FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

2121 S. Rural Rd.
Tempe, Arizona 85282



Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

Revised July 2026

Our condolences to you and your loved ones. On behalf of the entire Our Lady of Mount Carmel community, we express our sympathy at this time of your loss. Please know that your parish family is here for you in your time of need, and it is our honor to assist you in the planning of a Catholic funeral for your loved one. Please utilize this guide to help plan a funeral at OLMC.

Abbreviations for Sources:
OCF: Order of Christian Funerals
CIC: Codex Iuris Canonici (Code of Canon Law)
CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church

PREPARATIONS BEFORE A FUNERAL

Burial vs Cremation?

The Church prefers that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites. "Although cremation is now permitted by the Church, it does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in those rites." (OCF 413.)

We understand that often due to financial considerations, cremation is chosen instead of casket burial, and thus cremation is now permitted by the Church to accommodate this. Cremation, however, is not permitted by the Church when chosen for reasons contrary to Catholic teaching (CIC 1176.3, CCC 2301).

Most funeral homes provide an option for using a temporary casket at the funeral liturgy, with cremation taking place following the funeral. If it is feasible for your family and the funeral home, this option would be the preferred option of the Church when choosing cremation.

The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the resurrection. Bearing this in mind, autopsies may be morally permitted for legal inquests or scientific research. The free (not for sale) gift of organs after death may also be permitted.

Choosing a Mortuary/Funeral Home and Cemetery

There are multiple mortuary/funeral home, and cemetery, options to choose from here in the Phoenix area. While you are welcome to select any of them, we recommend selecting Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery and Funeral Home in Mesa. As an organization that is directly part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, they are fully knowledgeable and well suited to provide care and support to you, your family, and your deceased loved one with full adherence to the norms of the Church.

Even if you choose cremation, a cemetery must still be chosen as a final resting place for your loved one. It is never permitted to scatter the ashes of one who has been cremated or to keep them at home. "The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, and the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." (OCF 417)

Scheduling a Funeral Liturgy

After selecting and contacting a Funeral Home, please contact the Parish Office here at OLMC to begin the funeral process at the church, and we will work with you to begin the funeral planning. Please note, we unfortunately cannot guarantee a date you may have in mind for the funeral will be able to be accommodated, due to the many events and services that occur every day in our church. After contacting the Parish Office, we will work to secure a funeral date for you, dependent on priest and church availability. Funerals here at OLMC typically only take place in the mornings of Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday.

Although the Funeral Liturgy is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church to which the deceased belonged, it is possible to choose any Catholic church for the Funeral Liturgy, provided the pastor of that church agrees and the pastor of the deceased has been informed (CIC 1177).

Arrangements for Flowers

Flowers, though not required, can add to the solemnity and beauty of the Funeral Rite and provide a way of offering a memorial for the deceased.

Flowers may be ordered ahead of time through the Mortuary or any local flower shop. If flowers are to be delivered to the church via a local flower shop, please request that they be delivered between 9:00-10:00am the morning of the funeral liturgy.

Flowers are often present at all three parts of the Funeral Rite (Vigil, Funeral, Committal), but may also only be present at the Funeral Liturgy if expedient. When present at all three parts, the mortuary often arranges and provides for their transportation, or if not, the family would be responsible. Please check with your mortuary funeral director for further information on the transportation of flowers.

After the completion of the Funeral Rite, you may do with the flowers as you wish. If you do not wish to leave flowers at the gravesite, keep them at home, or distribute them amongst your family, you may donate them to the church.

Military Honors and Military Cemeteries

If the deceased was a member of the United States Armed Forces and is eligible for military honors at the funeral and/or burial at a military cemetery, please contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs soon to complete arrangements. Please additionally let both your mortuary funeral director, and OLMC funeral coordinator know that your loved one is eligible for military honors and burial and what plans you have arranged with the VA.

The VA National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona is the local military cemetery in Phoenix, and has its own special regulations and burial schedules. It is recommended to consult www.cem.va.gov for specific details.

THE PARTS OF A CATHOLIC FUNERAL

Overview

The Catholic Funeral Rite is a three-part ritual, focused on praying for the deceased, and laying them to rest. The three parts are the Vigil, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of Committal.

