

RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites

The Archdiocesan *Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites and Instruction on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites* presuppose Church law on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites as contained in the Code of Canon Law, canons 1176-1185; the Statutes of the Eighth Synod of the Archdiocese of Boston, Statutes IV:F1-4; the Policy on Stipends; the Policy on Offerings on the Occasion of Liturgical Celebrations; the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*; the *Appendix to the General Instruction for the Dioceses of the United States of America*; the *Order of Christian Funerals*; and the *Ceremonial of Bishops*.

Upon recommendation of the Office for Worship and having heard the Presbyteral Council, I hereby promulgate the following Policy on *Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites and Instruction on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites* for the Archdiocese of Boston:

1. With due regard for Canon 1184, the Catholic Faithful departed are to be given the Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites of the Catholic Church, which ordinarily includes the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Mass, and the Rite of Committal.
2. Care is to be taken that the poor are not deprived of proper Funeral Rites, including the Funeral Mass.
3. The only Ecclesiastical Funeral Rite in English approved for use in the Archdiocese of Boston is the *Order of Christian Funerals* (1989).
4. Rituals in other languages must be approved by the appropriate Episcopal Conferences prior to their use in the Archdiocese of Boston.
5. Regarding Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites, catechumens are to be considered members of the Church.
6. Pastors, administrators, members of team ministries, and parochial vicars have the faculty to grant Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites, including the celebration of a Funeral Mass, for a baptized member of a non-Catholic Church or ecclesiastical community, provided such is not contrary to the previously expressed will of the deceased and the minister of the deceased is unavailable.
7. Pastors, administrators, members of team ministries, and parochial vicars to have the faculty to grant Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites, including the celebration of a Funeral Mass, for a child who dies before Baptism provided the parents intended to have the child baptized.

8. When no priest or deacon is available to preside at the Vigil for the Deceased, a lay minister, properly prepared by the Office for Worship of the Archdiocese of Boston, may preside at the Vigil for the Deceased.
9. A Funeral Mass may be celebrated only in a church or in a chapel of a religious community or of a Catholic long-term care institution. A Funeral Mass is not to be celebrated in a private home or in a funeral home.
10. A Funeral Mass may be celebrated on any day except holy days of obligation, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, and the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season.
11. An announced intention Mass cannot be replaced by a Funeral Mass without prior consent of the person who requested the arranged intention Mass.
12. Regarding cremation, it is preferred that the Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy outside Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased prior to its cremation.
13. Pastors, administrators, members of team ministries, and parochial vicars have the faculty to permit the celebration of the Funeral Mass in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased.
14. The Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass may be celebrated in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased person provided that the cremation was not chosen for motives in opposition to Catholic doctrine.
15. The homily at a Funeral Mass, as at all other Masses, and at a Funeral Liturgy outside Mass may be preached only by a bishop, priest, or deacon.
16. Ordinarily the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass is to be celebrated in a church or approved chapel.
17. The Funeral Liturgy outside Mass may be used when the Funeral Mass is not permitted or when the pastor and the family judge that for pastoral reasons the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass is the more suitable form of celebration.
18. Following the prayer after Communion and before the Final Commendation, only one speaker, a member or a friend of the family, may speak for not more than five minutes in remembrance of the deceased.
19. Cremated remains should be buried or entombed in accord with the tradition of burying the dead.

RCAB Instruction on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites

1. THE AUTHORITY OF THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

1. The only canonically approved liturgical rite in English is the Order of Christian Funerals (1989).
2. The Spanish translation of the *Ritual de Exsequias Cristianas* was approved in 1993 by the NCCB and submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. When final approval is given to this ritual book, it will be the only Spanish version of the Rite which may be used in the Archdiocese.
3. Liturgical books in other languages must be approved by their proper Episcopal Conferences. Ministers in ethnic communities should take care that they are using the current approved translation of the Latin *Ordo Exsequiarum*.

2. ENTITLEMENT TO THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Every Catholic, unless specifically excluded by the norms of law, is entitled to the Church's ministry at the time of death.

