

Appendix 24: Diocese of Bismarck Policy on Catholic Church Funeral Rites

1. "Deceased members of the Christian faithful must be given ecclesiastical funerals according to the norm of law." **Canon 1176 §1**
2. "...there is to be no favoritism toward persons in funerals and that the poor are not deprived of fitting funerals." **Canon 1181**
3. "When it concerns funerals, catechumens must be counted among the Christian faithful." **Canon 1183 §1**
4. Catholic clergy can permit Catholic funeral rites for an unbaptized child whom the parents intended to baptize but who died before baptism. **Canon 1183 §2**
5. The Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for baptized persons who are enrolled in a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial community unless their intention is evidently to the contrary. **Canon 1183 §3**
6. A baptized member of another Christian Church or ecclesial community, who for a reasonable cause requests it, may be buried in a Catholic Cemetery with the express permission of the Diocesan Bishop.
7. The ecumenical norms governing participation by Catholic clergy in the funeral rites for baptized members of other Christian communions are:
 - a) When requested by the family and after consultation with the proper pastor of the deceased, Catholic clergy may officiate at the funeral services of other traditions, funeral homes, and at the graveside. By the same token they may, if invited, participate in the funeral services conducted by the minister of the church of the deceased. (Ecumenism Guidelines, U.S. Bishops, 1965)
 - b) Catholic clergy may not officiate in the church of another communion but, when asked by the family, they may be present in the sanctuary or chancel to offer prayers and expressions of sympathy. Catholic Clergy may officiate at graveside rites in other than Catholic cemeteries, both for Catholics and for members of other churches. (Ecumenism Guidelines, U.S. Bishops, 1965)
8. A priest from outside the parish should generally be allowed to celebrate the various rites of the funeral liturgy when a reasonable request is made.
9. Unless they gave some signs of repentance before death, the following must be deprived of ecclesiastical funerals:
 - a) Notorious apostates, heretics, and schismatics.
 - b) Those who chose cremation for their bodies for reasons contrary to Christian faith.
 - c) Other manifest sinners who cannot be granted ecclesiastical funerals without public scandal of the faithful.

If any doubt occurs, the Chancery is to be consulted. **Canon 1184**

10. Order of Christian Funerals

- a) "The Order of Christian Funerals was canonically approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in plenary assembly on November 14, 1985 and was subsequently confirmed by the Apostolic See by decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship on April 29, 1987 (Prot. N. CD I 550/85). ...From All Souls Day, November 2, 1989, its use is mandatory in the dioceses of the United States of America. From that date forward no other English versions of these rites may be used." (Order of Christian Funerals: Decree of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops).
- b) No matter what other prayer services are provided during the time of mourning before a funeral, the Funeral Rites are to include the Vigil for the Deceased as provided in the Order of Christian Funerals. This vigil service is the beginning of the Funeral Rites, and should not be omitted without good cause (Lit. Law).
- c) In accord with local custom, the rosary may be recited before or after the Vigil for the Deceased or at another time if requested by the family of the deceased. It may also be incorporated into the Vigil if it does not replace any part of the given ritual.
- d) Viewing videotapes immediately prior to or during funeral liturgies is not permitted. The people who attend a funeral are invited to be active participants in the liturgy, which by its nature flows naturally from one element to the next. Viewing videotapes in these instances does not foster active participation or serve the well-being of the faithful.

11. The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed. The Church does not prohibit cremation unless it was chosen for reasons contrary to Catholic doctrine. **Canon 1176 §3**

12. Cremation and the Funeral Liturgy.

- a) Order of Christian Funerals Appendix 2: Cremation, in virtue of an indult effective on All Souls Day, November 2, 1997, permits "... the diocesan bishop to allow the presence of the cremated remains of a body at the Funeral Liturgy in dioceses of the United States. This indult was granted by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on March 21, 1997
- b) In the Diocese of Bismarck, the bishop has granted delegation to the local pastors and associate pastors to give permission for the funeral liturgy to be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains. In every case, the priest must consider the reasons for the request and receive the necessary assurance that the cremated remains will be handled with reverence and will be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. (Order of Christian Funerals Appendix 2: Cremation #417)
- c) If a family makes plans to scatter the cremated remains, a clergyman or representative of the Church should not be present for the Rite of Committal.

13. Central to the Catholic faith is the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist; these elements are to remain prominent within the celebration of the Christian funeral. Therefore the following guidelines are to be respected:

- a) A funeral Mass is to be celebrated in the local church and should be considered the norm. A funeral Mass is not to be celebrated in other chapels without permission of the bishop.
- b) The homily of the Mass should be based on the scriptures selected for the Mass. It may also relate to the prayers of the Liturgy.
- c) Music is integral to the funeral rites. The texts of the songs chosen should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death and triumph over death and should be related to the chosen reading from scripture. The other principles, rubrics and norms concerning music in the Mass (e.g. acclamations are to be sung) are to be followed.