We highly encourage you to follow this two day, three-part ritual plan that the Church over the centuries has formed, as it has been found to be very beneficial in overcoming the grief of loss, however if you elect, the Vigil may be omitted or the timeline of the ritual modified.

The Vigil for the Deceased

The Vigil for the Deceased is the first part of the Funeral Rite, and typically takes place the night prior to the funeral itself, but is optional. It is sometimes called a "Wake" or "Visitation". The Vigil often takes place at the Mortuary and may contain a rosary or scripture prayer service.

A Catholic member of the clergy, typically a Deacon from our parish, can lead the scripture prayer service if you wish to include it in the Vigil. Otherwise, if the scripture prayer service is not to be utilized, a family member may lead a rosary.

The Vigil service is the most appropriate time for a eulogy or sharing of stories and memorial videos. During the Vigil, the remains of the deceased are present, especially if an open casket is feasible.

About the Funeral Liturgy

The Funeral Liturgy, most often taking the form of a Funeral Mass, is celebrated in the morning in the church at the parish. It is the central liturgy, the primary component, of the Funeral Rite of the Catholic Church. Celebrating the Holy Mass during a funeral most perfectly expresses the communion between Christ and those who have died: death with Christ so we may have eternal life with Christ. The Holy Mass is the highest and most efficacious form of prayer we can offer for our deceased loved ones.

There are a few options within the Funeral Mass for you to select prior to the funeral taking place. This includes music and reading selections. Please see the Music and Reading worksheet for more information on these options.

General Guidelines for the Funeral Liturgy

At OLMC, a table can be set up in the entryway of the church if you wish to set up any mementos, photos, guest book, prayer cards, or booklets. Additionally, a tripod easel is available if you would like to display a large poster-sized image. If you would like either of these options set up for you, please inform your OLMC Funeral Coordinator.

If requested, printed programs for your loved one's funeral mass can be provided by the parish at no additional cost. If you would like this option, please inform your OLMC Funeral Coordinator.

Flower arrangements in vases or pots may be placed on the steps of the Sanctuary (the elevated platform containing the altar), but not in front of the Altar. Wreath or standing flower arrangements may be placed on the ground level in front of the Sanctuary. During the liturgical season of Lent (typically Feb-March), flowers arrangements on the steps of the sanctuary are allowed but must be limited and subdued, due to the penitential character of the season.

If your family has chosen cremation prior to the funeral taking place, the urn is placed on a small table at the bottom of the Sanctuary steps prior to the start of the Funeral Mass. You may have either a flower arrangement and/or a photo no larger than 8x10 present on the table with the urn. If you would like a rosary or crucifix to accompany the urn on the table, this is also permitted.

For a casket, the parish's funeral pall is placed over the casket at the entryway to the church. A cross or rosary may be placed atop the casket during the funeral Mass, but no other items may be placed on the casket during the Mass. Flowers or a flag may be placed atop the casket outside the church prior to, or following, the funeral Mass, but they are removed for the Mass itself.

Pallbearers should be selected by the family for funerals where a casket will be present, and optionally, honorary pallbearers may be named for when cremated remains are present. Six pallbearers should be selected to escort the casket.

Order of the Funeral Mass

At the beginning of the Funeral Mass, the priest will greet those present, and then sprinkle the casket or urn with Holy Water to bless it and recall the baptism of the deceased.
In the case of a casket, this takes place at the entryway to the church, with the immediate family gathered around the casket, and then processing down the aisle with the casket towards the altar. In the case of an urn, this takes place at the foot of the sanctuary steps in front of the altar, with everyone already in the pews.

After the priest says the opening prayer of the Mass, the First Reading is read. Following the First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm is sung by the musician. Following the Psalm, the Second Reading is read. These two readings and Psalm are chosen by you from the list of options further in this packet. Someone from your family or friends should be selected to read the two readings. Following the Second Reading, the Gospel passage is proclaimed by the Deacon. After the Gospel, the priest will preach his homily (sermon). When the priest completes his homily, he will return to his chair. Shortly after returning to his chair, the General Intercessions are then prayed by the Deacon.

