

CHAPTER 10

FUNERALS

A. INTRODUCTION

- 10.1.1 Holy Mother Church, who has borne the Christian sacramentally in her womb during his earthly pilgrimage, accompanies him at his journey's end, in order to surrender him "into the Father's hands." She offers to the Father, in Christ, the child of his grace, and she commits to the earth, in hope, the seed of the body that will rise in glory.¹¹⁴²
- 10.1.2 For the Christian, the day of death inaugurates, at the end of the sacramental life, the fulfillment of the new birth begun at baptism, the definitive "conformity" to "the image of the Son" conferred by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and participation in the feast of the Kingdom which was anticipated in the Eucharist—even if final purifications are still necessary in order to be clothed with the nuptial garment.¹¹⁴³
- 10.1.3 The Christian funeral confers neither a sacrament nor a sacramental on the deceased, who has passed beyond the sacramental economy.¹¹⁴⁴ It is nonetheless a liturgical celebration of the whole Church, which celebrates funeral rites to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life that has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with the deceased, at the participation in that communion of the community gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.¹¹⁴⁵
- 10.1.4 Ecclesiastical funerals, by which the Church seeks spiritual support for the deceased, honors their bodies, and at the same time brings the solace of hope to the living, must be celebrated according to the norm of the liturgical laws.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴² CCC 1683, cf. 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44.

¹¹⁴³ CCC 1682.

¹¹⁴⁴ See Introduction: "In his risen glory, and now seated at the right hand of the Father, the Lord is no longer visible in this world; but as Saint Leo the Great testifies, 'What has been visible of our Savior has passed over into the sacraments.'"

¹¹⁴⁵ OCF 5; CCC 1684, cf. SC 81-82.

¹¹⁴⁶ CIC can. 1176 §2. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.1.6.

- 10.1.5 As soon as possible after the notification of death, the priest should call on the bereaved, whether at home or in the hospital, to console them and pray with them. In the absence of a priest, members of the parish who are suitably prepared for this ministry are encouraged to share in this responsibility.

B. OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

- 10.2.1 Priests, as teachers of faith and ministers of comfort, preside at the funeral rites, especially the Mass; the celebration of the funeral liturgy is especially entrusted to pastors and parochial vicars. When no priest is available, deacons, as ministers of the Word, of the altar, and of charity, preside at funeral rites.¹¹⁴⁷
- 10.2.2 In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the dead.¹¹⁴⁸
- 10.2.3 When no priest or deacon is available for the vigil and related rites or the rite of committal, a layperson may preside.¹¹⁴⁹
- 10.2.4 Pastors and other priests should instill in readers, altar servers, musicians, ushers, pallbearers, and, according to existing norms, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, an appreciation of how much the reverent exercise of their ministries contributes to the celebration of the funeral rites. Family members should be encouraged to take an active part in these ministries, but they should not be asked to assume any role that their grief or sense of loss may make too burdensome.¹¹⁵⁰
- 10.2.5 Lectors or readers designated to proclaim the Word of God should prepare themselves to exercise this ministry.¹¹⁵¹
- 10.2.6 The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by Catholics. On exceptional occasions and for a just

¹¹⁴⁷ OCF 14.

¹¹⁴⁸ OCF 39; GIRM 346. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.3.3.e.

¹¹⁴⁹ OCF 14. While the rite permits the designation of a lay person to lead the prayers at the cemetery or mausoleum, this must be regarded as a rare exception in the Archdiocese of Washington, one that is to be employed only in those circumstances when it is impossible for a priest or deacon to be present. In such a case, the designated lay person would not bless the grave.

¹¹⁵⁰ OCF 15.

¹¹⁵¹ OCF 24.

cause, the Archbishop may permit a baptized non-Catholic to take on the task of reader.¹¹⁵²

- 10.2.7 The Word of God should always be proclaimed from a Lectionary, and never from a disposable missalette or sheet of paper. Such temporary aids give poor testimony to the permanency and reverence due to the Word of God. Therefore, in proceeding to the ambo or lectern to proclaim the reading, the lector or reader should not carry a missalette or sheet of paper on which the reading has been written.¹¹⁵³

