

# Taunton Vale Catholics



## Instructions for my funeral

***If we have died with Christ, then we shall live with Him too” (Romans 6: 8)***

***“In him the hope of blessed resurrection has dawned, that those saddened by the certainty of dying might be consoled by the promise of immortality to come. Indeed for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended, and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust, an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven” (Roman Liturgy).***

## **Introduction**

When a Catholic dies, it is the usual custom of the Catholic Church for them to be brought to their parish church and for a Requiem Mass to be offered up for them. This is the case even for those who during their lifetime rarely practiced their Catholic faith. Catholics believe that when a person dies, it is a priority to offer Mass, because it is the sacrifice of Christ and in the Mass the Church pleads to the Lord, asking him to forgive the sins and weaknesses of the dead person and to admit them into the communion of the saints (*Order of Christian Funerals 6*).

*Sometimes people think that the chief purpose of a funeral is to 'remember' or to 'celebrate the life' of the loved one who has died. Catholics do believe that we must thank God profoundly for the gift of having known and loved our departed. But the principle reason we offer the Mass is to ask the Lord to join our loved one with the Death of Christ so that they might also share his Resurrection.*

The best form of funeral for a Catholic is a Requiem Mass.

*Sometimes people think it is less distressing for the mourners or for non-Catholics that the funeral be a brief service at the cemetery or crematorium, especially if the loved one was not a regularly practising Catholic. Yet this not only deprives the person who has died of the spiritual assistance of the Mass, but it can also deprive the people and clergy of the Christian community, to which the person belonged, of an opportunity to pray for them, to thank God for their service, and to commend them to the Lord. Experience shows that the*

*Catholic Requiem liturgy, with its impressive symbols and beautiful prayers, can be a powerful source of consolation to the living, even to those of little or no faith.*

## **Choosing an undertaker**

Within the parish there are a number of undertakers. Some are independent family-run businesses while others are part of a much bigger group such as the co-op or Dignity funeral care. It is worth thinking in advance about which one you would like, perhaps considering recommendations, experience and cost.

All of the undertakers offer the option of arranging a funeral plan and paying for your funeral in advance.

## **Burial or cremation?**

The Church continues to prefer the practice of burying the bodies of the deceased, because this shows a greater esteem towards the deceased, but also allows cremation. If cremation is chosen, the ashes are treated by the church as representing the person's body and treated with great reverence. They should be buried in a suitable place and not separated. One option is to have them buried in the ashes memorial plot at St George's Church. Please ask us for more details if you would like to find out more about this option.

*When, for legitimate motives, cremation of the body has been chosen, the ashes of the faithful must be laid to rest in a sacred place, that is, in a cemetery or, in certain cases, in a church or an area, which has been set aside for this purpose, and so*

*dedicated by the competent ecclesial authority. From the earliest times, Christians have desired that the faithful departed become the objects of the Christian community's prayers and remembrance. Their tombs have become places of prayer, remembrance and reflection. The faithful departed remain part of the Church who believes "in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church"*

*The reservation of the ashes of the departed in a sacred place ensures that they are not excluded from the prayers and remembrance of their family or the Christian community. It prevents the faithful departed from being forgotten, or their remains from being shown a lack of respect, which eventuality is possible, most especially once the immediately subsequent generation has too passed away.*

*It is not permitted to scatter the ashes of the faithful departed in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way, nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry or other objects.*

*Pope Francis, 2 March 2016*

## **Vigil**

The church offers the option of a simple vigil service the night before the funeral, with the coffin being brought into church. The service itself is very short, but then allows the family as long as they want to pray and reflect afterwards.

## **Choosing readings**

A separate booklet is available giving the readings suggested by the church for funerals. You can have one or two readings from the first and second reading sections, a psalm and a Gospel reading.

## **Choosing hymns**

You are free to choose any hymns you like. Usually people have 2 hymns for a funeral service and 3 or 4 hymns for a Mass. Some popular choices are:

### **Traditional Hymns**

Abide with me  
All my hope on God is founded  
Be thou my vision  
Firmly I believe and truly  
For all the saints  
Guide me, O thou great redeemer  
I heard the voice of Jesus say  
O Jesus, I have promised  
Lead, kindly light  
Lord of all hopefulness  
Now the green blade riseth  
O God, our help in ages past  
Praise to the holiest in the height  
Praise we our God with joy  
Sing with all the saints in glory  
Soul of my Saviour  
Thine be the glory

## **Modern Hymns and Songs**

Be still and know I am with you  
Be not afraid  
How great thou art  
I am the bread of life  
Like a child rests  
Jesu, son of Mary  
O the love of my Lord  
On eagle's wings  
Unless a grain of wheat  
We walk by faith

## **Donations**

Many people choose to have a box, arranged by the funeral director, for people to leave donations for a charity at the end of the funeral service. In this way people can choose to remember you through their support for a charity that is particularly important to you. You might want to specify this charity here.

Some people choose to name the parish as the charity they would like to support with this collection, which is enormously appreciated. You might also want to consider leaving a legacy in your will to support the parish. This makes such a difference in helping the parish to help to continue to support the faith of future generations.

Parishioners wishing to make provision in their wills for the benefit of the parish may find the following wording helpful (this should not be considered legal advice):

**'I give free of all taxes the sum of £..... (or residue of my estate) to Clifton Diocese (a company limited by guarantee, reg. no. 10462076), a registered charity (no. 1170168) of St Ambrose, North Road, Leigh Woods, Bristol BS8 3PW, for the general charitable purposes of .....Catholic Parish and I declare that the receipt of the Diocesan Financial Administrator or other proper officer of Clifton Diocese shall be a good and sufficient discharge of my Executors. But if the said Parish has been closed or reorganised then for the general charitable purposes of such parish as the Bishop of the Diocese considers has taken the place of the said Parish'.**



## **My instructions**

Full legal/baptismal name

Usual name used by family and friends

Date and place of birth

Address

Postcode

Phone no.

Executor name and phone number

Relationship to me

I would like the following undertaker

I wish to be buried at

**or**, I wish to be cremated at

and I would like my ashes to be buried at

I would like my coffin to be received into church the night before the funeral.

I would like my funeral to take the form of

a Requiem Mass.

a funeral service at church without Mass.

a short committal at the crematorium with no service at church.

If possible, I would like the following readings from scripture to be read:

First reading

Psalm

Second reading (optional)

Gospel

If possible, I would like the following hymns to be sung:

hymn 1

hymn 2

hymn 3 (optional)

hymn 4 (optional)

I would like a collection to be taken at the end of the service  
for:

Signed

Date

After you have completed this form:

- return it to your Parish Priest. He will be happy to photocopy it and, with your permission, keep that copy in a secure file in the Parish Archive until the time it is needed. You may of course ask him to return it to you or remove it at any time;
- keep the original and put it among your papers so that those who want to find out your wishes and instructions at the time of your death will find it there;
- let your next-of-kin know that you have filled in this form and where it can be found; and
- let your next-of-kin know that should you become seriously ill or be admitted to a hospital or into care, you would like them to inform the priest so he can bring you the sacraments.