

Celebrating a Catholic Funeral

St Pius X, Alderley Edge
St Benedict's, Handforth,
Sacred Heart & St Teresa's, Wilmslow
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May God bless you at this time of grief and give you peace.

Jesus says: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Let us pray: Lord God we commend into your hands our brother/sister. Welcome him/her into eternal life where there will be no sorrow, but the fullness of peace and joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

What is a Catholic funeral?

A Catholic requiem Mass in Church lasts about 40-50 minutes.

The Purpose of a Catholic funeral

It is common in our culture for a funeral to be mainly about a celebration of life for the deceased. The Catholic funeral is more profound than this. The Catholic funeral lays the greater emphasis on giving thanks to God for the life of the deceased, praying for them as we commend the deceased into the arms of a God of compassion, and praying for one another that we may know peace and consolation at this time of grief.

It is appropriate to use only religious hymns and sacred music in the Church. We do not have a license to use secular music. At the crematorium there is wider choice of music available, but there are many beautiful Christian songs to choose from sung by the likes of Aled Jones, Katherine Jenkins, and Russell Watson.

The Catholic funeral is calm and dignified. The prayers and Bible readings powerfully speak for themselves. Through the prayers of the funeral we pray that you will receive and know the consolation of faith.

Words of Remembrance

You may wish that someone will share some words of remembrance in honour of the deceased near the beginning of the funeral. If this is chosen, it should be no more than five minutes in total. It is nearly always helpful to have it written or typed out on one side of A4. Long eulogies do not have a place in the Catholic funeral. However, it is entirely appropriate for stories about the deceased to be shared at the reception after the funeral.

Hymns

If the funeral is in Church, it is often appropriate to sing some hymns and listen to instrumental organ music. Please consider whether people are likely to know and join in by singing the hymns you may choose. We can book an organist for you.

Examples of popular hymns for a funeral in Church:

Abide with me, Amazing Grace, As I kneel before you, Be still for the presence of the Lord, Be thou my vision, Do not be afraid, Hail Queen of Heaven, Here I am Lord, How great thou art, I watch the sunrise, Lord of all hopefulness, Make me a channel of your peace, O Bread of Heaven, The Day thou gavest, The Lord's my shepherd, This is my body.

Order of Service for a Requiem Mass (45 minutes approx.)

- Entrance procession to instrumental organ music
- Introduction and Welcome
- ***Optional 'Words of Remembrance' (5 minutes maximum)***
- ***Optional opening hymn***
- Opening Prayer
- First Reading
- Psalm
- Gospel Reading – read by the priest
- Homily – a short sermon given by the celebrant
- Intercessions – The response is: Hear our prayer
- ***Hymn or instrumental organ music at the preparation of the gifts***
- Liturgy of the Eucharist & Holy Communion
- ***A hymn or instrumental organ music at Communion***
- Prayer after Communion
- Final Commendation
- ***Recessional hymn or instrumental organ music***

You might have someone you would like to read the First Reading and the Psalm, otherwise we can find a member of the Church congregation to read.

Funeral Readings 2025-2026

First Readings – page 1 to 2

Psalms – page 3 to 4

Gospel readings – page 5 and 6

First Readings (please choose one. You can ask someone to read this, otherwise we can ask a parishioner)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-9)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

The Word of the Lord R\: Thanks be to God

A reading from the book of Revelation 14:13

I, John, heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on.' Blessed indeed,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours, for their good deeds go with them.

The Word of the Lord R\: Thanks be to God

A reading from the prophet Daniel (12:1-3)

In those days: I, Daniel, was mourning and heard the voice of the Lord:

'At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as there has never been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time, your own people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the Book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

The Word of the Lord R\: Thanks be to God

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (8:31-35.37-39)

Brothers and Sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord R\; Thanks be to God

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by the word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Word of the Lord R\; Thanks be to God

A reading from the first letter of St John (3:1-2)

Beloved: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

The Word of the Lord R\; Thanks be to God

Responsorial psalms (please choose one. You can ask a person to read this, otherwise we can ask a parishioner)

Psalm 23 (22) Response: The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Near restful waters he leads me; he revives my soul.

He guides me along the right path, for the sake of his name.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

You have prepared a table before me in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

In the LORD's own house shall I dwell for length of days unending.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Psalm 27 (26) Response: *The LORD is my light and my salvation.*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; whom should I dread?

The LORD is my light and my salvation.

There is one thing I ask of the LORD, only this do I seek:

to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,

to gaze on the beauty of the LORD, to enquire at his temple.

The LORD is my light and my salvation.

O LORD, hear my voice when I call; have mercy and answer me.

It is your face, O LORD, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

The LORD is my light and my salvation.

I believe I shall see the LORD'S goodness in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD; be strong; be stout-hearted, and wait for the LORD!

The LORD is my light and my salvation.

Psalm 103 (102) Response: The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

He will not always find fault; nor persist in his anger for ever.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

As a father has compassion on his children,

the LORD's compassion is on those who fear him.

For he knows of what we are made; he remembers that we are dust.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

Man, his days are like grass; he flowers like the flower of the field.

The wind blows, and it is no more, and its place never sees it again.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

But the mercy of the LORD is everlasting upon those who hold him in fear,

upon children's children his justice, for those who keep his covenant.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious.

Psalm 122 (121)

Response: I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'

And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord

as it is decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

There were set the thrones for judgement, the thrones of the House of David.

I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

For the peace of Jerusalem pray, May they prosper, those who love you.'

May peace abide in your walls, and security be in your towers.

I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

For the sake of my family and friends, let me say, 'Peace upon you.'

For the sake of the house of the LORD, our God, I will seek good things for you.

I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

Gospel Readings (please choose one which is read by the priest or deacon)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 5:1-12)

At that time: Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 11:25-30)

At that time Jesus declared, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 23:33, 39-43)

When the soldiers came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. One of the criminals who were hanged there railed at Jesus, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And he said to him, 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:37-40

At that time: Jesus said to the crowd, 'All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (John 11:21-27)

At that time: Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (John 14:1-6)

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

The Gospel of the Lord. R:\ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