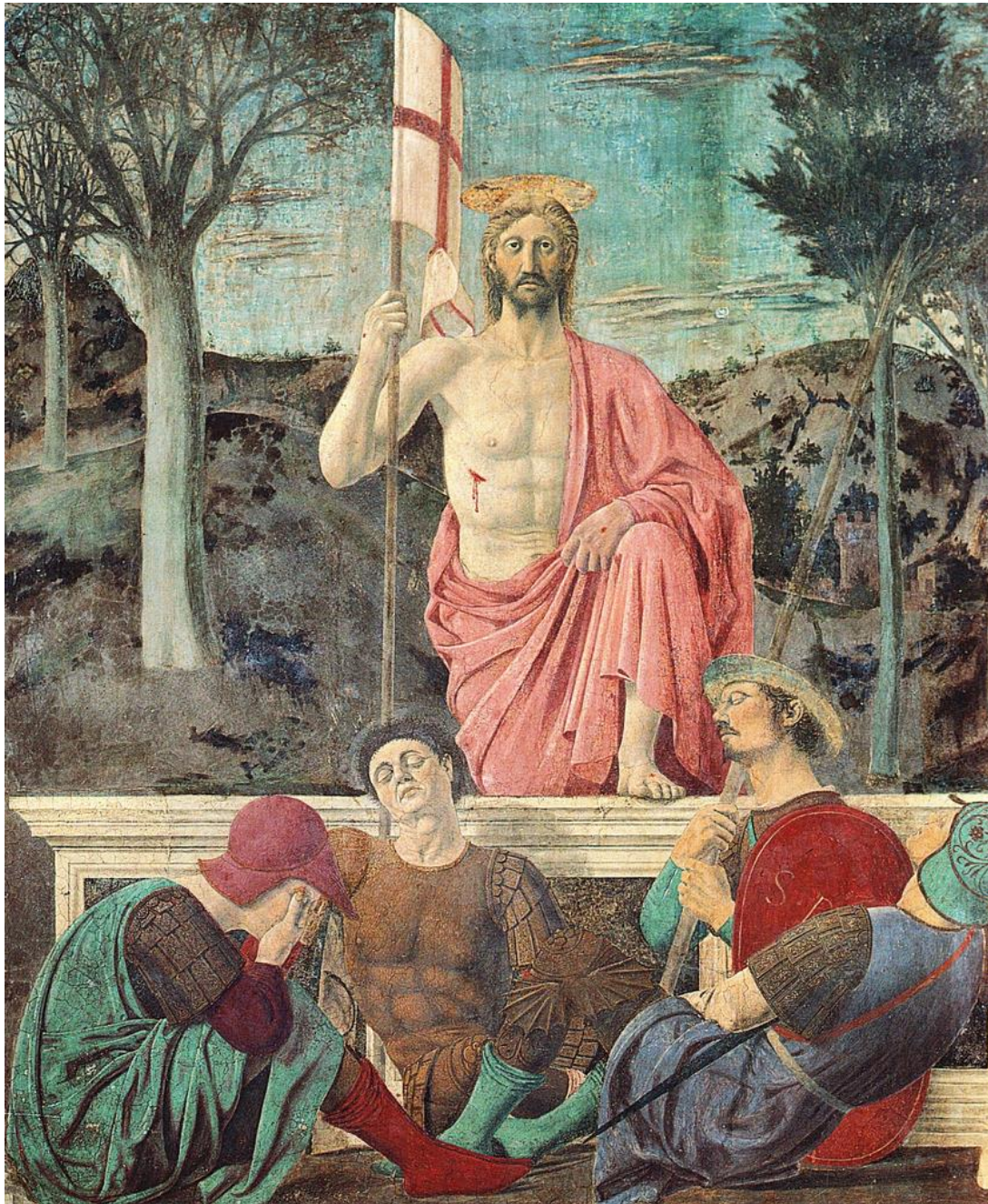


FUNERALS

St Mary Immaculate, Warwick

St Charles Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

When someone we love dies, there are many things to arrange, and the most important is the person's funeral.



