



OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

Archdiocese of Newark

Guidelines for a Deacon's Funeral

September, 2010

The funeral rites for a deacon, an ordained minister of the Church, should be celebrated with the decorum and propriety befitting a member of the clergy. This is to be done with sensitivity to the wishes of the family as well as of the deceased.

Upon the death of a deacon, a member of the family or the funeral director should call the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and provide details for the notification of the clergy. (973.497.4125 or 4225 or 4135)

The three services outlined in the *Order of Christian Funerals* (Vigil Service, Funeral Mass and Committal Service), should be meticulously observed.

Viewing

A deceased deacon may be vested in liturgical vestments: alb (cincture), white stole and white dalmatic. A knowledgeable person should assist the family and funeral director to insure correct vesting.

The date of the deacon's ordination should be included on the memorial card.

It is customary that clergy be waked in the church the evening before the funeral Mass.

Vigil

The *Vigil for the Deceased* (OCF, 69 ff) may take place in the funeral home or in the church and it may be repeated. A vigil service may take the form of Evening Prayer for the Deceased (OCF, 385 ff).

Transfer of the Body to the Church

If the deceased is to be waked in the church, the body is received according to the Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church (OCF, 82). If the casket is to be opened, the placing of the pall (and Christian symbols) is omitted.

It is customary to view the body of the deceased from the position which the person occupied in the liturgical assembly, namely, the faithful facing the altar and sacred ministers facing the people.

Funeral Mass

If the viewing takes place in the church, the casket is **not** removed prior to the funeral Mass. The casket is closed and the pall is placed without ceremony **before** the funeral Mass begins. If a Christian symbol is used (OCF, 163), it may be placed on the casket after it is covered with the pall (Cf. OCF, 400). Ordinarily only one symbol should be used. If the viewing takes place in the church, the Mass begins in the usual way (entrance procession, sign of the cross, greeting, penitential rite, opening prayer).

If the viewing did not take place in the church, the Mass begins with the reception of the body (OCF, 158 ff).

Rite of Committal

The Rite of Committal is taken from the *Order of Christian Funerals*, 204 ff.

Participation of Deacons

The liturgical functions of the deacon should be carried out to the fullest extent at funeral services for a deceased deacon. The diaconal ministries may be divided accordingly when several deacons are present. A deacon may preside at the *Vigil for the Deceased* and the *Rite of Committal* in the absence of a priest.

Vigil for the Deceased (OCF, 69 ff – OCF 82, ff)

- Proclaim the Gospel
- (Homily)
- Intercessions
- (Dismissal)

Funeral Mass (OCF, 154, ff)

- (Penitential Rite)
- Gospel
- (Homily)
- Intercessions
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Invitation to the Place of Committal

Rite of Committal (OCF, 216, ff)

- Intercessions
- Conclusion

The roles of reader and other lay ministers should not be assumed by ordained deacons.

Deacons should not function at the funeral of a deacon in ways that would exclude members of the family by assuming the roles that are not ordinarily theirs.

Attending Deacons at funeral services may do the following as appropriate: vest, process and recess, and assist as needed with the distribution of Communion, especially the chalice.