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| The Church Triumphant |
| A Funeral Guide for Deacons |
| This document is a guide for participation in a Deacon’s Funeral Liturgies. Small variations may be included. It also contains a Funeral Planning Guide, Emergency Contact Information and Vesting Prayers for a Deceased Deacon. *Picture above is of Faith* or *The Church Triumphant*, by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1664 – 1665 |
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**FUNERAL GUIDE FOR DEACONS**

To live out our calling according to the Will of God, it is incumbent upon Deacons to reflect the Gospel we herald to our Catholic Family, even in death. As a community of Servants of Jesus Christ, this becomes especially important when responding to a brother Deacon who passes away.

To be sure, the dignity of Deacon Funeral Liturgies is a wonderful witness to the world of the promises of Jesus Christ and an appropriate way of showing our gratitude for the unselfish ministry of our deceased brother. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the ordained ministers to assure conformity and reverence for each brother Deacon as he is laid to rest in the hope of his eternal life with God in heaven.

The Diaconate community has a responsibility to ensure their deceased brothers are given the respect and reverence that is due to any family member--as they share the same indelible mark, conferred at ordination that will accompany each one into eternity. Also, because they are ordained ministers, it is very important that the Funeral Liturgies are done with utmost care and in keeping with the desires of the Church teachings.

This document has been put together to provide guidance in fulfilling our obligations as Deacons, even in death. But more importantly, this document provides for consistency and understanding of what the Church already provides through Her liturgical documents; both universally and locally.

**Notification of a Deacon’s Death**

It is important that the Deacon provides contact information to his family members and guardians to ensure that the Office of the Diaconate is notified when he goes into a hospital or when he has passed away. The Diaconate Office also desires to be notified in the event that a family member becomes seriously ill or passes away since the Deacon’s immediate family is also important to the community. *Contact information is available in Appendix A*.

**Deacon Funeral Plan**

The funeral planning sheet is not for the Deacon. While advance preparation for one’s funeral doesn’t eliminate the grief of family members when the death actually occurs, it does help alleviate some of the stress and confusion for those who are suddenly required to plan the funeral. Specifically then, the funeral planning sheet is for the Deacon’s loved ones. A spreadsheet with the different elements of the Funeral Liturgies has been provided to all the Deacons. (*Appendix B*). Keep in mind that the funeral plan is a “planning guide” and that the Office of Deacon Personnel understands that conditions may exist that require changes to some of the entries. For example, if the desired homilist is deceased or unavailable, the family and the Office of Deacon Personnel will work to find someone else to do the homily.

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy, every man preparing for Ordination is required to present a completed funeral planning sheet to the Office of the Diaconate prior to Ordination. Likewise, a Deacon who is requesting to be placed in a retirement status must submit a funeral planning sheet to the Office of Deacon Personnel for approval before it is sent to the Archbishop for signature.

The Deacon should discuss his funeral plan with family members so they understand the protocol appropriate to his office and his own personal requests. Once he is finished filling the document out, he should make a copy of the form and keep it in a safe location. The original goes to the Office of Deacon Personnel and is filed away. Should the Deacon desire changes to his plan, he should simply provide those changes to the Office, keeping a copy for his family in a safe place.

**GUIDELINES FOR FUNERAL LITURGIES**

Applicable in this section, the Director of Deacon Personnel can also mean the Director or his designee. The Designee will be the Liaison for Retired Clergy or the applicable Regional Director.

**Guidelines for Response to a death**

Upon notification of the death of a Deacon, the Office of Deacon Personnel will contact the family and offer assistance. The Office will also immediately contact the Archbishop to notify him of the death of his deacon, and then check on his schedule to see if and when he is available to be the Celebrant of the Mass of Christian Funerals. The Office will also pull the funeral plan and will meet with the family to go over the content of the funeral plan.

The Office of Deacon Personnel will also help make the necessary arrangements to insure the body of the deceased is properly cared for and treated with dignity. This includes working with the appropriate personnel from the mortuary to help with arrangements. The Office will also contact the named Clergy (from the funeral plan) to notify them of the death and the desire of the deceased to participate in the designated funeral liturgies.