A Christian funeral is fundamentally a celebration of the life of Jesus Christ, his Resurrection, and our prayers for the deceased. We pray that their sins may be forgiven as we hand them back to their Creator and that they may share in Christ's Resurrection. The focus is not on their past but on their future with the Lord.

For Catholics, a Requiem Mass is the best way of showing our continued love for the deceased. Other forms of service are possible (in church or at the crematorium) but nothing compares with the celebration of Mass. The length of the service will depend on the number of readings, hymns, or the length of time someone speaks for in remembrance of the deceased.

What to do

The first step is to speak to the Funeral Directors. Tell them that the deceased person is a Catholic and that you wish to arrange the Requiem Mass. They will then contact a priest and fix a time and day. The Funeral Directors deal with all the costs.

Burial or Cremation?

Burial has always been the tradition of the Church because it expresses more fully the belief in the Resurrection of the Body. However, cremation is also now permitted

It is a common Catholic practice that the body comes into church the evening before the funeral. If you wish this to happen, you need to tell the Funeral Directors.

Order of Service

The texts of the Requiem Mass are laid down in the Roman Missal. There are some choices which you may make: the readings and the hymns (if desired).

You may wish to have an Order of Service printed for the funeral. The Funeral Directors can do this, but you will need to talk to by the priest first who will be happy to guide and advise you.

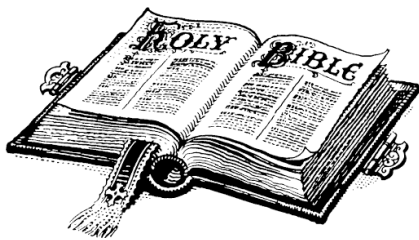


A Christian funeral is not a Memorial Service so the wording on the front of the Order of Service should normally be “Requiem Mass for the Repose of the Soul of...”

Phrases such as “a Celebration of the Life of ...” or “Thanksgiving for the Life of...” are common nowadays but don’t really reflect Christian beliefs about death and resurrection. Our principal purpose at a Requiem is to focus on the Person of Jesus and to pray for the deceased.

Readings

The priest can advise you in the choice of readings for the Mass. Only Scriptural readings are permitted. If family members or friends wish to read during the Mass this can be discussed when meeting the priest beforehand so that he can ensure that they know what to do.



The General Instruction on the Roman Missal states that, “At the Funeral Mass there should, as a rule, be a short homily, but never a eulogy of any kind.” However, there is provision for one person to make a brief statement about the deceased before Mass begins or at the end of Mass. This should last no more than a couple of minutes, and the text needs to be shown to the priest before the funeral.

The priest will preach during the Requiem Mass, and he may make some brief remarks about the life of the person. However, the main purpose of the homily is to preach the Gospel and to instil in us hope in the Resurrection.

Music

Only sacred music may be used in church, recorded music is not permitted. You may wish to have hymns during the Mass, but there is no obligation to do so. If you think that there will not be a good participation by the congregation it is better not to have hymns. Your choice of hymns can be discussed with the priest when you meet. Whether or not you have any hymns, it can be arranged for an organist to play.



Symbols used in a Requiem Mass

Purple vestments, which symbolise penance, are usually worn.

The more traditional black is also permitted, a symbol of grief.

White is sometimes worn for funerals of children or at Christmas & Easter

The coffin is sprinkled with holy water as a reminder of Baptism, and the Paschal Candle also stands nearby as a symbol of the Resurrection.

The coffin will usually be covered with a pall. It will have a crucifix and a Book of the Gospels or Bible on top.

Incense is used as a sign of our prayers rising up to heaven and to dignify the remains of the deceased.

A flower arrangement & picture of the deceased may stand nearby, but other items should not be included as they would distract from the Christian symbols and our focus on the Lord



Burial

After the Mass the coffin is taken to the cemetery (or crematorium). There is then a brief service of committal.

Masses for the Dead

Our faith tells us that our relationship with someone who has died is not at an end and we can continue to help them by our prayers and sacrifices.

The best thing we can do is ensure that Masses are said for our loved ones who have died. Masses can be arranged through the parish office.

