



Dear members of our Catholic Family,

Please be assured that our prayers are with you at this time of loss. Each time we celebrate Mass, we pray during the Eucharistic Prayer, "remember your servants who have gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace." (EP I) Your loved one is in the heart of the Church in this prayer.

This time calls for you to make some difficult decisions, and we are confident that the priest of your parish and those who collaborate with him in parochial ministry are ready and willing to assist you in any way they can. Do not hesitate to call upon them. The dedicated funeral home professionals are also a source of guidance and support at this time.

Wishing you God's consolation,  
I am, In Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory Aymond  
Archbishop of New Orleans

## A Mourner's Prayer

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you willingly gave yourself up to death, so that all might be saved and pass from death to life. We humbly ask you to comfort us in our grief and to receive (name) into the arms of your mercy. You alone are the Holy One, you are mercy itself; by dying you unlocked the gates of life for those who believe in you. Forgive (name) his/her sins, and grant him/her a place of happiness, light and peace in the kingdom of your glory forever and ever. Amen.



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Resources for Catholics

Archdiocese of New Orleans  
NOLAcatholic.org

Archdiocesan Cemeteries Office  
(504) 596-3050

Please contact the church parish of the deceased to arrange for clergy to celebrate the funeral services. A complete listing of parish contact information can be found online at [NOLAcatholic.org](http://NOLAcatholic.org).

Guidance for Catholics:

Important Information  
Regarding Cremation and  
Words of Remembrance

In the difficult process of planning a funeral, there are many decisions that need to be made. Two issues in particular have come to light as sources of confusion and concern for Catholics: that of cremation and eulogies.

While Catholics are allowed to choose cremation, eulogies are not allowed at Catholic Funerals. Words of Remembrance, however, may be spoken to honor the memory of the deceased. The following information is provided to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding these two options.

## May my loved one be cremated?

Catholics today do have the option of considering cremation of loved ones. The Church has some important teachings on this that we must call to your attention before you make that decision.

The Order of Christian Funerals, the ritual book for all Catholic funerals and associated times of prayer, offers the option of having a Vigil Service and a Funeral Mass with the body of the deceased present. Cremation would then occur at a later date, followed by the interment of the cremated remains.

It is also permitted to have the body cremated first, followed by visitation and the Vigil Service, then Funeral Mass, with the cremains present for both. The option in either case is yours.

In either instance, please keep in mind above all else that the cremains of the deceased are always and in every way to be treated just as the body of the deceased would be. It is not permitted, for instance, for cremated remains to be brought home in full or in part. We would not do this with the body of a deceased loved one; we do not do this with cremated remains either.

"The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they come. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport and the final disposition. The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering the remains on the sea, from the air, or in the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition the Church requires. (Order of Christian Funerals, paragraph 417)



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## Words of Remembrance in the Catholic Funeral Rite

The revised Order of Christian Funerals has included a relatively new option for families who are preparing to celebrate the funeral of a loved one. This option is the speaking of Words of Remembrance.

First, please note that this is an option; it is not a required element of funeral liturgies. Its placement in the series of the funeral rites also presents options for the family to consider. To assist you in making the decision whether or not to include this, we offer the observations on the next panel

The Words of Remembrance are not the same as a Eulogy

Words of Remembrance focus solely on the faith life of the deceased, not on other anecdotal memories. As Catholics, we say each day at Mass that "we wait in joyful hope" for the time of our return to the Lord. In reflecting on the faith life of the deceased, we prepare ourselves to say our farewell filled with that same joyful hope. "Because our loved one lived this life, we therefore with joyful hope entrust him/her to the Lord." That is the spirit of Words of Remembrance. Reflecting on manifestations of a loved one's life of care and nurturing, of prayer and fidelity to the sacraments, of service to Christ's Church family, of fidelity to relationship and commitments made in faith: these are all that need be included in Words of Remembrance, for this is how Christian faith is lived.

Words of Remembrance are offered only by one person on behalf of the family. Therefore, the one chosen for this should consult with the family to make certain that the remembrances of all are represented in the remarks.

In our archdiocese, it is the preference of the archbishop that Words of Remembrance, if selected to be included, are offered at either of the following times. 1) During the Vigil Service (Wake Service) following the Concluding Prayer and before the Blessing and Dismissal. 2) Before the Funeral Mass following the prayers for the Transfer of the Body to the Church or Chapel, if these prayers are offered at the funeral home. 3) At the conclusion of the time of visitation and before the beginning of Mass, if all is done at the parish church. Your parish may have other preferences and these should willingly be followed.

Please contact your parish priest or deacon if you need further information or assistance.