C. THOSE TO WHOM ECCLESIASTICAL FUNERALS MAY BE GRANTED

- 10.3.1 Deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law.¹¹⁵⁴
- 10.3.2 Manifest sinners can be granted ecclesiastical funerals in cases where there will not be a public scandal of the faithful (for example, persons in irregular marriages).¹¹⁵⁵
- 10.3.3 When it concerns funerals, catechumens must be counted among the Christian faithful.¹¹⁵⁶
- 10.3.4 Those who have expressed in some way their desire to receive baptism, even though they have not been received formally into the catechumenate, may be counted as catechumens, since they would have been entitled to baptism in danger of death.¹¹⁵⁷
- 10.3.5 The local ordinary can permit children whom the parents intended to baptize but who died before baptism to be given ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁵⁸

¹¹⁵² ED 133, cf. CDW, *Non-Catholic Readers at Mass*. See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 6.9.5.

¹¹⁵³ See ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 1.4.8 and its note; 6.27.1.

¹¹⁵⁴ CIC can. 1176 §1.

¹¹⁵⁵ CIC can. 1184 §1 3^o. See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 10.4.1-7.

¹¹⁵⁶ CIC can. 1183 §1.

¹¹⁵⁷ José Tomás Martín de Agar, in *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, second edition (Montréal: Wilson and Lafleur Lte., 2004) 918-919. José Luis Santos, in *Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (Montréal: Wilson and Lafleur Lte., 2004) III/2, 1697: "Even though the person may not be in the specific institution called the "catechumenate ... it may be noted that this broader catechumen status is considered to be sufficient for spiritual assistance, since upon defining it, the legislator does not speak of the institution, but of the individual's genuine desire and personal will to join the Church."

¹¹⁵⁸ CIC can. 1183 §2.

- 10.3.6 In the prudent judgment of the local ordinary, the funeral rites of the Catholic Church may be granted to members of a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community, unless it is evidently contrary to their will and provided that their own minister is unavailable.¹¹⁵⁹ (Their own minister is considered unavailable if they have not participated in their own denomination for some time.) If a Funeral Mass is to be celebrated, the name of the deceased should not be mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer, since such commemoration presupposes full communion with the Catholic Church.¹¹⁶⁰
- 10.3.7 Certainly those baptized non-Catholics who have expressed the desire to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church may be granted the Church's funeral rites.
- 10.3.8 Unbaptized persons who in some way were considered to be close to the Church but who died before receiving baptism can also be given an ecclesiastical funeral, according to the prudent judgment of the local ordinary.¹¹⁶¹

D. THOSE TO WHOM ECCLESIASTICAL FUNERALS MUST BE DENIED

- 10.4.1 Unbaptized persons who were not catechumens and who do not fall under the provisions in the articles above are not given ecclesiastical funerals. However, it is permitted for a Catholic minister to offer prayers for them, for example, at the graveside.¹¹⁶²
- 10.4.2 Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, notorious apostates, must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁶³ (Apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith.¹¹⁶⁴ An apostate from the faith incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication.¹¹⁶⁵)

¹¹⁵⁹ CIC cann. 1183 §3, 1184; ED 120, cf. also CCEO, cann. 876 1, 887. ED 137: “[I]f priests, ministers or communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church do not have a place or the liturgical objects necessary for celebrating worthily their religious ceremonies, the diocesan Bishop may allow them the use of a church or a Catholic building and also lend them what may be necessary for their services. Under similar circumstances, permission may be given to them for interment or for the celebration of services at Catholic cemeteries.”

¹¹⁶⁰ CDF, On Public Mass for Deceased Non-Catholic Christians, 11 June 1976.

¹¹⁶¹ CCEO can. 876 §2; cf. CIC can. 19.

¹¹⁶² See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Guidelines, 2010, 10.3.8.

¹¹⁶³ CIC can. 1184 §1 1°.

¹¹⁶⁴ CIC can. 751.

¹¹⁶⁵ CIC can. 1364 §1.

- 10.4.3 Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, notorious heretics must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁶⁶ (Heresy is the obstinate denial or obstinate doubt after the reception of baptism of some truth which is to be believed by divine and Catholic faith.¹¹⁶⁷ A heretic incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication.¹¹⁶⁸)
- 10.4.4 Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, notorious schismatics must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁶⁹ (Schism is the refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.¹¹⁷⁰ A schismatic incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication.¹¹⁷¹)
- 10.4.5 Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, those who are publicly known to have chosen the cremation of their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁷²
- 10.4.6 Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals.¹¹⁷³
- 10.4.7 If any doubt occurs, the local ordinary is to be consulted, and his judgment must be followed.¹¹⁷⁴

E. LITURGICAL RITES

General

- 10.5.1 The Order of Christian Funerals gives three types of funeral celebrations, corresponding to the three places in which they are conducted—the home, the church, and the cemetery—and according to the importance attached to them by the family, local customs, the culture, and popular piety. This order of celebration is common to all the liturgical traditions and comprises four principal elements:

¹¹⁶⁶ CIC can. 1184 §1 1°.

