

**Saint Patrick Catholic Church
Mount Dora, FL**

**Policies and Guidelines for Funeral Planning,
Vigils/Wakes, Masses, Receptions and Committals
Revised: 16 December 2018**

The Saint Patrick Ministry of Consolation (MOC) is called upon to assist with families' needs after the death of a loved one. One of our services involves assisting in preparation for the Funeral Liturgy* by providing the family a better understanding of their options and how they can be more actively involved in the process. The MOC then assists them in selecting the readings, music, and several other details.

*Order of Christian Funerals/Funeral Liturgy/para 128-153.

Ministers of Consolation (MOCs) should keep in mind that unanticipated situations frequently arise in the planning processes, and sometimes even at the Mass itself. Therefore the following policies and guidelines were developed to prepare MOCs for carrying out their responsibilities. Special attention should be paid to Sections II and III.

- I. Ministry of Consolation
 - A. MOCs are trained in the Parish with Diocese provided training material to properly perform these tasks in a compassionate manner and in accord with Catholic faith and teaching.
 - B. Catholic funerals are about the faith of the community and the individual who has died.
 - C. All pre-funeral or funeral pre-planning interviews are to be coordinated in advance with the Church Office.

- II. Funeral Planning
 - A. The *Family Choices* form guides the interviewer and the interviewed.
 - B. Planning is often done after the death of a loved one; Parish members are encouraged to consider planning in advance for their own funerals.
 - C. Stipends: Checks are normally taken care of by Funeral Directors (if they are involved) and charged back to the family. If no Funeral Director is involved, the MOCs inform the family and collect the stipends. Current stipends are: St. Patrick Church: If registered parishioner \$150 (for Organist); If not registered: \$300 (Includes \$100 for Church, \$150 for Organist, \$50 for Cantor). It is the donor's choice for an Honorarium to

the Presider. The Church Office is to inform the MOC when family situations indicate stipends should not be collected.

- D. The interview process should include every effort to determine whether the immediate family (the bereaved) are practicing Catholics, and whether they are familiar with Catholic beliefs and traditions. In situations where it is determined the bereaved are not familiar with these items, an emphasis shall be placed on reverence during the entire Mass, especially during the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion.
- E. Encourage those who do not wish to receive Communion to reverently approach with arms folded over their chests for a blessing. The Presider may also inform those at Mass how to approach for a blessing.
- F. The preference of the Catholic Church is that the body be present at the Mass of Christian Burial and that cremation (if there is to be one) takes place later. However, cremains are permitted during the Mass.
- G. At Saint Patrick Parish, it is our practice to celebrate Funeral Masses at 9:00 A.M. weekdays, at which time regular daily Mass participants join in prayer and the celebration. When scheduling, the Church Office will make every effort give at least a three day lead time for planning the funeral, be cognizant of feast days, and schedule Saturday funerals only with presider approval.

III. Vigils/Wakes

- A. This topic will be discussed during the planning process.
- B. The Church teaches that the Liturgy is to be a celebration of the faith life of the community of which the deceased was a part. This is the manner in which the Catholic Church celebrates its faith and bids farewell.
 - 1. The typical process is to have vigils/wakes take place prior to the Funeral Mass. (for example, at the Funeral Home). MOCs are encouraged to attend vigils/wakes when possible.
 - 2. Absent that, remembrances (eulogies) are encouraged at the family's reception, after the Funeral Mass.
 - 3. If desired and if the Church is available, wakes/vigils can take place in the Church in the days prior to the Funeral Mass.
 - 4. A single three minute eulogy is permissible during the Funeral Mass, delivered after Communion and prior to the Final Blessing. We stress that only one person give the eulogy and that it be brief. If more time is requested for a eulogy, it will be considered on a case-by-case basis; the consent of the Presider is required.

IV. The Funeral Mass

A. The MOCs shall assure that all is in readiness for the Mass.

1. During the Easter season, the Paschal Candle remains near the pulpit. If outside of the season, place the Paschal Candle on the 'X' marked spot at the left side, facing altar, foot of the steps to the altar.
2. Assure incense coals are lit, that there are Mass servers and candle bearers, that the pall, sprinkling devices, reserve pew signs, Kleenex, side door signs, easels, tables, wheel chairs, readings book, and podium for the guest book are properly located.
3. A maximum of three sprays of flowers are allowed on the altar; balance, if any, should remain in the Gathering Space.
4. Guide the funeral director as necessary in bringing the casket into the church and properly locating it in front of the Baptismal Font.
5. In the absence of a body, assure the cremains table is properly placed in the center of the steps to the altar, and a person is designated to process in and recess out with the urn. The urn is placed on the top rear of the Baptismal Font before Mass starts and returned to the Baptismal Font after the recession.
6. Assist and guide family members who are participating in the liturgy as readers, gift bearers, etc. Guide family members as they process into the church to their seats and for the recession.
7. Assist all participants as necessary after the Mass.
8. After the Mass assure the return of all items used during the liturgy to their proper storage place.

V. Receptions

- A. Receptions may be held in the Parish Hall (parishioners only per Fr. Charlie Deeney 10/27/2017) or Gathering Space if the family desires. The MOCs must check with the Church Office to be sure the Parish Hall or Gathering Space is available at the desired time. The MOCs will guide the family in making preparations for a reception the Gathering Space during the Funeral Planning Process. Included in this guidance is getting estimates of the number of attendees, assisting in food selection, getting quotations or estimates for food costs (at Publix), arranging for items such as speaker's podiums, easels, tables for photos, screens and tables for projectors, etc.
- B. There is no charge for use of the Gathering Space. (See the 10/27/2017 Guidelines For Use Of The Saint Patrick Church Gathering Space And Parish Hall for Funeral Receptions) If the reception is catered with workers/servers, the catering company must provide the Church Office with proof of insurance.

VI. Committals

- A. If immediately after Mass and in the Parish Cemetery, the Deacon or Priest will preside and MOCs will attend and participate as needed.
- B. If immediate or the same day at another location, the Deacon or Priest may be invited to preside and MOCs are encouraged to attend.
- C. If at a later date, particularly as Cremains are interred at the Parish Cemetery, a brief Committal service will normally be arranged after a 9:00 AM weekday Mass, with a Deacon or Priest presiding. MOCs present at the 9:00 AM Mass are encouraged to attend.
- D. Other times and locations will be considered as situations come about. The Church Office will assist with obtaining clergy to preside at the Florida National and Cape Canaveral National Cemeteries.