1. In coordination with the parish priest, the family of the deceased and the funeral director chosen by the family arrange the place and set the time for the Vigil, the Funeral Mass, and the Rite of Committal.
2. The Funeral Mass is ordinarily the central element of Catholic funerals in the Archdiocese of Boston. When survivors hesitate to request a Mass, they should consult the pastor. The pastor should encourage the offering of Mass, explaining that the Funeral Mass is a prayer for God's mercy for the deceased and a solace for the living, including the entire faith community.
3. Catechumens may be given Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites.
4. In the Archdiocese of Boston, Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites, including the Funeral Mass, are permitted for a deceased baptized non-Catholic who might reasonably be presumed to desire or prefer the Catholic rite. Such a decision would be appropriate when non-Catholics worship regularly in the Catholic Church or identify with the Catholic Church more than any other.

5. To foster and respect family bonds, non-Catholic members of Catholic families may be interred in a Catholic cemetery. Clergy of other communions, vested if they desire, may conduct the cemetery rites according to their tradition, if the family so desires or if it was the expressed wish of the deceased.

6. The Church encourages the burial of Catholics in Catholic cemeteries (Canon 1180.1). Burial in the consecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery is a sign of baptismal commitment and gives witness, even in death, to faith in Christ's resurrection.

7. A child who dies before Baptism, or a stillborn or miscarried child, may be given ecclesiastical funeral rites if the parents intended to have the child baptized. The remains of fetuses or stillborns should always receive reverent Christian burial if this is at all possible. These remains may be placed either in specific individual graves or in a common burial area.

8. The *Order of Christian Funerals* provides a complete funeral liturgy for children who have died (OCF #234-342). The various texts for a baptized child or a child who died before Baptism make these rites fully adaptable to various situations, and offer consolation for those suffering the extraordinary grief which comes with the death of a child.

9. There is no objection to Catholics making prior arrangements to donate their bodies or parts of them, after certain death, to advance medical science. Upon eventual disposition of the body or its parts, there should be reasonable assurance that the remains will be disposed of in a proper, reverential manner. The family of such a donor should be encouraged to celebrate a pro-burial Mass as soon as possible after death. Whatever remains of the body after an organ transplant or medical research should be given appropriate burial. The rite of final committal with final commendation (OCF #224-233) offers a model for concluding prayers for the donor and the donor's family (CCC 2300-2301).

3. INVOLVEMENT OF THE ENTIRE PARISH COMMUNITY

Since the ministry of consolation belongs to the entire Christian community, the entire community is to be involved in caring for the dying, praying for the dead, and comforting those who mourn.

l. Regular catechesis is encouraged to help parishioners understand their role in ministering to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

2. Parish policies, procedures, and ministerial resources are to be developed in light of these guidelines and communicated clearly to parishioners so they can take full advantages of the services available to them at time of death.

3. Funeral directors provide an invaluable service to families and to the Church. Often the funeral director provides the first response to a family who has experienced the death of a loved one. It is important for parish staffs and local funeral directors to cultivate an attitude of mutual respect and effective collaboration. Annual meetings with funeral directors within a parish or cluster are encouraged. Funeral directors are encouraged to include study of the *Order of Christian Funerals* as part of their regular in-service study, and are invited to call upon the services of the Office for Worship.

4. MINISTRIES IN THE RITES OF THE ORDER FOR CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

In keeping with the norms found in the Order of Christian Funerals, priests and deacons are to share the responsibility for planning and implementation of the Order with qualified lay ministers.

1. The rite, Gathering in the Presence of the Body (OCF #109-118), may be used if a priest, deacon, or parish minister is present at the time of death, or when the family first visits the body,

2. A pastoral visit to the family by the priest celebrating the Funeral Mass is an expected part of the Church's ministry of consolation. The ministry of a bereavement group or ministry of consolation is never to substitute for the pastoral visit of the priest.

3. Part of the priest's ministry to the grieving family may include the offer to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. This may be appropriate when the family has not participated in worship for some time. However, this does not warrant general absolution in the Archdiocese of Boston.

4. A full complement of liturgical ministers is recommended in the celebration of the various liturgies of the *Order of Christian Funerals*. "In liturgical celebration each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #28).

5. The preparation of the liturgy can provide consolation for the mourners. However, the preparation of the liturgy should never become a burden for the family.

6. The *Order of Christian Funerals* recommends that family members be involved in some of the liturgical roles, unless they prefer not to be involved (OCF #15). Nevertheless, they might designate the persons to place the pall or appropriate symbols on the casket at the reception at the doors of the church, as well as the persons to bring gifts of bread and wine to the altar (OCF #152).

7. Music selected for the *Order of Christian Funerals* should be appropriate for Christian prayer and conform to liturgical directives. The texts of the music should express the Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. This is especially important for the Song of Farewell. Popular non-religious songs are not to be used in the liturgy.

