

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### CRUSE

To enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief  
and cope with their loss

Daytime helpline: 0844 477 9400  
[www.crusebereavementcar.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcar.org.uk)  
Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

### GRIEF NET

An Internet community of persons  
dealing with grief, death, and major loss

[www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

### LIVERPOOL BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

Tel: 0151 236 3932  
Email: [liverpoolbereavement@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:liverpoolbereavement@tiscali.co.uk)

### ALDER CENTRE

For those affected by the death of a child  
Child Death Helpline: 0800 282 986  
Local: 0151 252 5391 (Daytime)

### SANDS

For those who experience Stillbirth  
Tel: 020 7436 5881  
Local: 07594 580092  
Email: [helpline@uk-sands.org](mailto:helpline@uk-sands.org)

### SURVIVORS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE

Helpline: 0844 561 6855  
[www.uk-sobs.org.uk](http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk)

### SUPPORT AFTER MURDER AND MANSLAUGHTER

Helpline: 0845 872 3440  
[www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)  
Email: [samm.national@gmail.com](mailto:samm.national@gmail.com)  
Local: 0151 207 6767(24 hours)  
[www.samm-merseyside.org.uk](http://www.samm-merseyside.org.uk)



# Planning a Catholic Funeral

*Lord God,  
you are attentive to  
the voice of our pleading.  
Let us find in your Son  
comfort in our sadness,  
certainty in our doubt,  
and courage to live through this hour.  
Make our faith strong  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

# Notes for bereaved families

The Catholic community joins you in grieving for your loved one and offers you a range of ways to give thanks to God for their life, to ask for the forgiveness of their sins and to affirm our hope in the resurrection.

Just as there are stages in the process of grieving, the Church encourages us to say farewell to our loved ones in three main stages:

- **The Prayer Vigil**, usually the evening before the funeral;
- **The Funeral**, which may be a Mass or a Funeral Service;
- **The Committal** at the cemetery or crematorium.

However all these rites are not appropriate in every situation and the parish looking after the funeral will be happy to help you decide on what is best for you and to choose appropriate readings, prayers and music.

## **The Prayer Vigil**

The Vigil may be held in the home of the deceased person, in a funeral home or in the church and may be led by a Lay Funeral Minister. The mood of the Vigil is one of quiet support, with readings from scripture and prayers. It may include the Rosary and appropriate poems and songs.

## **The Funeral**

This is the community's main celebration and prayer for the deceased person. This could be a Funeral Mass, but if the majority of the mourners would not be able to participate fully in a Mass, or if no Priest is available, it may be a Funeral Service led by a Lay Funeral Minister or a Deacon. It cannot be guaranteed that all the deceased's wishes will be fulfilled, even where a pre-paid funeral plan has been arranged.

The family and friends of the deceased can be involved, if they feel able, in a variety of ways:

- Placing on the coffin symbols of Christian faith, such as the pall (a large white cloth which reminds us of Baptism), a crucifix and an open bible.
- Placing other symbols of the person's life on a table near the coffin.
- Reading the scripture passages or the intercessions.
- Speaking briefly in memory of the deceased person.
- Bringing up the gifts of bread and wine (if it is a Mass).

The Funeral usually takes place in the parish church but, if it is not a Mass, it may sometimes be appropriate to hold it in the chapel of the cemetery or crematorium immediately before the Committal.

## **The Committal**

The final act of saying farewell is a brief service at the graveside or at the crematorium and this may be led by a Lay Funeral Minister. When a body is cremated there may be a further brief service for the burial of the ashes some time later.

## **Music**

The use of music in the various stages of the funeral is important, and carefully selected hymns and music will enhance the service, bring back memories of a loved one and provide consolation for the bereaved. It should be borne in mind that the Catholic Church has a vast library of music to suit all needs. Some music (or words) which would not be appropriate for use in church may be better suited to the crematorium or the cemetery. Your local parish will be pleased to give advice and guidance.

**Please contact the parish looking after the funeral  
before finalising any arrangements with the Funeral Director.**