

Funeral Planner Guide

St. Michael the Archangel RC Church wishes to stand with you in this difficult time. We know there are many decisions to be made — while grieving — and the details of Funeral Rite liturgy of the Church can be overwhelming. In no way are these meant to complicate an already difficult experience. This is to draw together differing aspects of the process so that should a question be forgotten or something overlooked while meeting at the Funeral Home, simply scanning these might fill in what has not been covered. Keep in mind that these guidelines apply only to St. Michael the Archangel RC Parish.

St. Michael's will make every effort to set a funeral time that is convenient for you and your family. We suggest that one members of the family, or other designed person, serve as the primary contact person for the funeral home and for the parish.

Contact Person Name: _____

Telephone and Email: _____

Funeral Home: _____

As Catholics, we celebrate the funeral rites to offer prayers of supplication for the souls of the deceased who have now returned to God, the Creator, Redeemer and Judge. Traditionally the Church identifies three principal funeral rites, with the customarily flexibility to choose the rite and/or rites that best mark the death of our loved ones.

- ❖ The Vigil (Wake) Service – usually takes place on the eve of the Funeral Mass and may be held in the Funeral Home. This service generally includes prayers for the deceased, and prayers of consolation for the members of the bereaved family. The Rosary may be recited since it helps us to reflect upon the life, death and resurrection of Christ and so leads us to a greater sense of hope at this time of grief. A priest, family member, or a friend may conduct this rite.
- ❖ Funeral Mass – the essential liturgical rite, which takes place in the church, with a priest offering the Holy Sacrifice of Christ for the repose of the soul of the deceased. The funeral liturgy includes the reception of the body, the Requiem Mass, and the Absolution of the body. As an expression of our faith in the resurrection of the body we respectfully ask that cremation of the body (if preferred) takes place after the Funeral Mass and Absolution of the body. Other options, like a Funeral Mass in the absence of the body may also be arranged along with Requiem Masses on the 3rd, 7th, and 30th days following the burial.
- ❖ Rite of Committal – celebrated at the cemetery, or columbarium. This service, accompanied by a Priest, consists of prayers, blessings, and a final farewell.

Planning for the Funeral Services

What service(s) and date(s) would you like?

Vigil (Wake) Service

Funeral Mass

Rite of Committal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Planning for the Funeral Services

Name of Priest for the service(s): _____

Name of the Deceased: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Death: _____

There are two forms of the ancient funeral Mass, the High Mass and the Low Mass. The High Mass requires at least four servers and a Plain Chant Schola. It may not be possible to arrange for a High Mass at very short notice. The Low Mass may be arranged with a single server.

Requiem Low Mass

Altar Servers: _____

Altar Servers: _____

Requiem High Mass

Altar Servers: _____

Altar Servers: _____

Altar Servers: _____

Altar Servers: _____

(It is customary to offer a stipend to the Altar Servers. (We recommend \$20/server.) In cases where the bereaved family has no one in mind to serve the Pastor will assign the required number.

Planning for the Music

Music is an essential part of the Requiem High Mass, and we encourage families to make full use of the Church traditions and the parish resources. The traditions of the Church clearly give the primacy of place to Plain Chant. The Plain Chant Requiem Mass is considered among the most beautiful ever composed. The parish Music Director will assist in assembling a Plain Chant Schola for the funeral masses of Active Parishioners. (However, please be mindful that it is not always possible to arrange for a Plain Chant Schola at short notice.)

In the event that a Requiem High Mass is desired the Contact Person should contact the Music Director Mrs. Eileen Hanisch by email at meh.sga@gmail.com

Stole Fees and Stipends for Funeral Masses are laid down by the Diocese of Scranton. Please note that these are not “costs”. Financial difficulties will never prevent the parish St Michaels from providing the funeral rites to active parishioners.

Stipend for small Choir at Funeral Masses:

Requiem High Mass for Active Parishioners:	\$500
Requiem High Mass for Inactive and Non Parishioners:	\$800

Stole Fees for Funeral Masses:

Stole Fees are the contribution provided directly to the Pastor. At St. Michael the Archangel the Pastor has chosen personally not to take a stole fee. Instead this offering will be given to the Church to help defray the parish expenses. No other contribution need be considered.

Stole Fee for Requiem Mass:	\$250
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We at St. Michael the Archangel RC Church are very proud of our Choir and musical tradition. We therefore encourage families to make use of this wonderful resource before asking for other musicians to provide liturgical music for funeral rites. However, in the event that the Schola are unavailable guest musician may be permitted with the consent of the Director of Music. We do ask for a small stipend of \$100 to accommodate outside performers.

Some Practicalities

The Reception of Holy Communion

Unfortunately due to the design of the pews at St. Michael the Archangel RC Church it is impossible to offer Holy Communion during a Requiem Mass while the casket is present. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion may do so after the casket has been removed.

Holy Communion is the summit of our belief in Jesus Christ. The Real Presence of Christ in our midst inspires us to remember of own sinfulness and the rules regarding the reception of the sacrament. Only those who are practicing Catholics, NOT conscious of grave (mortal) sin should consider themselves disposed to receive worthily. The mode of reception is in keeping with our humble attitude in the presence of our God. Therefore at St. Michaels Holy Communion is received upon the tongue while kneeling at the altar rail. An announcement to this effect will be made before all funeral Masses.

Flowers

We welcome flowers as part of the funeral rite. However flowers in the traditional rites of the Church are not permitted on altar or in the sanctuary. Instead they will be displayed and arranged in the vestibule area of the church or around the casket in the event of the reception of the body the night before the funeral.

Pictures and Portraits

Unfortunately the design of the church does not provide space, for easels and/or tables for displaying of your loved one's pictures and remembrances.

Eulogies

The appropriate place for eulogies is at the Vigil Service prior to the Funeral Mass.

Reception

St. Michaels' basement is not a suitable venue for funeral receptions. Families are therefore asked to make alterative arrangements for a venue where family and friends can gather for a time of refreshment and remembrance.

Donations and Fees

- There is no charge for a funeral at St. Michael the Archangel. It is customary to give a donation to the parish to help defray the cost of lights, air conditioner, cleaning, and maintenance of the facilities.
- There is no charge for the services of the priest, or altar servers. However, it is recommended a generous discretionary donation for their services.
- Fees and stipends for the Music Director and cantor(s) are listed above. Please make sure to provide for the professional work.

A Final Thought on Catholic Funeral

As members of the body of Christ, when one suffers, we all suffer. Therefore, we are called on as a community to care for the dying, to console those who mourn, and to participate in the funeral rites. Prayerful preparation and planning of the funeral rites will help you and your loved ones deal successfully and gracefully with the ultimate rite of passage through death to eternal life. The pastor is always available to address any issues or questions.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS GUIDELINE
AND RETURN TO THE OFFICE**