a hope filled prayer to God

While the ceremony is occasioned by the unique and unrepeatable life of the deceased, the focus always remains that of hope filled prayer to God. That prayer will seek from God also a special strength for the family in the face of such a sad loss.

Liturgical foundation

The church celebration, whether Mass or simple prayers, is always rooted in listening to the Sacred Scriptures so that we can be nourished and strengthened by God's word, and when appropriate the Eucharist. These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with prayerful gestures, with silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives, and assisted normally with appropriate music.

Place & Time of Funeral Service

Only the Parish Priest may enter the place, date, and time of the funeral in the parish calendar. These details will be entered after the priest has been contacted by the person designated by the deceased to organise the funeral liturgy.

At that time, the celebrant or a member of the Parish Bereavement Team will meet with the family and explain nature of a Catholic funeral and the process of preparation leading up to the funeral itself.

The Funeral Rite

Catholic priests may perform a funeral liturgy only in accordance with the Rite set out in the "Order of Christian Funerals for the Catholic Church". This means that the ceremony must follow the formal liturgy of the Church for Catholic funerals, use approved Scripture Readings, and appropriate Church music.

Where

Funeral liturgies are conducted in our Parish Church - Sacred Heart Murwillumbah. Requests for funerals to be held at one of our other churches - Our Lady of Perpetual Succour South Murwillumbah, St. Columba's Uki or St. Brigid's at Burringbar – may be made directly to the Parish Priest for special circumstances. By exception, they may be celebrated at the cemetery or crematorium.

Liturgical Preparation

In consultation with the priest who will celebrate the funeral liturgy, the next of kin will need to determine if the funeral will take place during a Mass of Christian Burial (within a Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist) or during a Liturgy of the Word. The order of celebration is similar for both.

We are here to help you

The Parish Priest or a member of our parish team will assist you in the preparation of the funeral liturgy that expresses the uniqueness of the moment and preserves the beauty of the Church's tradition.

Priest Celebrant

Ordinarily, the Parish Priest will perform the funeral liturgy. The family may invite another priest (with formal authorization and a current working children check) to preside at the liturgy. However, the family is asked to seek the approval of the Parish Priest.

Ministers of the Word: Readers

Usually, the family will want to ask a relative, family member or friend to serve as ministers of the Word (reader) for the funeral. The family is encouraged to consider well the talents necessary to proclaim the Word reverently, effectively, and with composure when inviting people to proclaim the Reading.

Words in remembrance

The Celebrant will deliver a homily based on the Scripture Readings. The Order of Christian Funerals for the Catholic Church provides that a member or friend of the family (one person) may speak briefly in remembrance of the deceased before the Final Commendation. Given the nature of the occasion, it may be preferable that only the Celebrant speak.

... of inspiration

The reflection by the family member or friend should be about the deceased person's human qualities, their life of faith, and how these qualities can inspire those present to live more fully the Gospel of Jesus.

Putting the message together ...

The 'words of remembrance' should speak honestly and compassionately, reflecting the circumstances of the life of the deceased. As a guide, the reflection should be no more than five (5) minutes. It should be written out ahead of time and reviewed by the celebrant beforehand. Storytelling, anecdotes, poems and songs, etc., can well form part of the family's home gathering afterwards.

Environment for worship

Flowers are an important part of the environment for the worship space. The parish secretary (02 66721118) will provide the name of the person to contact to assist you in planning floral arrangements. To avoid any hazard to the safety of others and the environment, and to comply with Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, the placing of extra candles and the sprinkling of rose petals etc. are not allowed.

Music

Since music is an important part of the funeral liturgy, guidelines will be provided for planning hymns appropriate to the occasion. The use of secular music or popular songs is better suited to the home or other gathering after the church celebration.

We respect the rights of musicians and artists to fair recompense for their work, we cannot purchase a blanket license therefore taped music, music on CDs or MP3 cannot be used. We do have a license for a substantial body of contemporary and traditional Church music of which you are welcome to make a selection.

Photography & Videotaping

Video and other photographers are not normally permitted at a funeral liturgy. Permission may be given by the Parish Priest.

If granted, professional photographers and video photographers should not intrude upon the reverence of the moment. They are not free to roam about the sanctuary during the funeral liturgy.

Funeral Ministry and Hospitality

We hope that you will find within the parish a wealth of assistance and encouragement to help in the preparation of this sacred moment.

The guidelines offered here are intended to ensure a reverent celebration of a Catholic funeral within the context of the Church's prayer. We are here to assist you. We ask God's blessing upon you at this time.

Donation

This is normally arranged by the Funeral Director and contained in their overall charges. It is a donation that people gladly make for the use of the Church etc. The current recommended donation is \$250 (this does not include music).

Parish Office Phone: 02 6672 1118

After the funeral

You may wish to have a reception for friends and visitors after the funeral rites have concluded. Unfortunately, we no longer have facilities to offer for such a reception. We recommend that you contact other venues in Murwillumbah for your reception.