5. PRESIDING AT THE VIGIL

Parish policy may not exclude priests from presiding at this rite. When no priest or deacon is available to preside at the vigil, lay ministers who have been properly prepared may preside.

1. During the wake, the Vigil for the Deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Church in the time following death and before the Funeral Liturgy. The practice of scheduling a specific hour for the Vigil for the Deceased is encouraged in order for more of the faithful to participate in this liturgy. However, devotions such as the rosary are permitted at other times during the wake.

2. The Vigil for the Deceased may provide a chance to take part in the funeral rites for those unable to participate in the Funeral Mass or Rite of Committal.

3. When no priest or deacon is available, it is permissible for a trained lay minister to be designated by the pastor to preside at the Vigil for the Deceased, providing the person has been formed in an understanding of the *Order of Christian Funerals*, and is also skilled at leading public prayer. The Office for Worship is charged with providing training for these lay ministers.

4. When the Vigil for the Deceased is celebrated in a church, a priest or deacon is to be vested in an alb and stole. A priest may wear a cassock and surplice with stole.

5. When a wake takes place in the church, the Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church (OCF #82) is to be celebrated.

6. Particular groups may be invited to celebrate a prayer service for the deceased in addition to the Vigil for the Deceased. In the case of religious communities of men and women, the customs and rituals of the community may be integrated into the Vigil for the

Deceased or there may be distinct times of prayer within the wake. The Liturgy of the Hours, Office for the Dead, found in the Order of Christian Funerals, Part IV, provides a form of a Vigil for the Deceased. Morning prayer from the Office might also be celebrated on the day of committal, following an evening Funeral Mass.

7. The presence of a cantor or other music minister at the Vigil for the Deceased can be helpful in leading the people in prayer, particularly in the singing of the psalms and responses of the liturgy.

8. If the church has appropriate space, it is permissible to hold the wake in the church building. This possibility is to be considered in the course of building or renovation projects.

6. SCHEDULING THE FUNERAL LITURGIES

1. The Funeral Mass may be celebrated at any hour of the day. Each parish should develop a clear policy on funeral schedules which is shared with parishioners and local funeral directors. While local policy should take into account the daily Mass of the parish, the availability of priests, the scheduling of liturgies and other parish events, sensitivity to the grieving family should be paramount in scheduling the Funeral Mass.

2. If the Funeral Mass is celebrated in the evening, a sufficient length of time should separate it from the celebration of the Vigil for the Deceased. The schedule for the Rite of Committal, ordinarily the next day, should be announced and the faithful invited to reconvene at that time.

3. The Vigil for the Deceased should be celebrated at a convenient time. The time for the Vigil for the Deceased may be published in the obituary notice.

4. Funeral Directors are asked to respect the correct names of the various liturgical rites in written obituary notices. Proper terms such as "Vigil for the Deceased", "Funeral Mass", "Funeral Liturgy outside Mass", and "Rite of Committal" are encouraged.

5. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer from the Office for the Dead (OCF, Part IV) may be scheduled during the time of the wake. The Office for the Dead may be celebrated in the funeral home, church, or oratory of a religious community, or in the family home.

6. Funeral Masses are not celebrated on solemnities of obligation, on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, or on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season. At a Funeral Mass celebrated on Ash Wednesday ashes are not distributed.

7. On days when the Funeral Mass may not be celebrated, the appropriate Rite is the Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass. A pro-burial Mass may be offered on another day.

8. Although the Funeral Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church to which the deceased belonged, it is possible to choose any Catholic church for the Funeral Mass, provided the pastor of that church agrees and the pastor of the deceased has been informed (Canon 1177). As a rule, the funeral rites for religious may be celebrated in their own church or oratory. The Funeral Mass may also be celebrated in chapels of Catholic long-term care institutions.

9. Parishes with many funerals may limit the number of Funeral Masses or Funerals outside Mass on any given day. It may not always be possible to have a Funeral Liturgy on a day or hour of one's choice.

10. If a funeral cannot be scheduled on a particular day, ordinarily the funeral will be celebrated on the next available day.

11. If two or more families, or a religious community, desire it, a Funeral Mass may be celebrated for more than one person.

12. The Funeral Mass may be celebrated at one of the regularly scheduled daily Masses in the parish. Particularly in instances where the deceased does not have a large family or circle of friends, the presence of the daily Mass community is extremely consoling to the mourners. A core group of readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, funeral choir, and servers may emerge from the daily Mass community.

