



Funeral Planning Guide

St. Thomas Apostle, 530 Elizabeth, Ann Arbor, MI

sta2.org | 734.761.8606

O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me!
Let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.

Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy.

—Psalm 43

We are so sorry for your loss.

The pastoral staff at St. Thomas the Apostle would like to express our sincere sympathy to you.

From the moment of a person's death to the moment of burial, the church enters into one continuous time of prayer: "At the death of a Christian, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life" (Order of Christian Funerals). So we invite you to enter wholeheartedly into this time of prayer. Praying for the dead is an ancient practice grounded in the Jewish roots of the Christian faith; we pray for the departed to receive the fullness of Divine Mercy and thus find an eternal home in heaven with God.

We hope that the services that you are arranging at St. Thomas will be comforting and beautiful. We will do our best to make this happen. Please use this booklet and the worksheets provided to assist you with the planning process. You may bring them with you to any scheduled meetings, but if you are not able to work through everything on your own, either because of limited time or limited energy, then we will simply get it done together when we meet.

Our Catholic faith teaches us to mourn with great hope because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, grieving is always a difficult and unique human experience. We cannot fully understand your loss, but please know that you are not alone.

May God bless you and give you peace -

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WORKING TOGETHER

The funeral coordinator will be available to you until the time of your service(s). Reach out whenever you need to.

CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITES

We offer funeral Masses, burial services, vigils, memorials, and luncheons.

STIPENDS

The charges for a funeral at St. Thomas simply cover honorariums; there is no charge for use of the church.

GRIEF AND MOURNING

Our church's age-old traditions teach us about death and what lies beyond the grave. These solid doctrines help us to process loss and find hope God's mercy.

Working together

If you haven't already done so, please arrange a meeting with the funeral coordinator, Emily Knickelbein, to plan for service(s).

If the priest who will preside is not able to join that meeting, then Emily will help you work with our parish administrator to arrange another meeting time with him, if possible, so that you can share information to help him learn more about the deceased and talk about your plans. Of course, this can also be an opportunity for you to receive comfort and spiritual care.

If you do not have an obituary to share with our staff, please take time to fill out the information on Worksheet Six, so that we can learn about the person who has passed and about your relationship.

Contacts for St. Thomas Clergy & Staff

Fr. William (Bill) Ashbaugh, pastor: pastor@sta2.org

Fr. Gerald Gawronski, parochial vicar: frgerald@sta2.org

Emily Knickelbein, funeral coordinator: 734.761.8606 X 1008 (forwards to cell);
eknickelbein@sta2.org

Cecilia Merigian, Parish Administrator: 734.761.8606 X 2800; cmerigian@sta2.org

Jeanne Marie Gerig, Music Director: 734.761.8606 X 2253; jmgerig@sta2.org

Church office: 734.761.8606; frontdesk@sta2.org

Catholic Funeral Rites



The Catholic "Order of Christian Funerals" offers three ways to honor and pray for those who have died, showing reverence for the body while interceding for the soul. You may not choose to have all of these services, but they each provide an important and special opportunity to pray and mourn together.

PRAYER VIGIL

A prayer vigil takes place during visitation, when people gather to pay their last respects to the deceased. A family member, a friend, or a minister can offer prayers, readings from Scripture, and/or a reflection. To arrange a vigil, fill out the top of Worksheet One.

FUNERAL MASS

During a funeral Mass, the church formally commends the deceased to God, offering the Lord's own Eucharistic Sacrifice (Communion) on his or her behalf. The beautiful words and rituals of the liturgy recall the person's baptism, which made him or her a child of God and opened the doors of heaven.

When you are planning a funeral Mass, you will select readings, songs, intercessory prayers, and also decide if you would like family and friends to participate in the service as readers, pallbearers, and in other capacities. Use Worksheets One and Two to organize your plan.

RITE OF COMMITAL (BURIAL SERVICE)

In the committal rite, mourners accompany the person's mortal remains to the gravesite. A priest or deacon blesses the grave and offers final prayers in hopeful anticipation of the bodily resurrection that Jesus experienced and promised to all who follow him. Fill out Worksheet One to request a stand-alone burial.

Stipends

The cost for a funeral Mass (with or without a burial following) is \$600. This covers a \$25 administrative fee plus honorariums to the following people:

- Priest \$200
- Organist/pianist \$200
- Cantor \$150
- Sacristan \$25

If you are not using St. Thomas clergy or musicians, adjust the total accordingly; if you have any guest clergy concelebrating with the priest from St. Thomas, please stipend them personally.

The honorarium for a stand-alone graveside service or vigil service off-site is \$100.

Note that payment is expected by the day of the service(s). Make all checks payable to St. Thomas Apostle, with the type of service and the name of the deceased in the memo line; e.g. Funeral Mass, John Smith. If St. Thomas is providing a luncheon, please add \$5/person to the same check and put "+ luncheon" in the memo line, too.

Please do not give personal checks to our employees and volunteers. If you want to make a donation above and beyond the usual fees, talk to the funeral coordinator for suggestions (e.g. music ministry, bereavement resources, special projects at the church, etc.).

Grief and Mourning

Simply stated, grief is the reaction to death, the emotions you may have at any given time: sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, guilt, and shock. The grief reaction is very different for everyone. No two people process loss in the same way. Furthermore, despite what you may have been told, there are no stepwise stages to grief, meaning there is no chronological, sequential path to “get through” in order to be all done with grieving. In fact, grief typically takes its course in waves or cycles, although the overall trajectory over time should be towards diminishing intensity and a sense of resolution.

Mourning, on the other hand, is the outward expression of internal grief, your proactive response. Mourning is not passive; rather it consists of the many ways you can express and work through grief. Mourning moves healing forward.

Grief Support

St. Thomas Church will be holding you in prayer for the next year and we will remember your loved one again when we celebrate All Souls' Day on November 2. Local parishes, hospitals, hospices, and funeral homes also offer resources and groups to help you through the grieving process.

Contact Emily Knickelbein, Liturgy Coordinator assistant, to explore options currently available in our area: 734.761.8606 X 1008; eknickelbein@sta2.org.

Notes

Notes



We give them back to you, dear Lord,
who gave them to us.
Yet as you did not lose them in the giving,
so we have not lost them in the returning.

Not as the world gives do you give, O Lover of Souls.
What you have given, you have not taken away,
because what is yours is ours also, if we are yours.

Life is eternal,
and love is immortal,
and death is only a horizon,
and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.

Lift us up, strong Son of God,
that we may see further;
cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly;
draw us closer to yourself,
so that we may know ourselves
to be nearer to our loved ones, who are now with you.

And while you prepare a place for them,
prepare us also for that happy place,
that where they are and where you are,
we may be also for evermore.

Composed by William Penn (1644-1718)
Popularized by Fr. Bede Jarrett, O.P.

