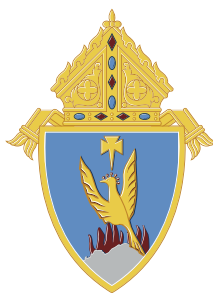




The Corporal Work of Mercy: Burying the Dead

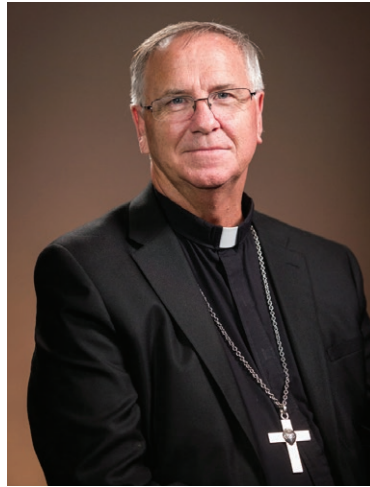
On the beauty of the Funeral Liturgy: Catechesis for fourth through sixth grades.



Catholic Cemeteries & Funeral Homes

A Ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix

Proclaiming the beauty of the Catholic Funeral Liturgy and Christian Burial.



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

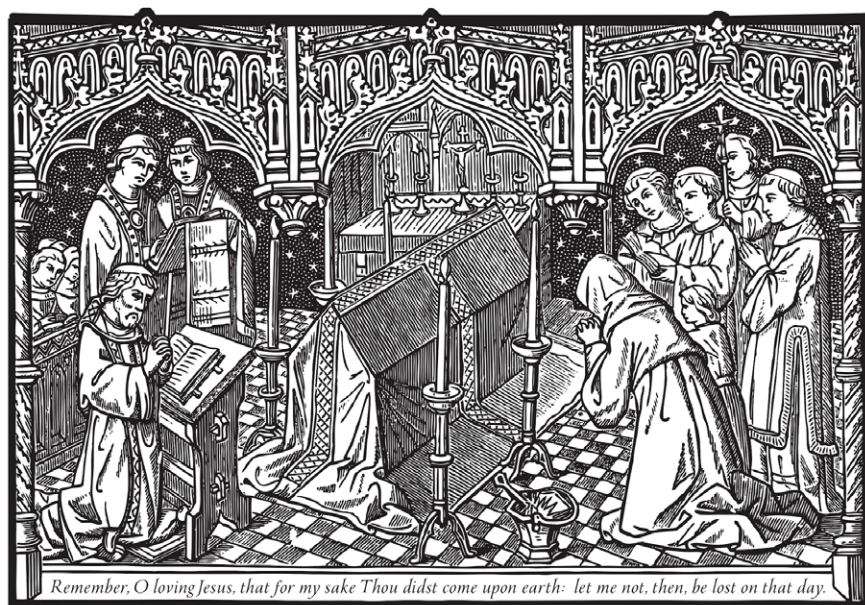
As Christians, hope is at the center of everything we believe — it is our hope in the Resurrection of Christ Jesus that fills us and carries us through the difficult moments of losing a loved one. The Church honors and upholds the dignity of every human person, in a special way those who are in the final stages of life and their families, and a Catholic funeral and burial are a final, sacred act of honoring those we love.

Catholic Cemeteries and Funeral Homes steward this time of difficulty with honor, dignity and compassion. Not only do they intentionally accompany those navigating the many decisions of loss and planning a funeral, but they also foster a spiritual atmosphere, praying regularly and celebrating Masses for the deceased and upkeep beautiful grounds. As a ministry of the Diocese of Phoenix, I am grateful to Catholic Cemeteries and Funeral Homes for tending to the needs of the faithful, both in preplanning and for those experiencing loss. I am grateful for their commitment to ensuring the dignity of every person, and for continuing to foster hope in even the most difficult seasons.

