

## Parish of St Ives and Papworth

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I, and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we still are. Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way you always used to. Put no difference into your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me. Let my name be the household name it always was. Let it be spoken without effort. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was. Why should I be out of your mind because I am out of sight? I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well, nothing is past, nothing is lost. One brief moment and all will be as it was before, only better, infinitely happier and forever. We will be one together with Christ.

A guide to preparing a funeral.

The Clergy and people of this parish would like to assure you of our prayers and support at this time of loss.

All of us, at some time, have experienced the loss of someone close, someone we have loved, and know the loneliness, the pain and the sorrow that comes with it. We also know the need for someone who cares, and supports, either by 'doing things', or by simply being there.

We seek to do just that, especially by keeping you and the one who has died in our prayers.

God of all consolation,  
In your unending mercy for us  
You turn the darkness of death  
Into the dawn of new life.  
Show compassion for your people in their sorrow.  
Be our refuge and strength  
To lift us from the darkness of this grief  
to the peace and light of your presence.  
Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
By dying for us, conquered death  
and by rising again restored life.  
May we then go forward eagerly to meet Him,  
and after our life on earth  
be reunited with our loved ones  
where every tear will be wiped away.  
We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

The death of a loved relative or friend is firstly a time of great sorrow - a time of deep loss. It is a time that can bring with it a profound sense of loneliness for us left behind- especially if we have lost a husband or wife, mother or father, a child or a very dear friend. Into this period of loss and loneliness the Church seeks to offer consolation.

As St Paul reminds us in his letter to the Corinthians:  
'When one person suffers the whole of the Christian community shares that suffering' (1 Cor.12-36).

Thus the clergy and people of this parish seek to offer an open ear, a supportive arm and to be of practical help to you in the arrangements that have to be made and the duties performed.

Above all what we seek to offer is the hope that comes from faith in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a saying you can rely on:

*"If we have died with Him, then we shall live with Him; if we hold firm, we shall reign with Him."*

One of the principal means of offering this consolation is through the funeral liturgy. In the liturgy the Lord speaks to us directly in the midst of our grief and we offer to Him our thanks and prayer that He will receive our deceased relatives and friends into the everlasting joy of the heavenly Kingdom.

## THE FUNERAL LITURGY

*"We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come"  
from the Nicene Creed.*

The Funeral Service is the principal means by which the Church seeks to offer consolation to the bereaved.

In this act of prayer and worship the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are placed before us in the services and the symbols offering us the hope of eternal life for those who have tried to live with and by Christ in their life. We come to thank God for the life of the one whom we have loved and still do love. We come to commend him or her to God asking that any sins they have committed are forgiven. We come to say farewell and to comfort one another.

How these aims may be best achieved depends on individual circumstances and so the Church gives us a choice of the type of Funeral Service.

- ❖ A Requiem Mass in the Church followed by burial or cremation
- ❖ A Service in the Church followed by burial or cremation.
- ❖ A Service at the Cemetery followed by burial.
- ❖ A Service at the Crematorium Chapel followed by cremation.

In the next few pages these options will be explained and practical guidelines given to enable you to choose the most appropriate form of Funeral Service. If you have not already done so, it is important at this point to contact the Funeral Director in order to begin to make the necessary practical arrangements.

Between them, the Clergy and Funeral Director will help you to co-ordinate and provide the Funeral Service that you feel is most appropriate.

## **A: REQUIEM MASS IN THE CHURCH FOLLOWED BY BURIAL/CREMATION**

### **1) Reception into the Church**

If the funeral is to take place in the Church at the 10.00 Mass, the body of the person who has died may, if so desired, be brought into the Church the evening prior to the funeral. This is the sign that our true and everlasting home as Christians is in the Father's house – the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Time** – Reception normally takes place at 4pm on the evening prior to the funeral and consists of the reception of the body that rests before the Altar, followed by a brief form of Evening Prayer in which we pray for the dead person and for those who are grieving. It is good if some of the family and friends are able to be present.

### **2) Requiem Mass**

The Requiem Mass is the normal funeral service for Catholics and would be the form most desired by those who have practised their faith. In it we listen to the Scriptures and offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, the offering by which Christ won for us the promise of eternal life.

The final committal at the cemetery/crematorium following the Requiem Mass is quite short.

*“Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day”.*

*John 6:54*

**Readings** – In the first part of the Mass we listen to readings from the Scriptures. Normally these readings comprise one of the Gospels and another reading from elsewhere in the Bible. In the Scriptures God speaks to us and holds out the promise of eternal life, and for this reason it is to the bible we turn in times of sorrow. The readings should be taken from the Bible. You may wish to choose the readings from a selection that the Priest will show you. He will be very happy to guide and help you.