13. When a Funeral Mass is to be celebrated as the daily Mass, every effort will be made to announce this to the daily assembly well in advance. If an announced Mass has been scheduled for a daily Mass, it is not possible to substitute a Funeral Mass without the consent of the person who has requested the announced Mass.

7. PRESIDING AT THE FUNERAL LITURGY

1. Only a bishop, priest or deacon is allowed to preach the homily at the funeral liturgy.

2. A eulogy is not appropriate where a homily is prescribed (OCF #27), although examples from the person's life may be used in the homily. The literary genre of eulogy is not a homiletic form. Rather, the homily is to "illumine the mystery of Christian death in the light of the Risen Christ (CCC #1687)" as proclaimed in the readings.

3. Excellence in preaching is of critical importance to the evangelizing task of the Church, especially at a moment when the faithful who live apart from the regular life of the Church may yearn for a message of faith and Christian hope.

4. In the Archdiocese of Boston, one speaker chosen by the family may offer not more than a five-minute remembrance of the deceased at the Funeral Liturgy before the final commendation. The remarks are to be simple, brief, and prepared. Care must be taken to follow this. Some priests have found it helpful to see the text beforehand. Within the context of a liturgy, the tone should remain one of faith and hope.

5. Other occasions might offer opportunities for individuals to share remembrances of the deceased.

8. THE FUNERAL MASS

In the dioceses of the United States, the principal rituals in the Order of Christian Funerals are the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Mass, and the Rite of Committal. The Funeral Mass is the central liturgy of the Christian funeral in the Archdiocese of Boston.

1. The Eucharist is the heart of the Paschal reality of Christian death (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1689). In the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church most perfectly expresses her communion with those who have died. The celebration of the Eucharist at the funeral is an opportunity for the community of the faithful, and for the family, to "learn to live in communion with the one who has 'fallen asleep in the Lord,' by communicating the Body of Christ of which he is a living member and, then, by praying for him and with him" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1689).

2. The Introductory Rites of the Funeral Mass presume a greeting of the mourners who accompany the body to the doors of the church. They are greeted by the priest and liturgical ministers, and other persons who have gathered at the church to await the procession from the funeral home or family home. The ritual plan for a parish must take into account the structure of the liturgy, the size of the assembly, the architecture of the church, and the vicissitudes of climate.

3. It is not ordinarily permitted to seat the family members who accompany the body before the body is presented for blessing. Parishes are called upon to develop, in collaboration with funeral directors, policies which result in seating on both sides of the church and towards the front of the assembly area.

9. THE FUNERAL LITURGY OUTSIDE MASS

It is the custom in the United States for a priest or deacon to preside at the funeral liturgy when it is celebrated outside of Mass.

1. The Funeral Liturgy outside Mass (OCF #177-203) is celebrated when a Mass is not possible or not deemed appropriate. It is ordinarily celebrated in the parish church, but it may also be celebrated in a funeral home, the home of the deceased or cemetery chapel (OCF #179). The pastoral advice of the parish priest is essential in determining what is appropriate.
2. The family may choose to celebrate a funeral outside of Mass, and schedule a memorial Mass at a later date, when it is determined in consultation with the parish priest that this form of the funeral liturgy is a more suitable form of celebration.
3. When the funeral liturgy is celebrated outside Mass, the community nonetheless gathers to hear the message of Easter hope proclaimed in the liturgy of the word and to commend the deceased to God. An invitation to a priest to "say some prayers" at a service does not constitute the liturgy of the Church.
4. The readings are chosen from those approved for Masses for the Dead.
5. Although the Order of Christian Funerals includes the possibility of Holy Communion in this form of the liturgy, this practice is not encouraged in the Archdiocese of Boston.
6. Music is an essential element of this form of celebration, which includes the entrance or gathering song, the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, and especially the song of farewell at the final commendation.

10. MUSIC IN THE FUNERAL MASS

It is the pastoral responsibility of parishes to provide liturgical music at all Funeral Masses. The same liturgical norms applied to music at any Mass apply to the Funeral Mass.

1. An instrumentalist, a cantor, and even a choir where possible should assist the full participation of the assembly in the songs, responses, and acclamations of the funeral Rites (OCF #33).
2. Certain musical texts are primary and should be sung at the Funeral Mass: the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, the three acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer, the "Lamb of God" litany, and the "Song of Farewell." These should not be done by cantor, choir, or soloist alone. Rather, they belong to the assembly.

