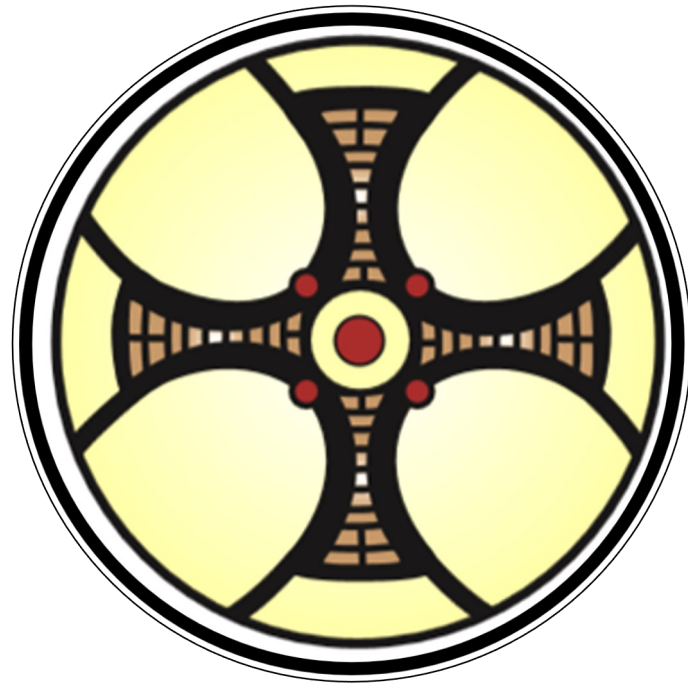


R C Parish of St. Cuthbert, Bolton.

The Churches of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Heaton

St. Joseph, Halliwell



FUNERALS

Notes for Guidance



Letter from Fr. Chris

'Jesus said 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still and trust in me. In my Father's house, there are many rooms'

These words come from the gospel that is chosen most often by families who are preparing for a Roman Catholic funeral and I commend them to you at this difficult time and assure you of my prayers.

This letter, borne out of twenty years' experience of celebrating funerals, is meant to help you to understand what is and what is not part of a Roman Catholic requiem, and to make clear what is and what is not permitted so that you can choose whether this is what you want for your loved one. Some people will tell you that you can do what you want and have what you want at the funeral. This is not the case if you choose to have a Roman Catholic funeral in our parish as you will be choosing a sacred service in a sacred place. The liturgy and the surroundings have a bearing on what is appropriate. If you choose to have a requiem in one of our churches, the norm is for it to be a Requiem Mass. The Mass is the source and summit of our faith and the very best context in which to remember your loved one.

There are practical considerations in the parish when a funeral is being arranged. These include making sure that Mass is celebrated each week day for local parishioners who can support you in prayer. If you have a funeral in church, you will have the opportunity to choose hymns and sacred music. Secular music is not an option for a funeral in church in our parish. Please be aware of this. If, however, the full service takes place at the crematorium, you may choose secular music which should be appropriate for the occasion.

There is always the opportunity for one member of the family to give what is called the Eulogy. This is a reflection on the life of the person who has died. It takes place at the beginning of Mass in church or at the beginning of the service at the crematorium. It needs to be appropriate to the setting and should not be of great length. To keep the focus and mindful of practical timings, around four minutes is the time available for this.

For a Requiem Mass in church, there is a set order of prayers and readings. You may choose hymns and readings from the suggested list, but you may not change the structure or replace the scripture readings with secular texts. You may choose to have an additional reading or poem suitable for the occasion.

In church, there are no flags, photographs or any other objects on the coffin. This is so that the book of the Gospels and cross can be placed on the coffin as the focal point. Flowers can be placed in front of the altar during the liturgy.

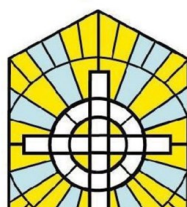
We have a group of parishioners who will help you to prepare for the funeral and look after you on the day if you chose to have a requiem Mass in our parish.