¹¹⁶⁷ CIC can. 751.

¹¹⁶⁸ CIC can. 1364 §1.

¹¹⁶⁹ CIC can. 1184 §1 1°.

¹¹⁷⁰ CIC can. 751.

¹¹⁷¹ CIC can. 1364 §1.

¹¹⁷² CIC can. 1184 §1 2°; cf. José Tomás Martín de Agar, in *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, second edition (Montréal: Wilson and Lafleur, Lte., 2004) 919.

¹¹⁷³ CIC can. 1184 §1 3°.

¹¹⁷⁴ CIC can. 1184 §2.

- a. the greeting of the community;¹¹⁷⁵
 - b. the reading of the Word of God;¹¹⁷⁶
 - c. the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice;¹¹⁷⁷ and
 - d. the farewell to the deceased.¹¹⁷⁸
- 10.5.2 A funeral Mass is one celebrated in the presence of the body, usually in connection with the burial. It may be celebrated on all days except those noted in the Table of Permissibility of the Archdiocese of Washington *Ordo*.¹¹⁷⁹
- 10.5.3 Masses “after receiving the news of death,” for final burial, and on the first anniversary, are the three special cases that are privileged and referred to in the Table of Permissibility of the Archdiocese of Washington *Ordo*. All other Masses of the dead are to be considered as “daily” Masses of the dead.¹¹⁸⁰
- 10.5.4 The correct title for the Mass celebrated prior to interment is “Funeral Mass” or “Mass of Christian Burial.” The term “Mass of the Resurrection,” although it emphasizes the festive tone of the resurrection, is inaccurate and should not be used, inasmuch as it causes confusion with the celebration of Easter itself.¹¹⁸¹

Place for Funerals

- 10.6.1 A funeral for any deceased member of the faithful must generally be celebrated in his or her parish church. A funeral Mass is never to be celebrated at a funeral home or in the chapel of a cemetery.¹¹⁸²
- 10.6.2 Any member of the faithful or those competent to take care of the funeral of a deceased member of the faithful are permitted to choose another church for

¹¹⁷⁵ CCC 1687.

¹¹⁷⁶ CCC 1688.

¹¹⁷⁷ CCC 1689.

¹¹⁷⁸ CCC 1690.

¹¹⁷⁹ ADW Ordo 14. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 10.7.1.

¹¹⁸⁰ ADW Ordo 15. Daily Mass for the dead may be said only when the Mass is actually being applied for a deceased person on a weekday of Ordinary Time. *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹⁸¹ BCLN April 1973.

¹¹⁸² CIC can. 1177 §1; OCF 268.

the funeral rite with the consent of the person who governs it and after notification of the proper pastor of the deceased.¹¹⁸³

Planning

- 10.7.1 A funeral Mass may be celebrated on any day except for solemnities that are holy days of obligation, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law.¹¹⁸⁴
- 10.7.2 In the arranging and choosing of the variable parts of the funeral liturgy (e.g., orations, readings, Prayer of the Faithful), pastoral considerations bearing upon the deceased, the family, and those attending should rightly be taken into account.¹¹⁸⁵
- 10.7.3 In preparing to celebrate the funeral of an infant or child, pastors are strongly encouraged to read closely the introduction to this section of the Order of Christian Funerals. Especially at the death of a child, the Christian community seeks to offer support and consolation to the parents and family during and after the time of the funeral rites. Those adults who have lost children of their own are to be especially encouraged to support the bereaved in their struggle to accept the death of a child. In the preparation of a Funeral Mass for a deceased child, if it is foreseen that many children will be present, the principles contained in the Directory for Masses with Children may be considered.¹¹⁸⁶
- 10.7.4 The faithful, and especially the family of the deceased, should be urged to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice offered for the deceased person also by receiving Holy Communion.¹¹⁸⁷
- 10.7.5 Ministers should be aware that the experience of death can bring about in the mourners possible needs for reconciliation. With attentiveness to each situation, the minister can help to begin the process of reconciliation. In some cases this process may find expression in the celebration of the sacrament of penance, either before the funeral liturgy or at a later time.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸³ CIC can. 1177 §2.

