

DEATH AND AFTER

THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE



The Catechism of the
Catholic Church defines what
a funeral is:



- The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing effectual communion with the deceased, at the participation in that communion of the community gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Death

- There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

Ecclesiastes 3



Judgement

- *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

– 2 Corinthians 5:10



Heaven

- Heaven is the fullness of communion with God, it is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity -
John Paul II



Purgatory

- Purgatory is not a place, but a condition of existence where Christ removes the remnants of imperfection - John Paul II



Hell

- Hell is the definitive rejection of God, a state for those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy - Pope John Paul II
- Hell is not a place God sends people as punishment
- What is the connection between human freedom and hell?



A Catholic funeral is
slightly different and can be
with or without Mass:



The Vigil for the Deceased:

- this is a service of prayers, songs and homilies either at the home of the deceased or in church, before the day of the funeral.
- This is also known as the rosary



Introductory rites:

- The priest greets the congregation and says: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." He leads the coffin and congregation down the church aisle. Holy water is sprinkled and there is an opening song and prayer.

Symbols

- Sprinkling of the coffin (reminder of baptism)
- Cross carried out at the head of the coffin
- Incense purification
- Song (brings the community together in song)
- Opening Prayer



Liturgy of the Word:

- readings from the Bible are read out, as well as a homily (a practical rather than theological sermon) and a Psalm.
- See Pg 38-39 of text book.



Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- there is a preparation of gifts, a Eucharist prayer is said and Holy Communion is received.



Final commendation:

- Mass ends, prayers are said and the coffin is taken out of the church



Symbols

- Cross
- Sprinkling of Holy Water
- Incense



Rite of Committal:

- Prayers are said by the final resting place (at the graveside for burial and before the curtains close for cremation).