After the General Intercessions are prayed, the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. Shortly after this, the Offertory occurs, when the bread and wine are brought forward to the altar. You may select some members of your family or friends (2-6 people) to be Gift Bearers to bring them forward, or you may elect to omit this participation and have the bread and wine already present at the altar. After the confection of the Eucharist, Holy Communion is then distributed by the priest to the Catholics in attendance. You do not need to find anyone to help with distribution of Holy Communion.
Non-Catholics are very welcome to participate and attend the Catholic Funeral Rites, however Holy Communion is reserved only for practicing Catholics in a state of grace.

After the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we reach the Concluding Rites of the Mass. The remains of the deceased are censed by the priest with incense, during the Final Commendation, then the final blessing and dismissal is given, and the priest leads the procession out of the church.

Throughout the Mass, music is provided by our parish musicians utilizing hymns selected by you from the list of options included in this packet.

The Committal

The Committal is the final act of the Funeral Liturgy, when we say our final goodbye to the deceased and lay them to rest. This part takes place at the cemetery at the gravesite or tomb, and typically takes place immediately following the Funeral Mass. It is comprised of a short prayer service is led by a priest or deacon and includes a blessing of the location where the casket or urn will be buried or interred.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Further Contacts for Funeral Arrangements

Our Lady of Mount Carmel – 2121 S. Rural Rd. Tempe, AZ 85282 480-967-8791

Pastor:	Fr. Robert Aliunzi –	pastor@olmctempe.com
Liturgy Coordinator:	Joseph Malzone –	liturgy@olmctempe.com
Music Coordinator:	Dan Ballinger –	dan@olmctempe.com

Funeral Donations

Normally, the mortuary will incorporate these donations to the church and those involved in funeral service into their contract. If you have any questions as to whether these fees have been included, please contact your mortuary for clarification. If not, cash or a check may be written to each of the following individual parties:

- Church $100.00 (suggested minimum donation)
    - Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Priest $100.00 (suggested minimum donation)
    - Fr. Robert Aliunzi *or* Fr. Paul Lokunume
- Deacon $75.00 (suggested minimum donation)
    - Dcn. Dave Knebelsberger *or* Dcn. Chito Zamora
- Musician $200.00
    - Jordan Webb *or other musician as specified*
- Sound Technician and Music Setup $75
    - Lucas Townsend
        - (Capacity for Livestreaming if Requested)

A family may request a waiver of the fees in the case of financial hardship. Please inquire with your OLMC Funeral Coordinator for more information.

Memorial Donations

Families often request donations to specific funds in memory of their deceased.
At Our Lady of Mount Carmel, we suggest the following:

Msgr. McCready Scholarship Fund

Monies donated to the Msgr. McCready scholarship fund are used to assist families in financial need to cover costs of tuition at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Renovation

Donations are accepted for specific memorials. Items such as new liturgical vestments, church appointments, statues, and other liturgical items. Donations can also be directed specifically towards building funds.

St. Vincent De Paul Society of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Donations made to St. Vincent De Paul Society enable the society to assist families in need with food, rental assistance, and other needs.

Options Worksheet

The last page of this guide contains the Funeral Options Worksheet, which must be filled out and returned to your Funeral Coordinator no later than 5 days prior to the scheduled funeral date. This worksheet includes your selections for Readings and Music, which are listed on the following pages.

AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Scripture Selections

You may have one or two members of your family or friends do the readings. The readers must be Catholic, and it is suggested that they be at least 13 years of age. The Deacon can do the readings if necessary. The priest or deacon will read the Gospel. Please select one reading from each of the four categories below, and denote it on your Funeral Options Worksheet:

1st Reading (Old Testament)-

- 2 Maccabees 12:43-46
- Wisdom 3:1-6, 9
- Wisdom 4:7-15
- Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9
- Lamentations 3:17-26
- Daniel 12:1-3

Responsorial Psalm (Sung by Musician)-

- Psalm 18
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 25
- Psalm 33
- Psalm 63
- Psalm 103

2nd Reading (New Testament)-

- Romans 5:5-11
- Romans 6:3-4, 8-9
- Romans 8:14-23
- Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39
- Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12
- 2 Corinthians 4:14- 5:1
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
- 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Gospel (Proclaimed by Deacon)-

- Mathew 11:25-30
- Luke 12:35-40
- Luke 23:33, 39-43
- John 5:24-29
- John 6:37-40
- John 6:51-58
- John 12:23-28
- John 14:1-6