It is important to remind the family that the body of the deceased will need to be present during the funeral Mass. If the intent is to have the body cremated, it can be done after the Mass is completed. The mortuary usually has items, such as a coffin, that can be rented to offset the costs of the funeral.

**Vesting Prayer**

Once the mortuary has made the body available for vesting, a representative from the Archdiocese will assign Deacons to help vest the Deacon prior to the Vigil. Deacons participating in the vesting prayer service will be individuals who were personal friends of the Deacon, members of the deceased Deacon’s formation class or those who had been active in the same parish where the Deacon served. This visit will include praying for the deceased and his family as well as vesting him in the appropriate liturgical attire. *A recommended vesting prayer can be found in Appendix C*. The minimum required attire for the deceased is as follows:

* Clerical garb is appropriate but not required
* The Deacon Cross underneath his alb and around his neck
* A white alb over his clothing
* A white stole (he may have a requested stole identified on his funeral plan). Stole is to be worn under his dalmatic.
* A white dalmatic

**Vespers**

The Vigil Service is usually conducted the evening before the Funeral Mass. This Liturgy can be done in the mortuary chapel in order to have the body of the deceased present during the service. Of course, the preference is to have the body present at the parish where the Deacon last served in his ministry or in a place he has designated on the funeral plan.

Deacons are asked to attend Evening Prayer for the Dead about a half hour before the Vigil Ceremony begins. Deacons are asked to vest for Evening Prayer as follows:

* White Alb
* White Cincture
* White Stole

Evening Prayer will be conducted in college with the Deacons processing into the facility and sitting together opposite the family. Two Deacons will be assigned by the Director of Deacon Personnel to conduct the Liturgy for the Office of the Dead. These Deacons will be selected based on the desire of the deceased Deacon and/or the family. If no preference is given, the Director will choose two Deacons, as he feels appropriate. The Liturgy Office will provide the pamphlets for the Liturgy.

After the Office is complete, the Deacons in college will be asked to process out one-by-one. Each Deacon will be asked to pay their last respects to the deceased by offering a blessing over the body. Then they will proceed past the first row of family members offering their condolences. Deacons that are not vested will be asked to sit in college behind the last row of vested Deacons, but will not process in or out.

**Vigil Service**

After the Office, the Deacon will process back into the church or chapel in the vestments listed above. The Deacons will process in two-by-two and takes their places in the same location as was previously designated for Evening Prayer.

The main Celebrant for Evening Prayer will be a Priest or Deacon as requested by the deceased in his funeral planning sheet. If no one was requested, the Director of Deacon Personnel, in coordination with the deceased family, will assign a Clergyman to lead the Vigil.

Often a Rosary is requested for the Vigil Service. Should this be the case, the Rosary will be place within the Vigil in place of a homily. The Vigil is also the proper place for the Eulogy which should take place after the homily and should be limited to a reasonable time frame so as not to prolong the Service unnecessarily.

Once the final blessing is received, a recessional song is appropriate and the College of Deacons will process out two-by-two. Since they had already offer condolences to the family, it is not necessary for the Deacons to repeat this process. Rather they should immediately process out of the chapel. A Master of Ceremonies will be assigned to help the Deacons enter and exit the sacred space.

**Funeral Mass**

Whether the Deacon was well known or not, he is an ordained brother among the Servants of Jesus Christ and, although attendance is not mandatory, it is respectful for any Deacon that is available to participate in the Funeral Mass for their departed brother. Deacon and Priest Funeral Masses should be a priority that takes precedence over many other activities. Of course, job requirements and important family obligations are important and can sometimes not be avoided.

The Archbishop or his designee will be the main Celebrant of all Deacon Funeral Masses provided his schedule permits him to be present. All other Priests identified in the Deacon’s Funeral Plan will Con-Celebrate with the Archbishop. We will assign the Deacons who will assist according to the Funeral Plan, as best as possible. Should the Archbishop, an alternate Bishop, or a Vicar be unavailable for the Mass, the Director, in coordination with the family, will select a Priest to be the main Celebrant. The Homilist will be one selected by the Deacon in his funeral plan. If, however, he did not select a homilist, one will be appointed by the Director in coordination with the family of the deceased. The Archbishop will not normally be the Homilist. All Clerics participating in the Sanctuary will be vested in purple vestments.

