

Funeral Rites

The Vigil (Wake)

During the Vigil for the deceased, commonly known as the wake, the wake service will be held. This is the beginning rite of the funeral. The celebration of the wake service is the time for the Christian community to offer both prayer and consolation to the family of the one who has died. The wake service is usually led by a priest or deacon. The priest or deacon will gather everyone together in prayer and then share a reading(s) from Scripture. They will then offer a brief homily on the reading(s) and prayers for the one who has died and for all those who mourn their loss. Everyone will then pray the Our Father together and the priest will offer a concluding prayer and a blessing.

The Mass of Christian Burial

The Mass of Christian Burial is the primary celebration of the funeral rites. This Mass celebrates our belief, as Christians, that death is a passage to a new life and, ultimately, to resurrection and eternal union with God. The resurrection is the theme that is reflected in the readings, the hymns and prayers.

As an expression of our faith in Jesus Christ everyone in attendance is encouraged to actively participate in this Mass. The bereavement ministers will help the family select the readings, hymns and prayers that are appropriate for the funeral Mass. Family members or friends of the deceased can serve as pall bearers, place the pall on the casket and present the gifts during the Mass.

The Rite of Committal

The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the place of burial or interment. In the committal of the body to its place of rest, we express our hope that the deceased will experience the glory of the resurrection. The committal must be celebrated immediately following the funeral unless a good pastoral reason dictates otherwise such as travel to a distant cemetery. The Church directs that the cremated remains of the deceased must be interred in a consecrated burial site.