¹¹⁸⁴ GIRM 380; cf. CIC cann. 1176-1185. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 10.5.2.

¹¹⁸⁵ GIRM 385.

¹¹⁸⁶ OCF, 28, 238, 240.

¹¹⁸⁷ GIRM 383.

¹¹⁸⁸ OCF 53.

Vigil or Wake Service

- 10.8.1 The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community before the funeral liturgy, or, if there is no funeral liturgy, before the rite of committal. The vigil may take the form of
- a. a Liturgy of the Word, provided in the Order of Christian Funerals as
 - i. the Vigil for the Deceased,¹¹⁸⁹ or
 - ii. the Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church.¹¹⁹⁰
 - b. some part of the office for the dead, provided in the Order of Christian Funerals in Part IV.¹¹⁹¹
- 10.8.2 The vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor, or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place. It may also be celebrated in the church, but at a time well before the funeral liturgy, so that the funeral liturgy will not be lengthy and the Liturgy of the Word repetitious. Adaptations of the vigil will often be suggested by the place in which the celebration occurs. A celebration in the home of the deceased, for example, may be simplified and shortened. If the reception of the body at the church is celebrated apart from the vigil or the funeral liturgy, the “Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church” may be used and simplified.¹¹⁹²
- 10.8.3 Catholics have long treasured the practice of praying the rosary at wakes or vigil services. While no mention is made of the rosary in the vigil described in the Order of Christian Funerals, the practice of praying the rosary is not to be discouraged, but rather encouraged as a way for the family and friends to pray together either before or after the vigil, which should be regarded as the main service of prayer.
- 10.8.4 When the vigil service takes place in church, the pastor must be assured that someone of the family is present at all times with the body while the church is open. Reverence for the sacred character of the church should be observed. The body of the deceased must never be left unguarded.
- 10.8.5 After the vigil service is over the church must be securely locked to prevent any possible desecration of the body. Jewelry or other valuables should not be

¹¹⁸⁹ OCF 69-81.

¹¹⁹⁰ OCF 82-97.

¹¹⁹¹ OCF 54.

¹¹⁹² OCF 55.

left on the body overnight. The pastor should also consider the schedule of Masses which are celebrated in the church, and if provisions are possible for moving the body prior to those Masses.¹¹⁹³

Funeral Liturgy

- 10.9.1 The Church offers the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Christ's Passover for the dead so that, since all the members of Christ's body are in communion with each other, the petition for spiritual help on behalf of some may bring comforting hope to others.¹¹⁹⁴
- 10.9.2 Among the Masses for the Dead, the Funeral Mass holds first place. It may be celebrated on any day except for Solemnities that are holy days of obligation, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law.¹¹⁹⁵
- 10.9.3 The faithful, and especially the family of the deceased, should be urged to participate in the Eucharistic Sacrifice offered for the deceased person also by receiving Holy Communion.¹¹⁹⁶
- 10.9.4 Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, are to be removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church, and may be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church.¹¹⁹⁷
- 10.9.5 If the Funeral Mass is directly joined to the burial rite, once the prayer after Communion has been said and omitting the concluding rite, the rite of final commendation or farewell takes place. This rite is celebrated only if the body is present.¹¹⁹⁸

¹¹⁹³ BLS 114.

¹¹⁹⁴ GIRM 379.

¹¹⁹⁵ GIRM 380, cf. CIC cann. 1176-1185.

¹¹⁹⁶ GIRM 383.

¹¹⁹⁷ OCF 38, 132. During the Mass the flag may be given a place of honor near the body, as a sign of respect for the deceased person's civil role.

¹¹⁹⁸ GIRM 384.

