

Scheduling a Funeral Mass or Memorial Service

To schedule a funeral Mass or memorial service at St. Thomas More Parish, the family or funeral home should call the parish office (404-378-4588). The parish's Director of Worship, Joe Messina, will work with you to select a date and time for the service and arrange a meeting for the family with the priest. Funerals and memorial services are normally scheduled on weekdays at 10:00am, though other times may be available.

Funeral Mass or Memorial Service

You may choose to remember the deceased in a funeral Mass or in a memorial service. The memorial service would include most of the same Scripture readings, music, prayers and blessings as the Mass, but would not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the distribution of Communion. We recommend a memorial service (without Communion) when many or most of the expected attendees will not be Roman Catholic. In such situations, the Catholic Mass may be unfamiliar and people may find it difficult to participate fully in the prayer. In this case it can be better to plan a memorial service from which no one feels excluded.

Planning the Service

The family will meet with the priest who will preside and the Director of Worship to plan various elements of the service including readings, music, words of remembrance, and who will participate in the service

- **Scripture Readings:** You may choose the readings from Scripture for the service. The Director of Worship and the priest will assist you with the selection of appropriate readings. Readings should be selected that speak to the life of the person whom we are commending to God. Readings from sources other than Scripture are not permitted.
- **Music:** Music is an integral part of the funeral Mass or memorial service. It is meant to console and uplift the participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and our sharing in that. The Director of Worship and priest will assist in choosing music for the service. A funeral Mass or memorial service is an act of worship, so only sacred liturgical music is appropriate. 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 music.
- **Words of Remembrance:** You may wish to have a family member or friend offer "words of remembrance" in memory of the deceased. This is sometimes done at the funeral home during the wake service or afterward at the reception, or these words may be offered in the church at the beginning of the funeral Mass or memorial service.

Having words of remembrance during the Mass should be discussed with the Director of Worship and the priest during the planning meeting. The remembrance should be written out and limited to about five minutes by one person.

- **Participants/Ministers:** You may also ask family or friends to proclaim some of the readings, 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 Director of Worship or the priest will help you select capable ministers for these tasks.

Worship Aid/Program

The Director of Worship will create a simple worship aid for use by those attending the service. This aid usually includes citations for the Scripture readings, lyrics for the music, the names of those assisting during the service, and a photo of the deceased and brief obituary if you desire.

Cremation

You have the option to present the body or cremains of the deceased at the funeral Mass or memorial 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 inurnment as soon as possible after the funeral Mass or memorial service.

Burial/Inurnment

You may discuss with the priest and Director of Worship the possibility of a graveside service for burial or inurnment immediately after the funeral Mass or memorial service or at a later time.

Visitation

You may schedule a one-hour visitation in the church immediately before the start of the funeral or memorial service. This is an opportunity for the family and friends to gather and visit before the Mass or service begins. The parish "Family Room" is also available for this purpose and is adjacent to the church.

Reception after the Funeral Mass or Memorial Service

You may wish to use the parish facilities for a modest reception after the Mass or service, depending on their availability. If you are interested in this, please discuss the availability and fee of these rooms with the Director of Worship.

Flowers

You may wish to have flowers delivered to the church at your expense. These flower arrangements must be delivered to the church one hour prior to the scheduled start of the service. Placement of the flowers in the church will be at the direction of the Director of Worship. You or the funeral home should plan to remove the flowers following the conclusion of the Mass or service.

Parking

St. Thomas More Parish has parking available on site. Limited parking is available on the street in front of the church, as well.

Fees

There is no fee for the use of the church for a funeral Mass or memorial service. However, we encourage the family of the deceased to make a donation to the church to help cover the costs of building upkeep, maintenance, utilities, and administrative support staff. We suggest a donation of \$250.00 by cash or check made out to St. Thomas More Church.

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

We ask the family to pay \$300.00 to cover the cost of the organist/pianist and the cantor. If you require additional musicians or singers, an additional fee will be applied to cover the cost.

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