Music Selections

Please select three Hymns from either the "Contemporary Hymns" or "Traditional Hymns" section, *plus* one Hymn from the "Communion Hymns" section below, and denote it on your Funeral Options Worksheet:

Contemporary Hymns

(These are appropriate for Entrance, Preparation of Gifts and Closing)

- Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)
- Jesus, My Everything
- As It is In Heaven
- Lead Me Home
- Awake, O Sleeper
- Lead Me To The Cross
- Be Still And Know That He Is God
- Let It Be Done
- Behold The Lamb of God
- Lord I Need You
- Better Is One Day
- My Heart Belongs To You
- Blessed Be The Name
- My Life Is In Your Hands
- Blessings
- My Savior's Love
- Christ Is Risen - Thompson
- None But Jesus
- Christ Is Risen
- Nothing But The Blood
- Come To Jesus - Blakesley
- On Our Side
- Draw Me Close
- Only In God
- Everlasting God
- Open My Eyes
- He Is Exalted
- Our God Is Here
- Healer
- Our God Reigns
- Hear Us From Heaven
- Prayers Of Abandonment
- Heart Of Worship
- Rain Down
- Here I Am - Thomson
- Reason To Live
- His Glory Appears
- Rescue
- Holy Is His Name
- Revive Us, 0 God
- How Great Is Our God
- Shout To The Lord
- Hungry
- Sometimes By Step
- I Am
- Soon - Hillsong
- I Can Only Imagine
- Spirit of God
- I Need You
- That Where I Am
- I See The Lord
- The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want
- I Surrender
- Unchanging
- I Will Choose Christ
- We Are Called To Serve
- I Will Rise
- You Alone Are All I Need - Booth/Houghton
- Jesus Messiah
- You Will Draw Water
- Jesus, Lover Of My Soul
- You Grace Is Enough
- Your Presence is Heaven To Me – Houghton

Traditional Hymns

(These are appropriate for Entrance, Preparation of Gifts and Closing)

- Amazing Grace - Traditional
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring
- Be Not Afraid
- Lord Let Your Mercy Be Upon Us
- Be Thou My Vision
- Make Me A Channel
- Blest Are They
- Happy Day
- Breastplate of St. Patrick
- On Eagle's Wings
- Christ Be Beside Me
- On That Holy Mountain
- Gentle Woman
- Our Souls Long for You, Lord
- Here I Am, Lord
- Prayer of St. Francis
- His Eye Is On The Sparrow
- Savior King
- How Can I Keep From Singing
- Soon And Very Soon
- How Deep The Father's Love
- The King Of Love My Shepherd Is
- How Great Thou Art
- You Are Mine
- I Surrender All

Communion Hymns

- Bread Of Life
- Communion - Powell
- Do This In Memory of Me - Muglia
- Give Me Jesus
- Holy, Holy, Holy How Beautiful
- I Am The Bread Of Life - Talbot
- I Am The Bread Of Life - Toolan
- I Need A Savior
- Make Us A Eucharistic People
- No Greater Love
- Pan De Vida
- Sacred Heart Song
- Sacred Silence
- Strength For The Journey
- This Is Jesus
- We Are One Body

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FUNERAL OPTIONS WORKSHEET

MUST BE RETURNED 5 DAYS PRIOR TO THE FUNERAL

Funeral Mass of:

Day _____ Date _____ Time _____

1st Reading: (Choose one reading from Old Testament options)

Selection: _____

Reader's Name: _____

Responsorial Psalm: (Choose one reading from Psalm options)

Selection: _____

2nd Reading: (Choose one reading from New Testament options)

Selection: _____

Reader's Name: _____

Gospel Reading: (Choose one reading from Gospel options)

Selection: _____

Gift Bearers for Bread and Wine [This is an option that may be omitted]

Name 1: _____ Name 2: _____

(Optional)- Additional Names: _____

Entrance Hymn: _____

Offertory (Preparation of Gifts) Hymn: _____

Communion Hymn: _____

Closing Hymn: _____

RETURN THIS WORKSHEET TO YOUR FUNERAL COORDINATOR
VIA EMAIL OR DROPPING IT OFF AT THE PARISH OFFICE.