Homily

- 10.10.1 At funeral rites there should, as a rule, be a short homily.¹¹⁹⁹ Attentive to the grief of those present, the homilist should dwell on God's compassionate love and on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. The homilist should help the members of the assembly to understand that the mystery of God's love and the mystery of Jesus' victorious death and resurrection were present in the life and death of the deceased, and that these mysteries are active in their own lives as well. Through the homily members of the family and community should receive consolation and strength to face the death of one of their members with a hope nourished by the saving Word of God.¹²⁰⁰
- 10.10.2 At the same time, the homily and prayers for the deceased should not be phrased so as to imply that the deceased is already in heaven. The homily must "avoid the literary genre of funeral eulogy" and illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the risen Christ. The Catholic doctrines regarding purgatory and indulgences must be respected, and mention can be made of the propriety of offering Masses and other prayers and good works as intercessions for the departed.¹²⁰¹
- 10.10.3 Pastors should take into special account those who are present at a liturgical celebration who hear the Gospel on the occasion of the funeral and who may be non-Catholics, or Catholics who never or rarely participate in the Eucharist, or who seem even to have lost the faith, for priests are ministers of Christ's Gospel for all, and this can be an opportunity for catechesis.¹²⁰²

Words of Remembrance, and "Eulogies"

- 10.11.1 While the Order of Christian Funerals allows the option to permit a family member or friend to speak in remembrance of the deceased at a funeral liturgy, there must never be a *eulogy* of any kind. A eulogy is "a speech or writing in praise of a person," a "commendatory oration," and thus has never been a part of the Catholic liturgical tradition. But because eulogies have been

¹¹⁹⁹ By definition, the homily is offered only by a priest or deacon. A lay person who presides at a funeral rite gives an "instruction on the readings." OCF 27. See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 1.9.1-5.

¹²⁰⁰ OCF 27, 61, 77, 93, 141, 166, 192, 259, 284, 304; CCC 1688, cf. OCF 41; GIRM 382.

¹²⁰¹ GIRM 382; CCC 1030-1032, 1471-1479, 1688; OCF 41; MI, especially those grants pertaining to various prayers for the departed. See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 7.11.1-7.12.8, 10.11.5.c.

¹²⁰² GIRM 385; cf. OCF 27.

part of the funeral rites of other traditions, some Catholics now expect them – and expect to deliver them – at Catholic funeral liturgies.¹²⁰³

- 10.11.2 Therefore, at the time that a funeral is being planned, when family members and friends will be particularly sensitive, it will be important to explain in a pastoral way the principles and proper focus of Catholic funeral rites, and the difference between words of remembrance and eulogies. Such explanations can be included in literature prepared in advance to assist those who may have to plan funeral rites. If words of remembrance are to be offered, they are to be succinct, written, and discussed in advance with the celebrant and pastor.
- 10.11.3 It should be explained that the most appropriate times for family members and friends to offer extended remarks about the deceased are:
- a. before or after a vigil or wake service—even one held in the church before the start of the funeral liturgy;
 - b. at the graveside, before or after the rite of committal; or
 - c. at a reception, held before or after the funeral rites.

It should be explained that these venues allow for more speakers, more time, more spontaneity, a wider range of themes and methods of paying tribute (stories, songs, or poems), and less emotional stress for the speaker(s).¹²⁰⁴ Other ways of sharing memories of the deceased can be through a pamphlet distributed at one of these venues or at the funeral liturgy, or even through an electronic document produced by family or friends and shared through the Internet.

- 10.11.4 Nevertheless, according to their prudent judgment, pastors may exercise the option contained in the Order of Christian Funerals to permit *one* family member or friend to speak in remembrance of the deceased at a funeral liturgy, following the Prayer after Communion (or the Lord’s Prayer, if there is no Mass) and before the final commendation.¹²⁰⁵

¹²⁰³ OCF 27, 141, 170, 197, 288, 309, 382, 394; GIRM 382. In recent years many dioceses have issued regulations to clarify liturgical law and to curb abuses.

¹²⁰⁴ OCF 15: “Family members ... should not be asked to assume any role that their grief or sense of loss may make too burdensome.” Diocese of Winona, “How to Plan a Catholic Funeral:” “Through the presence of Christ found in the Eucharist, Scripture, the gathered faithful and the priest, the Funeral Mass moves us from intense grief and loss, to hopeful joy and peace. Having a sad or unrehearsed eulogy after Communion can tend to negate the prayer before it.”

¹²⁰⁵ OCF 170, 197.

