

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Saint Dennis Church – 815-838-2592 – www.Saint-Dennis.org
1214 South Hamilton Street, Lockport, Illinois 60441

Funeral Information

- Our heartfelt condolences to you on the death of your loved one! May our Catholic Christian faith bring you consolation during this difficult time!
- Please meet with our priest right before or right after you confirm the date and time of the funeral liturgy with the funeral home of your choice.
- Our priest will pray with you and will go over all the details of the funeral liturgy and your role in it. Sometimes a parish staff member may also help.
- It is the duty of the parish priest to conduct the funerals in our church. It is the responsibility of our parish music director to provide the music.
- The funeral home has information about church donations and fees. If you are not using a funeral home, please contact the parish office instead.

Three Parts of a Funeral

- There are three parts to a funeral: the wake, the church liturgy, and the family gathering afterward. Each of these parts has its own distinct character.
- The wake at the funeral home is a celebration of the life of your loved one. It is a time for people to gather and share both memories and eulogies.
- The liturgy at church is a celebration of eternal life in Jesus Christ. It is a time for people to pray for their loved one and to renew their faith in Christ.
- The family gathering after the cemetery prayers is a celebration of all the lives that continue in a new way in memory of their departed loved one.
- By reflecting on these three parts of a funeral, we can appreciate the spiritual character of what is celebrated in the church at the Funeral Liturgy.

Four Funeral Symbols

- Through four traditional sacred symbols, the funeral liturgy in church is a celebration of the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.
- **Water:** recalls the waters of baptism in which we are cleansed of sin and are immersed in the life of God's grace as a new creation in Jesus Christ.
- **Pall:** recalls the baptismal garment in which we were clothed with the holiness of Christ and are prepared for the robe of glory in the life to come.
- **Candle:** recalls the light of Christ which we received at the time of our baptism, as a guiding light throughout our mortal lives upon this earth.
- **Incense:** recalls the baptismal anointing with sacred Chrism, because of which we are called Christians, that is, anointed ones like Christ.
- Each of these four religious symbols invite us to dedicate our lives to Christ, so that we may be ready for him, whenever he calls us to himself.

Thoughts for Prayer

- "We loved them in life, let us not forget them in death, until by our prayers we bring them to the very gates of heaven itself." – St. Ambrose
- "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be released from their sins." - II Maccabees 12
- "I go before you to prepare a place for you, that where I am, one day you may be." – John 14
- "Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them forever. May they rest in peace! Amen. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace! Amen."

PRAYERFUL, SIMPLE, TRADITIONAL FUNERALS

Funeral Liturgies. At Saint Dennis Church, our funeral liturgies are prayerful, simple, and traditional. Here are three distinguishing features of Catholic Funeral Rites which give hope in the midst of sorrow, and comfort during a time of farewell to those whom we love so dearly. It is especially a time for renewed faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

- First, a funeral is primarily for the deceased person. “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.” We pray for the repose of the soul of our departed loved one as they come into the presence of God. We hope that, someday, our loved ones will remember us in prayerful intercession as well.
- Second, a funeral is also for the sake of those who mourn the loss of their loved one. Many happy memories are called to mind. Both tears of sorrow and expressions of gratitude console broken hearts at such a time as this. May our faith in Jesus Christ be renewed through the sharing of the holy Gospel.
- Third, a funeral is an opportunity to proclaim that Jesus Christ has conquered death through his own death, and especially by his resurrection. Because there is life after death with Jesus, there is also abundant life even before death. To live as a Christian is to anticipate already the joy of eternal life.

By reflecting on these values, we hope you will be able to understand and appreciate why a Catholic Funeral is so much more than just a celebration of life. A Catholic Funeral is a Celebration of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ! The priest will discuss these matters with you in more detail when you meet with him to plan the funeral liturgy together.

Sacred Rites Reverently Celebrated

- Our priest goes through the entire funeral ritual with the family members who are making the arrangements.
- We faithfully follow the instructions in the liturgical books for the celebration of all the sacraments at our church.
- We do not add anything to the liturgy or leave anything out of the liturgy, regardless of what is done elsewhere.
- You may always do at the funeral home or at your luncheon what is not part of the Sacred Liturgy of the Church.
- Eulogies may be given at the funeral home or at the funeral luncheon, but not during the funeral liturgy itself.
- The purpose of the church funeral is to entrust the soul of the faithful departed to the mercy and love of God.
- If the priest cannot accompany you to the cemetery, he recites the cemetery prayers at the end of the liturgy.

Church Decorations and Decorum

- We regret that we cannot host wakes or visitations at our church. Local funeral homes can assist you with this.
- We permit two floral arrangements for the altar, although we can simply use our own parish flowers as well.
- In the narthex, you may have some pictures and other flowers, etc., but not in the worship space of the church.
- If there is an urn, it is placed on a memorial pillar at the base of the altar steps, near where a coffin would be.
- The urn is covered with a funeral pall during the liturgy, which prevents any flowers on or around the urn itself.
- Military rites usually occur at the cemetery, but they may be done after the liturgy either outside or in the narthex.
- We recommend Catholic Cemeteries for the final resting place of your loved ones and all the faithful departed.

A Celebration of Eternal Life! When we gather in church for a funeral, we give thanks to God for the life of our loved one, and for the many memories which we will cherish for the rest of our days. We gather as well to pray for the repose of their souls, as they embark on the final phase of their journey to heaven.

But when we gather to pay our last respects to our departed loved ones, we are also reminded of our own mortality as well. So, where are we at right now in our relationship with God? And where is God calling us to be in our relationship with Him as we live out the remaining days of our mortal lives?

A funeral provides us with an opportunity to discover or deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ as our God and Savior. When we know him, love him, and serve him in this world, we prepare ourselves to live happily ever after with God for all eternity. Thus, our time of sadness can also be a moment of grace.

From the perspective of our Catholic Christian Faith, eternal life already begins here and now, in a life lived for God. This is the spiritual life that continues even after our physical death, as we await our resurrection from the dead in a new heaven and a new earth that is beyond all our hopes and expectations.

Thus, our Catholic Christian funeral rites are not simply a celebration of our past lives. Catholic Funerals are a celebration of the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord! If you would like to explore these profound spiritual matters more fully, please contact us, your own pastor, or your own parish community. God bless you!