**Readers** – The first reading is normally read by a member of the Congregation, so if you know of someone amongst family or friends who would be happy and able to do this, please tell the Priest. It may also be appropriate for this person, or another to read the Bidding Prayers after the Homily. The person who is to read should be chosen carefully as reading at the funeral of a loved one can be a traumatic experience.

**Music** – Music is normally provided by one of the Parish Organists. Since the Requiem Mass is a religious service all of the music should be of a religious nature, normally hymns or instrumental pieces. These can be chosen from the Hymn Book and discussed with the Priest. Music should not be arranged with the Funeral Director before consulting the Priest.

**Eulogy** – There is provision, if you so wish, for a friend or member of the family to offer a short eulogy towards the end of the service. If you decide that you would like this, great care should be taken in choosing the person. The eulogy should be brief, normally about three or four minutes.

**Time** – The Requiem Mass normally takes place at 10.00am in the Church. This is for practical reasons and to enable the community at the Sacred Heart to participate. Should circumstances suggest another time, this can be arranged by speaking to the priest.

## **B: FUNERAL SERVICE FOLLOWED BY BURIAL/CREMATION**

### **3) Funeral Service in the Church**

For various reasons you may not wish to have a Requiem Mass, but would still like to have a funeral service in Church prior to burial or cremation. The service basically comprises the first part of the Requiem Mass followed immediately by the final commendation or farewell before departing for the burial/cremation. The final committal at the cemetery or crematorium will be quite short.

**Readings** – The readings are chosen from the Bible with the help and guidance of the Priest. If possible, it is desirable that one of the mourners, perhaps a friend or relative read the first reading and also the Bidding Prayers.

**Music** – The music should be of a suitable religious nature, and is normally provided by one of the Parish Organists. The Priest will help you choose which hymns to have. Music should not be arranged with the Funeral Director before consulting the Priest.

**Time** – The timing of this service should be arranged with the Priest before arrangements are made at the cemetery or crematorium.

#### **4) Funeral Service at the Crematorium or Cemetery**

The Funeral Service (but not a Requiem Mass) may be conducted entirely either at the Cemetery (if burial is to follow) or at the Crematorium Chapel. Such services tend to be very short, as the time allowed is dictated by the Cemetery authorities.

Since time is limited at such services, this must be borne in mind when choosing readings and music.

**Readings** – As always, the readings for a Catholic Funeral Service should be taken from the Bible. The reading or readings can be chosen with the help and guidance of the Priest and may be read by a member of the family or a friend of the deceased person.

**Music** – The music is normally provided by an organist, and hymns and voluntaries should be chosen with the help of the Priest.

There is also the opportunity for recorded music to be played, but the length of particular pieces needs to be borne in mind. Such arrangements must be confirmed to

the Funeral Director not less than 48 hours before the funeral.

**Time** – Services are arranged by the Funeral Directors and they will check the availability of the priest before booking a time.

*“We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them. Like other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus; God will bring them with Him.”*

*1Thessalonians 4:13-14*

**Flowers** – In all of the four options described above, you may wish to invite people to send flowers in memory of the person who has died. You may, on the other hand, just wish for family flowers and request donations to the parish, a particular cause or charity. Either the priest or funeral director can advise on this matter.

## **AFTERWARDS**

### **1) Remembering and praying for the Deceased.**

As Christians we believe that the bonds of love and affection that unite us in this life still exist after death. As we should not forget those who have died, equally we should remember them in our prayers, asking the Lord God to receive them into His Kingdom.

One of the ways which Catholics fulfil this duty of love is to have Masses said for those who have died sometimes just after death, on the anniversary, birthday or other such special occasions. To arrange a Mass you may simply speak to the Priest or contact the parish office.

November, beginning as it does with the Solemnity of All Saints followed by All Souls Day, is a month in which we traditionally remember and pray for those who have died. A book of Remembrance will be available for you to enter the names of those you wish to be prayed for particularly.

### **2) Support for the Bereaved**

The process of grieving for someone who has died continues a long time after the occasion of death. It is once again a period in which we may experience many different emotions: relief, sorrow, anger, loneliness, regret, questioning, doubting faith, to name but a few.

Members of the Parish Bereavement Group are available to support you through out this time. They are a group of trained lay-people who are willing to offer practical support or a listening ear. If you wish to speak to one of them, simply telephone the Parish Office or speak to one of the clergy.

Below are the names and contact information for a number of groups in the area that seek to offer practical help, counselling and support to those who are bereaved.

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

For bereavement care  
01480 414511

**S.A.N.D.S**

For those who have lost a baby  
01480 407491

**Suicide Bereavement Support Group**

For those bereaved through suicide.  
Contact Cambridge Cruse and you will be called back.  
01223 302662