May God bless you and keep you,

John P. Dolan
Bishop of Phoenix

+ *John P. Dolan*



Nihil Obstat
Rev. Michael Diskin
Assistant Chancellor
November 2017

Imprimatur
Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix
November 2017

Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade – Preparation

Corporal Works of Mercy: Burying the Dead

Please read before the lesson to prepare

Most students will have attended a funeral or known someone who has passed away. Burying/interring the dead is one of the corporal works of mercy, and is a central part of the faith community. Alongside the many charitable activities of feeding and sheltering the poor, visiting the sick and imprisoned, our parishes also celebrate thousands of funerals for the deceased. This session is meant to teach students how families and the Christian community participate in the corporal works of mercy when they bury/inter the dead. Below are some Bible and Catechism quotes that will help you to prepare for this lesson.

Bible Quotations

“By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground, from which you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” – *Gen 3:19*

“My son, shed tears for one who is dead, with wailing and bitter lament; As is only proper, prepare the body, and do not absent yourself from the burial.” – *Sirach 38:16*

“Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” – *Romans 6:3-4*

“We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.” – *1 Thess 4:13-14*



Catechism Quotations

CCC 1690 – “A farewell to the deceased is his final commendation to God by the Church. It is the last farewell by which the Christian community greets one of its members before his body is brought to its tomb. 192 The Byzantine tradition expresses this by the kiss of farewell to the deceased:

By this final greeting we sing for his departure from this life and separation from us, but also because there is a communion and a reunion. For even dead, we are not at all separated from one another, because we all run the same course and we will find one another again in the same place. We shall never be separated, for we live for Christ, and now we are united with Christ as we go toward him . . . we shall all be together in Christ.” 193

CCC 2300 – “The bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection. The burial of the dead is a corporal work of mercy; 92 it honors the children of God, who are temples of the Holy Spirit.”

The Three Sacred Moments of a Catholic Funeral



The Vigil. The rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. It is a time when loved ones show their respect and greet the family and friends of the deceased. It is also the most ideal time to share their memories of the deceased through a eulogy or video tribute, usually held at the funeral home the day before the Funeral Mass.



Funeral Mass. This is the central liturgical celebration held with the deceased's body present at a church. Part of Catholic belief is that those who follow the way of Jesus shall forever be in Heaven, body and soul, in the presence of God. We believe in the bodily resurrection. Also, the Church honors the body because it has been the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Church says that the body should be present at the funeral rites. If cremation is selected, the Church prefers that the body be present at the Mass.



Rite of Committal. This rite is the final act of our faith community in caring for the body of its deceased member. By our presence at this rite, we help the mourners face the end of one relationship with the deceased and the beginning of a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude and the hope of resurrection and reunion. The celebration, whenever possible, takes place not in a cemetery chapel but at the open grave or place of interment. The act of committal expresses that the grave, once a sign of despair, is now, through Christ's own death and Resurrection, a sign of hope and promise. The Church encourages all Catholics to seek out a Catholic Cemetery that has been blessed and consecrated as a final resting place.



Fourth Grade through Sixth Grade – Lesson

Opening Prayer

(The prayer said at the graveside, modify to suit your use as needed)

Lord Jesus Christ,
by Your own three days in the tomb,
You hallowed the graves of all who believe
in You
and so made the grave a sign of hope
that promises resurrection
even as it claims our mortal bodies.

Grant that our brothers and sisters may sleep
here in peace
until You awaken them to glory,
for You are the resurrection and the life.
Then they will see You face to face
and in Your light will see light
and know the splendor of God,
for You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

1) Proclamation

(From the Order of Christian Funerals) At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist.



2) Explanation

Typically, in the Diocese of Phoenix, this age group will have been introduced to the central tenets of our faith and have received or are preparing for Confirmation and First Eucharist, for this reason a more detailed Catechesis on the corporal works of mercy and the funeral rite are appropriate.

Suggested question prompts:

1) Q. What are some of the things that Jesus asked us to do?