- 10.11.5 In the cases described above, the words spoken in remembrance of the deceased that are prepared and submitted in advance are:
- a. to be simple and brief, lasting *no more* than five minutes;
 - b. to address solely the life of the deceased in relation to his or her Catholic faith;¹²⁰⁶ and
 - c. to avoid any suggestion that the deceased is “in heaven,” which, among other things, implies that he or she is not in need of the prayers and suffrages of the Church.¹²⁰⁷
- 10.11.6 Since, unlike the homily, words of remembrance form no part of the Liturgy of the Word, they should not be made from the pulpit or ambo, but are to be given from some other appropriate place designated by the pastor.¹²⁰⁸

¹²⁰⁶ These remarks must not include anything that is contrary to the Catholic faith, scandalous, offensive, off-color, or otherwise inappropriate to a celebration of Christian faith and hope in the context of a Catholic funeral liturgy.

¹²⁰⁷ CCC 1032; cf. MI, norms, 3; *ibid.*, other concessions, 29. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum doctrina*, (1967) 2-3, in MI: “It is a divinely revealed truth that sins bring punishments inflicted by God’s sanctity and justice. These must be expiated either on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and calamities of this life and above all through death, or else in the life beyond through fire and torments or ‘purifying’ punishments.... These punishments are imposed by the just and merciful judgment of God for the purification of souls, the defense of the sanctity of the moral order and the restoration of the glory of God to its full majesty.... That punishment or the vestiges of sin may remain to be expiated or cleansed and that they in fact frequently do even after the remission of guilt is clearly demonstrated by the doctrine on purgatory. In purgatory, in fact, the souls of those ‘who died in the charity of God and truly repentant, but before satisfying with worthy fruits of penance for sins committed and for omissions,’ are cleansed after death with purgatorial punishments. This is also clearly evidenced in the liturgical prayers with which the Christian community admitted to Holy Communion has addressed God since most ancient times: ‘that we, who are justly subjected to afflictions because of our sins, may be mercifully set free from them for the glory of thy name.’” MI, norms, 2: “An indulgence is partial or plenary according to whether it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due sin.” *Idem*, 3: “The faithful can obtain partial or plenary indulgences for themselves, or they can apply them to the dead by way of suffrage.” See also CCC 1030-1032, 1471-1479. DPP 251: “[The pious custom of suffrage for the souls of the faithful departed] is an urgent supplication of God to have mercy on the souls of the dead, to purify them by the fire of His charity, and to bring them to His kingdom of light and life. This suffrage is a cultic expression of faith in the communion of saints. Indeed, ‘the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and “because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins” (2 Mac 12: 46) she offers her suffrages for them’ [LG 50]. These consist, primarily, in the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Eucharist [Second Council of Lyons, *Professio fidei Michaelis Palaeologi imperatoris* (1274): DS 856; Saint Cyprian, *Epistula* 1 2; Saint Augustine, *Confessiones* IX, 12 32], and in other pious exercises, such as prayers for the dead, alms deeds, works of mercy [Saint Augustine, *De curis pro mortuis gerenda* 6; Saint John Chrysostom, *Homilia in primam ad Corinthios* 41 5], and the application of indulgences to the souls of the faithful departed.”

- 10.11.7 Pastors are authorized to establish, as a matter of policy for their parishes, whether the option to allow words of remembrance to be spoken at funeral liturgies will be used. Such policies should be made explicit in any literature prepared for those who are planning funeral rites.

Music

- 10.12.1 Music for the celebration of funeral rites should be chosen with great care, so that it will support, console, and uplift the participants. The texts of songs should be related to the readings from Scripture, and should express the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and victory over death, and the Christian's share in that victory.¹²⁰⁹
- 10.12.2 Secular songs and music of any kind, whether classical, popular, or patriotic, even if they were favorites of or requested by the deceased, are not to be used in ecclesiastical funeral rites. As with any words of remembrance spoken by family members and friends, the appropriate venues for the singing or playing of secular music are:
- a. before or after a vigil or wake service – even at one held in the church before the start of the funeral liturgy;
 - b. at the graveside, before or after the rite of committal; or
 - c. at a reception, held before or after the funeral rites.

F. ECCLESIASTICAL BURIAL

Burial

- 10.13.1 The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed. "This is the body once washed in baptism, anointed with the oil of salvation, and fed with the bread of life. This

¹²⁰⁸ See GIRM 309: "From the ambo only the readings, the responsorial Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) are to be proclaimed; it may be used also for giving the homily and for announcing the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should go up to it." Ibid. 105b: "In performing this function the commentator stands in an appropriate place facing the faithful, *but not at the ambo.*" (Emphasis added.) See other references in the same document to the proper uses of the ambo. In a case of true necessity (e.g., lack of space) a pastor may permit the use of the ambo for this purpose.

