

A Note from Fr. Ed Becker about Planning the Funeral for Your Loved One

I hope that the funeral Mass for your loved one will be a source of comfort and hope for you and a sign of the Resurrection that our Lord seeks to share with each one of us. Following are some options and choices for the funeral liturgy. Please let me know of your choices as soon as possible.

Flowers and Photo Displays

You may bring and set up some flowers and/or photo displays in the vestibule of the church (just inside the front door of the church) so that those attending the funeral may view them on the way into the church as well as on the way out. During the funeral Mass, the casket or urn is placed in the center aisle near the sanctuary, along with the paschal candle symbolizing the light of Christ. The pall covers the casket (symbolizing that the departed loved one was clothed in Christ at his or her baptism), and a crucifix and/or other Christian symbols may be placed on top of the casket or around the urn (see further discussion of these items below). In order to maintain a simple beauty emphasizing these Christian symbols, no flowers or photo displays are placed near the casket or urn during the funeral Mass.

Christian Symbols

The mortuary generally provides a crucifix to be placed on the casket during the funeral Mass. If, however, your departed loved one had another crucifix that you would rather use, you may do so. In addition, if your departed loved one had a favorite Bible, this may also be placed on the casket.

Short Talks About Your Departed Loved One

If you like, you may have one or two short talks (no more than five minutes each) about your departed loved one. This would occur at the beginning of the funeral Mass (after the body or cremains have been brought into the church and the family and friends have assembled). I recommend that these talks be written out and rehearsed (helping to avoid nervous rambling, which can happen in a stressful situation). I also recommend that additional speakers who want to share memories about your departed loved one be given an opportunity to do so at the vigil service/rosary the evening before the funeral or at the reception following the funeral.

Choosing Readings for the Liturgy of the Word

You are invited to choose three readings from the booklet, *Through Death to Life* (available in the parish office), as follows:

1. A first reading from C1 through C11, pp. 26-34.
2. A second reading from E1 through E15, pp. 45-55.
3. The Gospel from G1 through G19, pp. 59-78 (to be proclaimed by me).

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH

Choosing Readers

If you like, you may choose up to three readers for the following:

1. The first reading
2. The second reading
3. General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful) (text to be provided by me).

Please ask the readers to be at the church and report to me in the sacristy 20 minutes prior to the funeral Mass so that I can discuss with them when and from where they will be proclaiming the readings.

Choosing Persons to Bring Forward the Gifts

If you like, you may choose two persons to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine at the Presentation of Gifts. Up to three other persons may accompany the two bringing forward the gifts (if, for example, you would like a particular family to bring forward the gifts). The two persons carrying the gifts should be 8 years of age or older.

Please let me know of your choices (a couple of days prior to the funeral, if possible) so that I can prepare the liturgy, including my homily (which I will base, in part, on the readings that you have chosen). For Scripture readings, please indicate both the number of the reading in *Through Death to Life* and the scriptural citation (e.g., C4, Wisdom 4:7-15). The parish phone number is (714) 542-4411, and my e-mail address is ebecker@stjosephsa.org. Also please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I pray that you will feel God's presence and love during this time of mourning for your loved one.