3. In the *Order of Christian Funerals*, as in all the reformed liturgical books, the cantor/leader of song has an important task. The task of the cantor is to animate and direct the singing of the assembly. With the exception of the responsorial psalm, which is done from the ambo, the cantor ordinarily leads the assembly from a lectern. The Office for Worship is charged with providing regular opportunities for cantor development and enrichment.

4. Some form of hymnal or worship program is called for at funerals. The program might be a computer-generated document with the words and music for the liturgy. Copyright licenses and permissions are necessary, and many parishes have found annual licenses to be both convenient and inexpensive. Some liturgical publishers have offered participation cards and booklets for the liturgy which have proven very useful. A separate sheet might be prepared for the participation of the faithful in the committal at the cemetery.

5. A choir has proven of great worth in many parishes. Members of a funeral choir are often recruited from parishioners who are retired, self-employed, or whose work gives them freedom of schedule.

6. The selection of music for the funeral liturgy is often a sensitive issue for bereaved families, parish musicians, and pastoral staff. The choice of music for Christian funerals must be in accord with all the recommendations governing music in liturgy, especially those found in *The Order of Christian Funerals*, *Liturgical Music Today*, and *Music in Catholic Worship*.

7. The principle of progressive solemnity, described in *Music in Catholic Worship*, applies to the rites found in *The Order of Christian Funerals*. A few things sung well, including the responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, eucharistic prayer acclamations, and the song of farewell have priority in funeral liturgies (*Liturgical Music Today* #33). Many of these may be drawn from the repertoire of the Sunday assembly.

8. The responsorial form of psalm singing, in which the psalmist or choir sings the verses and the assembly responds with a brief antiphon, is well suited to the funeral liturgy. The practice of substituting metrical hymns based on psalm texts for the responsorial psalm is not encouraged since this form affects and alters the ritual pattern of responsorial singing (*Liturgical Music Today*, #40).

9. The request for "favorite songs" of the deceased often result in inappropriate performances of music incapable of bearing the weight liturgy demands. Popular songs, sentimental ethnic music, or songs from Broadway hits are never to substitute for the music of the funeral liturgy. There are three standards of judgment proposed in *Music in Catholic Worship*. The liturgical judgment: is the music's text, form, placement and style congruent with the nature of the liturgy? (MCW 30-38) The musical judgment: is the music

technically, aesthetically and expressively good irrespective of musical idiom or style? (MCW 26-29) The pastoral judgment: will it help this assembly to pray? (MCW 39-41) Such a process may not be as easy to apply as an absolute list of permitted or prohibited music, but is more effective pastorally.

10. Music is preeminent among the signs expressed by the participants in any liturgy. Therefore, recorded music is not to be used within the liturgy to replace the congregation, the choir, the organist, cantor, or other musicians. (*Liturgical Music Today*, #60).

11. THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

The Rite of Committal is celebrated at the place of burial or interment and never in the church.

1. The Rite of Committal, whether at an interment chapel, at a mausoleum or at a graveside, is a gathering of the faithful for prayer.
2. Military services and certain cultural or social rites are permissible at the cemetery. These other services should be arranged in advance with the local parish priest and coordinated in such a way that they do not disrupt or distract from the integrity of the liturgical committal service. Funeral directors are called upon to assist in the coordination of these elements, and to safeguard the integrity of the Church's liturgy at the Rite of Committal.
3. If a lengthy time has passed since the celebration of the Funeral Mass, or if the funeral has been conducted overseas or in a distant state, the Rite of Committal with Final Commendation (OCF #224-233) may be more appropriate.

12. CREMATION

While the Church recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed, cremation is permitted as long as it has not been chosen for reasons contrary to Catholic teaching (Canon 1176.3 Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2301).

1. It is preferred that the Funeral Mass or the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased prior to its cremation. (OCF Appendix Cremation #411-438, available through the Office for Worship, (617) 746-5880.
2. The significance of having the body of the deceased present for the funeral liturgy is indicated throughout the Mass texts and ritual actions. Therefore, when arrangements

involving cremation are being made, the parish priest is to recommend that: a) following a wake, or a time of visitation, the Funeral Mass be celebrated in the presence of the body of the deceased person, and that following the Funeral Mass, the body of the deceased be cremated; b) the Funeral Mass conclude with the final commendation in the church; c) at an appropriate time, usually some days later, the family gather at the cemetery for the burial of the cremated remains. The Rite of Committal takes place at this time with the inclusion of the proper prayers for the committal of ashes (OCF #406.3).