The General Instructions call for the deceased Deacon to be brought into the Nave, head first because of his participation at the Altar of Our Lord. The Master of Ceremonies will remind the Mortuary Personnel of this obligation prior to Mass.

The preferred location for the Deacon Funeral Mass is the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. However, because of the difficult location and the parking situation at the Cathedral, it is reasonable to request the Funeral Mass at the parish location where the Deacon once served. The location of the Funeral Mass will be taken from the Funeral Planning Sheet.

Deacons in college are expected to vest for all Deacon Funeral Masses as follows:

* White Alb
* White Cincture
* White Stole (when the Mass is at the Cathedral, the Diocesan stoles will be provided)

Those Deacons assisting in the Mass will don a Purple Dalmatic as well. These Dalmatics will be provided by the Archdiocese along with the Celebrant’s chasuble.

Deacons in college are expected to arrive at the parish at least 15 minutes (preferably 30 minutes) before the Mass begins so that they can be assembled into the processional line. The Deacons will typically follow the Deacon with the Book of the Gospels and will process in two-by-two, reverencing the altar and then, in an orderly fashion, take their place in the front section of the nave opposite the family. A Master of Ceremonies will likely be assigned to assist the Deacons in their processions.

Once the Deacons are in their place, the College of Priests will process behind them and sit in a designated area, usually in front or behind the College of Deacons. Those Deacons that have a disability and cannot process will be pre-seated prior to the Mass beginning.

The following responsibilities will be assigned by the Director or the Master of Ceremonies for the Deacons with consideration given to the funeral planning sheet:

* Deacon of the Word
* Deacon of the Eucharist
* Ordinary Ministers of Communion

A Deacon that is assigned to the location of the Funeral Mass may also be assigned to assist with the orderly preparations and movement of the Mass. This Deacon will be assigned by the Master of Ceremonies or the Director of Deacon Personnel.

At the recessional, the Deacons will process out of the church behind the Altar Servers and proceed out the door to the coach. The college of Priests will process behind the Deacons. The Clergy will form two lines to allow the coffin of the deceased Deacon to process between the Clergy. Once the coffin has been placed in the coach, the Deacons will stand aside so that the Archbishop can bless the coffin with the Aspergillum. Once, the Archbishop moves away, the Deacons will help the Priests move forward to the back of the vehicle to offer their final blessings. Once all the Priests have blessed the coffin, then the Deacons are to offer their blessings. It is incumbent upon the Deacon holding the Aspergillum to move away from the vehicle immediately after the last Deacon so as to avoid others coming up to use the Holy Water.

**Committal at the Burial Site**

At least, one member of the Clergy will be asked by the Director to go with the funeral procession to the burial site and accomplish the Rite at the grave. The Deacon is to wear the same vestments he wore at the Funeral Mass. It is strongly recommended that the Priest or Deacon that performs the burial rite be familiar with the family members. Other Clergymen are welcome to participate. It is appropriate for the Presider of the Gravesite Ritual to carry Holy Water and the Order of Christian Funerals Rite Book. It is also at the gravesite where Pastoral care is important in order to care for the needs of the grieving family.

Appendix A

Contact information for the Office of Deacon Personnel is:

Phone Number: (303) 715-3198

Email Address: Deacon.Donohoe@archden.org

 Mary.Borda@archden.org

 Deacon.Rinne@archden.org

Emergency Phone Number: (303) 889-9849

Alternate Emergency Number: (303) 653-8505

Appendix B





Appendix C

**Vesting Prayer for the Deceased Deacon**

*The Leader of the group must be a Deacon or a Priest. This prayer is conducted in the presence of the deceased Deacon’s body, usually at the mortuary and prior to any ritual liturgies being celebrated. Because of the need to move the body in order to place the vestments on the deceased Deacon, it is not recommended the family participate in this prayer service.*