I feel that it is very important to help you by being clear about the boundaries of what is possible and appropriate in order to avoid upset before and during the funeral. With this in mind, if you do choose to have a funeral in our parish, then it will be a very special time of prayer and faith in which to remember your loved one.

Funeral arrangements will only be confirmed from the parish point of view on the understanding that you accept what has been explained in this letter.

Please be assured of my prayers.

God bless. Fr. Chris.



A Requiem Mass - what it includes.

The liturgy for a Requiem Mass begins with background music, played by the organist, as the funeral procession enters the church. This is followed by the Eulogy. Mass then begins with the Opening Hymn. This is followed by a Reading, a Psalm and a Gospel, which may be chosen by the family from the list provided. Family members and friends are welcome to do the reading and the psalm. The priest always reads the gospel.

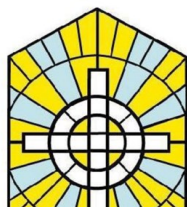
After the gospel, the priest delivers the Homily, which is a short sermon prepared especially for the occasion.

The most sacred parts of the Mass follow. These are the Offertory and the Consecration. The family may choose hymns for both. The liturgy continues with the prayers before the Consecration and the Consecration itself which is followed by the distribution of Holy Communion and the Communion hymn.

After Holy Communion, there is time for reflection. This may include a short poem or a piece of music suitable for the occasion.

The Prayers of Farewell and Committal bring Mass to an end.

The procession leaves the church as the congregation sings the closing hymn.



Funeral Service at the Crematorium

(where there has been no service in church) - what it includes

The Service begins with Entrance Music chosen by the family. This can either be a hymn or a favourite piece of music suitable for the occasion. The Eulogy follows. This may be delivered by a member of the family or a friend and is followed by a reading, a psalm and a gospel all of which may be chosen by the family from the list provided with this booklet. Family members or friends may do the reading and the psalm. The priest always reads the gospel.

The priest then gives the homily, a short sermon specially prepared for the occasion.

After the homily, there is an opportunity for reflection. During this quiet time, a poem may be read or a favourite hymn or piece of music played.

The service ends with the Prayers of Farewell and Commendation.

A final hymn or other piece of music may be played as everyone leaves the chapel.

All of the above will be discussed when you meet with members of the pastoral team. They are familiar with the organisation of funerals in both of our parish churches, and will be pleased to give you guidance and advice. They will also do all that they can to ensure that your loved one's requiem, whether it be a Mass or a Service, is a prayerful, peaceful and respectful occasion.



Checklist for Requiem Mass

- Background music as the procession enters the church
- Eulogy : (optional)
- Opening Hymn :
- First Reading :
- Psalm :
- Gospel : Fr. Chris.
- Homily : Fr. Chris.
- Offertory Hymn :
- Communion Hymn :
- Piece of Sacred Music/Poem : (optional)
- Prayers of Farewell and Commendation : Fr. Chris.
- Closing Hymn :



Checklist for Funeral Service in Crematorium (when there has been no service in church)

ORDER OF SERVICE

- ◆ Entrance Music :
- ◆ Eulogy : (optional)

- ◆ Welcome, Opening Rites and Opening Prayer

- ◆ First Reading:
- ◆ Psalm:
- ◆ Gospel: Fr. Chris.

- ◆ Homily
- ◆ Bidding Prayers

- ◆ Poem/Piece of Music: (optional)

- ◆ Prayers of Commendation

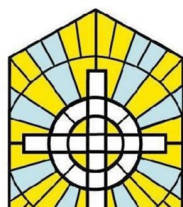
- ◆ Final Piece of Music :



