

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

The funeral rites for a deacon, as ordained minister of the Church, should be celebrated with the decorum and propriety befitting a member of the clergy. This is to be done with sensitivity to the wishes of the family as well as of the deceased. The following guidelines are offered to assist the appropriate individuals with steps to be taken in order that the Diocese of Orlando community may respect the memory of one of its good servants. As clergy, it is important for all deacons, serving in the Diocese of Orlando, provide a copy of their funeral arrangements to the Permanent Diaconate Office.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Upon the death of a deacon, the entire diaconal community should be notified through established communication systems. The family (or if need be the local pastor) is asked to notify the Office of the Permanent Diaconate or Deanery Lead Deacon who will then notify the appropriate person to activate the coordination process that will ensure the entire community is notified and gain access to the Bishop's schedule.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The family, in coordination with the Permanent Diaconate Office, should make funeral arrangement conscious of the desire of the Bishop of the Diocese of Orlando to preside at the funeral liturgy. Wake services can be planned with the local pastor with additional assistance from the Consolation Ministry of the parish. It is fitting for deacons to be invited to participate in the liturgy observing the appropriate norms.

Because of the numbers of deacons/priests who may attend a funeral liturgy, it is suggested prior thought be given to the arrangements for the procession of clergy, reception of communion and other details to accommodate a large number of clergy.

If desired, the family may indicate a deacon whom they wish to serve as the Deacon(s) of the Mass for Christian burial (i.e. Deacon of the Word & Deacon of the Table). The Permanent Diaconate Office should be notified and the deacon(s) should work closely with the pastor and/or bereavement team in planning the liturgy.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of the Permanent Diaconate to arrange for the presence of the Bishop, or in his absence his designated representative. As soon as firm arrangements are made for the general liturgy those details should be communicated to the Permanent Diaconate office.

The wake is often held in a funeral home. If desired and with the approval of the Pastor the body may lie in state at the Parish of assignment the evening prior to the funeral liturgy. Specific visiting hours comparable to those at the funeral home are suggested.

The body of a deceased deacon is normally vested in his Alb and white stole, but may be clothed according to the wishes of the family. If lay clothes are chosen, a symbol of his office [i.e. Stole, book of Gospels...] may be placed near or on the bier.

CELEBRATION OF THE FUNERAL LITURGY

In planning the funeral liturgy, the family will want to consult with the Parish staff. The Permanent Diaconate Office will serve, as a resource to the staff. Options for an evening funeral with burial the following morning may be used.

When a deacon's body is brought into the church it should be so arranged that his head rest nearest the altar with his feet towards the congregation. This is the appropriate position for one who has been ordained.

The liturgy of Christian burial should reflect that it is being celebrated for a permanent deacon who, if married has a dual vocation of Christian marriage and holy orders. Care should be taken that only appropriate liturgical music is chosen. Deacons who attend are invited to vest and assemble as a body for the procession. They should be seated as a body in an appropriate place in the congregation so they can kneel for the Eucharistic prayer.

Should the burial service be separated from the funeral liturgy, deacons are also invited to vest for the burial service.

It is customary for the attending bishop to conduct the prayers of Final Commendation the end of the Funeral Mass.

SERVICE AT THE GRAVE

The family, relatives and invited guests always have precedence. The grave site service may be led by a deacon depending, of course on the wishes of the family and the appropriate ritual is to be used.

DEATH OF THE SPOUSE OR WIDOW OF A DEACON

The death of a deacon's wife or widow is also of great concern to the Diaconate Community. The Permanent Diaconate Office will provide any assistance the family may desire in planning the liturgy, providing notification to the Diocese Diaconate community and advising the ordinary of the deacon's loss.

Unless the family otherwise desires, it is most appropriate for the deacons to vest and sit as a body at the funeral liturgy of the deacon's wife.

In all of the suggestions above, the guiding concern will be the wishes of the deacon's family. It would be a great help to the family if the deacon takes time to explain the suggestions above with their family and to indicate those areas where the family needs to make decisions. It is hoped that each deacon has given thought to the fact of both providing a will for his family and any desires he has concerning his funeral liturgy. This is particularly important, as the family is responsible for all funeral expenses.