¹²⁰⁹ OCF 30.

- is the body whose hands clothed the poor and embraced the sorrowing. Indeed, the human body is so inextricably associated with the human person that it is hard to think of a human person apart from his or her body. Thus, the Church's reverence and care for the body grows out of a reverence and concern for the person whom the Church now commends to the care of God."¹²¹⁰
- 10.13.2 Since the family unit traditionally has been preserved even in death, non-Catholics may be buried in Catholic cemeteries with Catholic family members.
- 10.13.3 Due to possible legal implications, all burial arrangements should be made by the family directly with the cemetery, rather than through the parish.
- 10.13.4 If a parish has its own cemetery, the deceased members of the faithful are to be buried in it unless the deceased or those competent to take care of the burial of the deceased have chosen legitimately another cemetery.¹²¹¹
- 10.13.5 Everyone, however, is permitted to choose the cemetery of burial unless prohibited by law.¹²¹² Similarly, Catholics may seek burial in a cemetery other than a Catholic one.
- 10.13.6. Any Catholic member of the community has a right to this Christian burial regardless of ability to pay for such services.
- 10.13.7 With the exception of the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle, tombs, graves, mausoleums, or columbaria for cremated remains are not permitted in churches or chapels within the Archdiocese of Washington.¹²¹³

¹²¹⁰ CIC can. 1176 §3; OCF 412. Saint Augustine, *De curis pro mortuis gerenda* 5: "The Lord Himself ... about to rise on the third day, both preaches, and commends to be preached, the good work of a religious woman, that she poured out a precious ointment over His limbs, and did it for His burial: and they are with praise commemorated in the Gospel, who having received His Body from the cross did carefully and with reverend honor see it wound and laid in the sepulchre. These authorities however do not put us upon thinking that there is in dead bodies any feeling; but rather, that the Providence of God (Who is moreover pleased with such offices of piety) does charge itself with the bodies also of the dead, this they betoken, to the intent our faith of resurrection might be stayed up thereby."

¹²¹¹ CIC can. 1180 §1.

¹²¹² CIC can. 1180 §2.

¹²¹³ CIC cann. 1242-43.

Cremation

- 10.14.1 The Church does not prohibit cremation unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Christian doctrine. Cremation, however, does not enjoy the same value as burial of the body. “The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the Church affirms in its rites.” Therefore, it is earnestly recommended by the Conference of Bishops that cremation take place following the funeral liturgy.¹²¹⁴
- 10.14.2 Any catechesis on the subject of cremation should emphasize that “the cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the corporeal remains of a human body. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition.”¹²¹⁵
- 10.14.3 A funeral Mass with the cremated remains present necessitates a dignified place on which the remains can rest during the Mass. To avoid ritual use of makeshift carriers or other inappropriate containers, parishes may wish to obtain a well-designed urn or ceremonial vessel and stand to hold the cremated remains during the vigil and funeral.¹²¹⁶
- 10.14.4 Cremated remains should be reverently buried or entombed in a cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium; they may also be buried in a common grave in a cemetery.¹²¹⁷
- 10.14.5 Cremated remains may be properly buried at sea in the urn, coffin or other container in which they have been carried to the place of committal. While cremated remains may be buried at sea, “the practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires.”¹²¹⁸

¹²¹⁴ CIC can. 1176 §3; OCF 212, 413; BCL, *Reflections on the Body, Cremation, and Catholic Funeral Rites*, 1997. Prior to the change in discipline regarding the presence of cremated remains in the church, *Notitiae*, 13, January 1977, published an article that stated, “In fact, the ashes which are an expression of the corruptibility of the human body are unable to express the inherent character of one ‘sleeping,’ awaiting the resurrection. The body, not the ashes, receives liturgical honors since it was made the temple of the Spirit of God in baptism. It is important to respect the verity of the sign in order that the liturgical catechesis and the celebration itself be authentic and fruitful.”

¹²¹⁵ BCLN July 1999, cf. OCF 416.

¹²¹⁶ BLS 113.

¹²¹⁷ OCF 417.

¹²¹⁸ BCLN July 1999, cf. OCF 416-417.

G. RECORD OF DEATH AND BURIAL

- 10.15.1 When a burial has been completed, a record is to be made in the parish register of deaths.¹²¹⁹

¹²¹⁹ CIC can. 1182. See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 1.12.4.g.