**Leader: Oh Loving Lord, Jesus Christ, Our Savior, on the day of his ordination, Your Servant, Deacon N., committed his life totally to the ministry of *Diakonia*.**   **He served Your People as a Prophetic voice of Your Gospel, giving them hope as a Sacramental Sign of Your Grace within the Sacred Liturgy, and being an example of holiness as a suffering Servant of Your Mercy. Indeed, his life was a vessel of Your Love flowing into the hearts of Your People.**

**As we prepare our brother for his final rest, we pray You will send Your Angels to empty out the many prayers of Your Faithful Servant to Your Throne in heaven. Allow his prayers, the prayers of his family, and his brother Deacons to be heard and answered always; but, most especially during this time of sorrow and grief.**

 *(All recite the Our Father)*

*(It is appropriate to take a Deacon Cross from one of the Deacons present and place his Cross on the Deacon if the Cross is not already present on the body)*

*(All recite the Hail Mary) after the prayer add:* **Intercede for our brother and those who have died marked by the sign of faith**

*Prepare to vest the body with the alb.*

*Once the body is vested with the alb, recite the following:*

**Leader: Deacon N. prepared himself to be purified each time he donned the white alb of the saints. In purity of his heart and soul, he has been washed by the Blood of the Lamb, may he enjoy eternal bliss.**

**All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ, King of endless glory**

*(All recite the Hail Mary) after the prayer add:* **Intercede for our brother and those who have died marked by the sign of faith**

*Prepare to vest the body with the stole.*

*Once the body is vested with the stole, recite the following:*

**Leader: Deacon N. wore the stole of immortality knowing he was unworthy to approach the Sacred Mysteries. Though his immortality was lost through the collusion of our first parents, he prayed that You, Dear Lord, might allow his mortal body to become immortal. May the words and actions of Deacon N. resonate in our lives and gain for him eternal joy.**

**All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ, forever and ever**

*(Recite the Hail Mary) after the prayer add:* **Intercede for our brother and those who have died marked by the sign of faith**

*Prepare to vest the body with the Dalmatic.*

*Once the body is vested with the Dalmatic, recite the following:*

**Leader: Deacon N. was encompassed with the garment of salvation, the vestment of joy and dalmatic of justice. May he experience, the Mercy of Your Forgiving Justice and join in the chorus of angels, forever singing your eternal praises.**

**All: Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ, King of heaven and earth**

*(All recite the Hail Mary) after the prayer add:* **Intercede for our brother and those who have died marked by the sign of faith**

*(All recite a Glory Be)*

**Leader: Through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, the Deacon Saints, Deacon N. Patron Saints and Angels may we give You praise and thanksgiving for all the gifts bestowed on our brother. Welcome Deacon N. into your Kingdom of Glory that he might enjoy the fruits of his ministry in heaven along with all the holy men and women of God.**

***The Litany of Saints*** *is led by the Leader by reciting each name.*

**Leader: St. Stephen, Proto-martyr and Deacon, All: *Pray for us***

**St. Joseph, foster father of Jesus, All: *Pray for us***

**St. Deacon Phillip, All: *Pray for us***

**St. Deacon Lawrence, All: *Pray for us***

**St. Deacon Ephraim, Doctor of the Church All: *Pray for us***

**St. Deacon Francis of Assisi, All: *Pray for us***

**St. Deacon Vincent of Saragoza, All: *Pray for us***

**Holy Mother Mary, guide and comforter of Deacon, All: *Pray for us***

**All the Deacon Saints, All: *Pray for us***

**All holy men and women, All: *Pray for us***

**All the Angels and Saints of God. All: *Pray for us***

***Final Prayer and Blessing***

**Leader: Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them. Eternal rest grant unto Deacon N., Oh, Lord.**

**All: And let your perpetual light shine upon him.**

**Leader: May he rest in peace**

**All: Amen**

**Leader: May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

**All: Amen**

**Leader: May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**All: Amen**

**Leader: May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

**All: Amen**