

Scheduling a Funeral or Memorial Service

To schedule a funeral or memorial service at St. Thomas More, upon the death of your family member or friend, you or a representative of the funeral home should call the parish offices (404-378-4588) and ask to speak with the priest on duty. The priest will help you find a date and time that suits you and your family as well as the priest and other parish staff.

Funerals and memorial services are **normally scheduled at 10:00 am Monday through Thursday**. If these times do not suit you, speak with the priest about available options.

Planning the Service

At least two days before the funeral Mass or memorial service, the priest or the parish's Director of Worship will schedule a meeting with you and/or other family members to plan the service, including whether to have a funeral Mass or a memorial service, Scripture readings, and music selections. See "Funeral Mass or Memorial Service," "Music," and Scripture Readings" below.

Funeral Mass or Memorial Service?

You may choose to remember the deceased in a funeral Mass, including a Communion service, or in a memorial service. The memorial service would include most of the same Scripture readings, music, prayers, and blessings as the funeral Mass, but it would not include a Communion service.

We suggest that a memorial service (without Communion) would be more appropriate if many family members and friends who are expected to be present are not Roman Catholic. These persons may find a Catholic Mass unfamiliar, or they might find it difficult to participate fully in our prayer. In such a case, it is better to plan a memorial service from which no one feels excluded.

Cremation?

You have the option to present either the body of the deceased or the cremains of the deceased at the funeral Mass or service. If you choose to present cremains, we ask that the cremation be done with due regard and respect for the Catholic Church's firm belief in the resurrection of the body "on the last day," and with the firm intention of properly and reverently disposing of the cremains as soon as possible after the funeral or memorial service.

Visitation

If you desire, you may schedule a one-hour "visitation" in the church immediately before the start of the funeral Mass or memorial service. This is an opportunity for the family to gather and visit in the church before the service begins. The parish "family room," which is adjacent to the church, may also be used for this purpose.

Reception After the Funeral Mass or Service

Saint Thomas Catholic Church Funeral Guidelines 2016

Depending on their availability, you may wish to use parish facilities for a modest reception immediately after the Mass or service. If you are interested, ask the priest or Director of Worship to reserve these rooms for your use. There is a fee for the use of these rooms. See below.

Scripture Readings

You may choose particular readings from Scripture for use during the funeral Mass or memorial service. Readings from non-Scriptural, secular sources are not permitted during the Mass or service. The priest or Director of Worship will assist you with your choices during the planning meeting, if you wish. A list of suggested Scripture readings is attached for your use.

You may wish to have a family member or friend read the Scriptures you choose during the Mass or service. The priest or Director of Worship will help you select capable readers.

Music

Music is an integral part of the funeral Mass or memorial service. It is meant to should console and uplift the participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in our share in that victory. You may choose the particular liturgical music for the funeral or service. However, because a funeral Mass or memorial service is an act of worship, only sacred music is appropriate. This excludes the use of popular music, show tunes, and patriotic music. The priest or Director of Worship will assist you with your choices during the planning meeting, if you wish.

The Director of Worship will arrange for an organist/pianist and a cantor to provide musical accompaniment and to lead the singing. In limited circumstances and with the permission of the priest or Director of Worship, there may be opportunities for family members and friends to participate in providing service music.

Other Ministers

You may also ask family or friends to offer intercessory prayers after the homily, and, in the case of a funeral Mass, to serve as gift bearers in the procession of the gifts of bread and wine to the altar and as Eucharistic Ministers during the Communion rite. The priest or Director of Worship will help you select capable ministers for these tasks.

Flowers

You may arrange for flowers to be delivered to the church at your expense. These should be delivered to the church at least one hour before the scheduled start of the Mass or service. Placement of the flowers in the church will be at the direction of the Director of Worship. Flowers should not be placed on or in front of the altar. You or a representative of the funeral home should remove the flowers from the church after the end of the mass or service.

Worship Aid/Program

The Director of Worship will create a simple printed worship aid for use by family, friends, and other guests during the Mass or service. This worship aid normally includes citations for the Scripture

Saint Thomas Catholic Church Funeral Guidelines 2016

readings, lyrics for the music you selected, the names of persons assisting with the service, and a photo of the deceased (if you desire).

Words of Remembrance

You may wish to have a family member or friend offer “words of remembrance” in memory of the deceased. This sometimes is done at the funeral home during the wake service or afterward at a reception. However, these words may also be offered at the church at the very beginning of the funeral Mass or memorial service. If you choose this latter option, you should choose no more than two persons to offer words, and the total time devoted to these words of remembrance should not exceed 15 minutes. We strongly suggest that persons who offer words of remembrance should write them out in advance.

Parking

St. Thomas More has parking available on site. Limited parking is also available on the street in front of the church.

Fees

There is no fee for the use of the Church for a Funeral or a Memorial Service. However, we encourage the family of the deceased to make a donation to the church to cover the costs of building upkeep and maintenance, utilities, and administrative staff support. We suggest a donation in the amount of **\$250.00**. Make a check payable to **St Thomas More Church**.

There is no additional fee paid to any St. Thomas More priest who presides at the funeral mass or memorial service.

We ask that the family pay **\$300.00** to cover the cost of the organist/pianist and cantor. If you require additional musicians or singers, an additional fee will be charged to cover this cost. This is best given in cash.

If you want altar servers to assist at the Mass or service, we ask a payment of **\$20 per server**. This is best given in cash.

If you want to use parish facilities for a modest reception after the Mass or service, we ask a fee of **\$500.00**. This fee will cover the costs associated with the reception, including utilities and clean-up. It does **not** include food or beverages. Make a separate check payable to St. Thomas More Church.

Memorial gifts in the name of the deceased may also be directed to the Parish. Named gift opportunities are available. The priest or Director of Music can assist with this.