

III. Other Considerations

The terms Funeral Mass (used in the Order of Christian Funerals) or Mass for the Dead (used in the Sacramentary) are correct terminology. We do not use the term “Mass of Resurrection”.

The terms used for **funerals of children** are the same as those used for funeral rites for adults. We do not use the term “Mass of the Angels”, etc.

Rosary: When the rosary is used at the funeral home or other place of the wake, it should be designated as such. It is not to replace the Vigil Service

Personal Memories:

During the wake, but after the Vigil Service, is the time for a eulogy, video remembrances, sharing of memories and special songs, etc.

Committal – at this time the people may wish to place a flower or handful of earth on top of the coffin.

Cremation

When the body has been cremated the cremated remains are to be placed in a respectful container and, before Mass, set on a table or stand where the coffin ordinarily is placed. The pall is not to be used. Mass proceeds as usual. After the Prayer after Communion the Rite of Final Commendation takes place. The alternate form of the dismissal is used. Prayers chosen for Mass should be those that do not mention the honoring or burying of the body. The Rite of Committal takes place at the cemetery or columbarium as soon as possible after the funeral liturgy. The alternate form of the words of committal are used.

Office of Worship and Christian Initiation
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings
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A Catholic Funeral Lexicon

The following notes are offered to facilitate a common understanding and use of common terms among those associated with Catholic funeral practices (pastors, grief ministers, funeral ministers and musicians in parishes, and funeral home personnel).

The Order of Christian Funerals was effective June 1, 1970 in the Latin version and was mandated in the Dioceses of the United States in the vernacular on November 2, 1989.

The term “Order” infers many celebrations rather than one. The term funeral rites refers to all of these celebrations while the term funeral liturgy refers to either the Funeral Mass or to the Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass.

I. Principal rites:

A. Vigil for the Deceased – rite held between time of death and the Funeral Liturgy (or Committal if there is no funeral liturgy).

1) Vigil for the Deceased – It takes the form of a liturgy of the word or some part of the Office for the Dead (e.g. Evening Prayer or Morning Prayer) may be held in the home of the deceased, funeral home, chapel of rest or some other suitable place.

2) Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church – It takes one of the forms noted above in (A.1) but includes special adaptations for the reception of the body at the church.

B. Funeral Liturgy – May take one of the two forms listed below:

1) Funeral Mass, includes a reception of the body at church if this has not already happened. The Mass includes the Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist and the final commendation and farewell.

2) Funeral Liturgy without Mass – Same as above without the Liturgy of the Eucharist (that is, a Service of the Word).

C. Rite of Committal – is the concluding funeral rite, the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of its deceased member. It may be celebrated at the grave, tomb, crematorium or used for burial at sea. Two forms are listed below:

1) Rite of Committal – used when the final commendation is a part of the conclusion of the funeral liturgy.

2) Rite of Committal with Final Commendation – used when the final commendation is not part of the funeral liturgy or when there is no funeral liturgy.

*****The act of committal (lowering of the coffin) expresses the full significance of this rite and is not to be discouraged.**

In the case of a body donated to science the **Rite of Committal** may take place at the time of interment. When burial is delayed for other reasons, the rite may be repeated when the actual burial or interment takes place.

II. Related Rites and Prayers;

to help the pastor, minister and others pray with the family and close friends in the time soon after death.

A. Prayers after Death;

may be used when the minister/pastor first meets with the family or by the family gathered with the person at the deathbed when death occurs.

B. Gathering in the Presence of the Body;

may be used when the family first gathers around the body of the deceased (at the home, funeral home, chapel)

C. Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal;

when the family prepares to transfer the body to the church (or if no funeral liturgy) to the place of committal.

***** Native American Traditions** are very important. If you celebrate a funeral or vigil for a Native American person be sure to inquire about traditions they would like to follow and provide for these as well as you are able.