A. He asked us to believe in Him, to live a good and virtuous life, to trust Him, and He also asked us to love Him and one another. He asked us to serve the poor, visit the ill and imprisoned and also to bury the dead.

2) Q. Does anyone know the corporal works of mercy?

A. They are feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead, and give alms to the poor.

3) **Q.** How do we honor and bury the dead?

A. That's right. A funeral. A funeral is a special time when we commend the person who has died to the mercy of God and, as Christians, pray for them that through their faith in Jesus Christ they will share in His resurrection.

4) **Q.** What happens at a funeral?

A. The family gathers to remember the person who died. First, there is a Vigil (also called a wake) the night before the funeral to remember the deceased and share stories. Often a rosary is said, and friends and family gather to console each other. Second, there is the Funeral Mass, where the Church offers up the prayers for the deceased, and is joined by all the saints and the community

of the faithful. Third, there is a committal rite, where the body or the cremated remains are buried or interred.

Note: Depending on their experience answers may differ widely

5) **Q.** When does the Church pray for all of our loved ones who have died?

A. At Mass, during funerals, at cemeteries, and at home or in church, we can pray for our family members and all who have died. On All Saints Day on November 1st, we ask for the prayers of all those saints who are alive with Jesus in Heaven. On All Souls Day we pray for all those who have died, especially our family and friends . . .



Teaching

Witness:

- If appropriate, share a story of a funeral you attended, share what happened focusing on the two most important aspects,
 - 1) The dead was commended to the mercy of God.
 - 2) The grieving were consoled and given an opportunity to mourn the loss of their loved one.

Catechesis (main points to cover):

- The corporal works of mercy are important ways that we honor the dignity of each person created in God's image. Alongside serving the poor, burying or interring of the dead is a very important aspect of our Catholic faith.
- When someone dies, we have a special way of remembering and honoring them called a funeral which prepares the person who has

died to enter into new and everlasting life with Jesus and helps the family mourn their loss.

- Cemeteries are permanent resting places for the bodies of the dead. They can be buried in the ground, interred in a mausoleum (an above ground tomb), or their cremated remains can be put in a columbarium (a small niche). It's customary that families visit the burial place of their dead loved ones on special anniversaries and All Souls Day or Día de los Muertos.
- Usually the funeral has three distinct parts.
 - 1) The Vigil
 - 2) The funeral liturgy
 - 3) The Rite of Committal

We pray for our family and friends who have died with firm hope that they will experience

the love and mercy of God, and we ask for their prayers and intercession to help us grow in holiness and to love God with all our

hearts. We believe that we will be reunited with our family and friends and all those who are in heaven.



3) Application

Guided reflection and discussion

Activity sheet “The Christian Funeral”

- Help students fill in the worksheet.

Key points to reinforce.

- Honoring and burying or interring the dead is a duty of every Catholic.
- The funeral commends the dead to the mercy of God.
- The funeral provides consolation and healing for those who mourn.
- The funeral includes the Vigil, Funeral Mass and Rite of Committal.

- Visiting the gravesite of family members who have passed away is a longstanding custom in the Church.

Recommended video resource: Fr. Mike Schmidt “The Real Purpose of Funerals”
ascensionpresents.com/video/the-real-purpose-of-funerals

4) Celebration

Finish the lesson by reinforcing any key points and offering a concluding prayer inviting children to pray for any family members and friends who have died

Another option is to pray the Stations of the Cross. See page 26.





The Christian Funeral

Jesus said “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places . . . I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be” – *John 14:2,3*

Directions

Match the descriptions with the part of the funeral that best fits.

Add to description of what happens during each part of the funeral.

Parts of the Funeral

1) The Vigil



2) The Funeral Mass



3) The Committal Rite



Descriptions

- A) The Church offers their prayers for the dead and celebrates the Mass.

- B) The family gathers before the Funeral Mass to share memories, say goodbye to their loved one, and offer prayers.

- C) The family goes to the cemetery for the burial or interment of their deceased loved one.



Compassion † Care † Christ

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