3. If cremation has already taken place before the Funeral Mass, the pastor may permit the celebration of the Funeral Mass in the presence of the cremated remains of the deceased person.

4. Special circumstances occur, such as health concerns or out-of-state or overseas transport which prompt families to arrange for cremation before making funeral arrangements. If cremation has taken place, the parish priest is to recommend: a) gathering with family and friends for prayer and remembrance of the deceased; b) celebration of a Funeral Mass; c) gathering with family and friends for the interment of cremated remains at the cemetery in the Rite of Committal.

5. Cremated remains should be treated with the same respect given to the remains of a human body, and should be buried or entombed. The scattering of cremated remains on the sea or on the ground or keeping them in the home is not the reverent final disposition that the Church directs.

13. THE BISHOP IN THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

1. It is fitting when a bishop is present at a Funeral Mass that he be the Principal Celebrant. If he is not the Principal Celebrant at a Funeral Mass, in the Archdiocese of Boston he participates and leads the Rite of Commendation (Ceremonial of Bishops, #175).

14. CUSTOMARY OFFERINGS

1. In accordance with traditional custom, offerings may be accepted by the parish on the occasion of a funeral. The offerings which are given are to be placed in the parish account (Synodal Statute V-8, also Archdiocesan Policy Handbook, p. 2603).

2. The offering on the occasion of a funeral does not include the professional fees for an organist, cantor, or other support services, unless this is part of the contract for the professional musician. Fees for musicians should be established on the parish level by the

pastor in consultation with the musicians involved (Pastoral Guidelines and Policies Book II, p. 6316 or Offerings on the Occasion of Liturgical Celebrations). Each parish is to have a plan for assisting families with financial hardship. Priests and deacons whose responsibilities include the spiritual care of patients or residents at various institutions and hospitals may want to initiate action for charity burials when the deceased has no relative to do this. Funeral directors should be informed that no offering is expected from the poor or those unable to afford an offering.

15. MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION

The establishment of a bereavement ministry is encouraged for every parish of the Archdiocese.

1. A bereavement ministry is a part of the ministry of the Church. "Those who are baptized into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are to be responsible for each other" (OCF #8). This ministry of mutual charity, caring for others in sickness, death, and mourning, is a call to every believer — priest, deacon, religious, layperson. The responsibility of the bereavement ministry rests with the community, which is to be instructed in this care by pastors, parochial vicars, and other ministers.

2. The ministry of bereavement extends beyond the time of the funeral to include the days and weeks after Christian burial.

16. CONCELEBRATION AT THE FUNERAL MASS

Frequently, the decision is made that a Funeral Mass be concelebrated by several priests. Priests who are invited to concelebrate should be aware of the prescriptions of canon 905: "For a just cause, a priest is permitted to celebrate Mass twice on any given day." The norms set forth in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal #199 - 251 are to be followed carefully, as well as the NCCB document "Guidelines for the Concelebration of the Eucharist" (1987).

1. Concelebration is a sign and a strengthening of the fraternal bond of priests and of the whole community, and is "the preeminent manifestation of the Church in the unity of sacrifice and priesthood and in the single giving of thanks around the one altar" (*In celebrationae Missae*, August 1973, #1).

2. Families planning to invite priests to concelebrate at the funeral liturgy or to fulfill other roles in the course of the funeral rites are encouraged to communicate these plans to the

pastor. As a courtesy to liturgical planners, priests who expect to participate in this way should contact the parish or religious community in advance.

3. Concelebrants should be seated together as a group. They should not be intermingled with the assembly, nor should anyone be seated between the concelebrants and the altar. Concelebrants must not be placed in such a way as to form a barrier between the altar and the Faithful, who kneel during the Eucharistic Prayer. Their position should not obscure the fact that only one bishop or presbyter presides over the entire action. Care is to be taken that the concelebrants neither usurp the place nor limit the functions of other liturgical ministers.

4. The chasubles worn by all the concelebrants should be simpler in their decoration than that of the principal celebrant. If sufficient chasubles are not available, it may be preferable for all the concelebrants to vest in albs and stoles of the same liturgical color, without prejudice to the custom of having designated concelebrants.