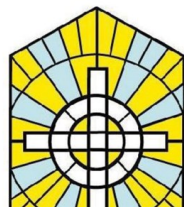
SUGGESTED HYMNS FOR FUNERAL

Numbers refer to the Laudate Hymn Book

Abide with Me	907	
Amazing Grace	846	
As I kneel before you	360	
Be still for the presence of the Lord	720	
Be Thou my Vision	970	
Christ be beside me	910	
Colours of Day	764	
Do not be Afraid	972	
Gifts of Bread and Wine	643	
Guide me, O Thou Great Redeemer	960	
Hail Queen of Heaven	356	
Here I am Lord	865	(I the Lord of Sea and Sky)
Holy Virgin by God's Decree	366	
I am the Bread of Life	629	
If God is for us	793	
I'll sing a hymn to Mary	355	
I watch the Sunrise	956	
Lay your hands gently upon us	432	
Lead kindly light	961	
Lord of all Hopefulness	969	
Lord Jesus Christ	772	
Make me a channel of your peace	898	
How great Thou art	721	(O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder)
Soul of my Saviour	938	
Sweet Sacrament Divine	663	
Sweet Saviour bless us	680	
The Lord's my Shepherd	806	
Walk with me, O my Lord	966	
You shall cross the barren desert	964	(Be Not Afraid)



Suggested Readings for the Funeral



A Reading from the First Letter of St. John 3: 1-2

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children, and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God, but what we are to be has not yet been revealed.

All we know is that when it is revealed, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

This is the word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Reponses : The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.

Response 'The Lord is my shepherd

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff, with these you give me comfort.

Response

You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil. My cup is overflowing. **Response**

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell, for ever and ever. **Response**

Gospel - A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 11: 25-30

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father. Just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



A Reading from the Book of Wisdom 3: 1-6. 9

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God. No torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die. Their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us like annihilation; but they are at peace.

If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality. Slight was their affliction, great will their blessing be. God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with him. He has tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust. They who trust in him will understand the truth. Those who are faithful will live with him in love; for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

This is the word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Response : Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice! O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.

Response : Out of the depths etc.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive? But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you. **Response**

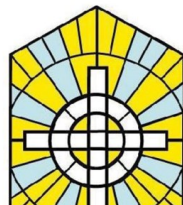
My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word. My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak. **Response**

Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption, Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity. **Response**

Gospel - A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus exclaimed ' I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians 4: 13-18

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them like the 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. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these, you should comfort one another.

This is the word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Response : The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want, Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters, he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit.

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He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness, no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort

Response

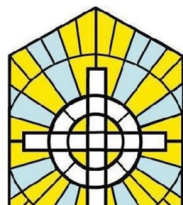
You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. **Response**

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell, forever and ever. **Response**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 14 : 1-6

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me, so that where I am, you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said : 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me'.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



A Reading from St. Paul to the Romans 8 :31-35. 37-39

With God on our side, who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us, he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand, he stands and pleads for us. Nothing, therefore, can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this; neither death or life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Response : I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to God's house'

I rejoiced when I heard them say, 'Let us go to God's house'. And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. **Response** : I rejoiced when I heard etc.

Jerusalem is built as a city, strongly compact. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.

Response

For Israel's law it is, there to praise the Lord's name. There were set the thrones of judgement of the house of David. **Response**

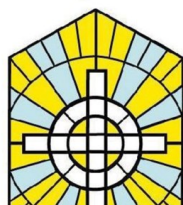
For the peace of Jerusalem pray; 'Peace be to your homes! May peace reign in your walls, in your palaces, peace. **Response**

For love of my brethren and friends I say, 'Peace upon you!' For the love of the house of the Lord, I will ask for your good. **Response**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 11: 21 -27

Martha Said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother', said Jesus, 'will rise again'. Martha said, 'I know he will rise at the resurrection on the last day'. Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies, he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord'. She said, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 15: 20-23

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and, in the same way, the resurrection from the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him.

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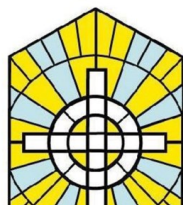
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell, for ever and ever. **Response**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 5: 1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them :

‘How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle; they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn; they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful; they shall have mercy shown them. Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God. Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



A Reading from the Book of Wisdom

The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest. Length of years is not what makes life honourable, nor number of years the true measure of life; understanding, this is man's grey hairs; untarnished life, this is ripe old age. He has sought to please God, so God has loved him; as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up. He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his understanding or treachery his soul. For the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade, and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart. Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life; his soul being pleasing to the Lord, he has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him. Yet, people look on, uncomprehending; it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord, and the protection of his holy ones.

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