



# FAMILY FUNERAL PLANNING GUIDE



Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
Office of Cemeteries and Funeral Services  
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## INTRODUCTION

As a people of faith, we believe that the Love of Christ conquers all things destroying even death itself (OCF 171). Our time on earth is truly a gift from God, but one designed to be finite until that day when we are called from this life to the next by our Heavenly Father. In thinking about our own mortality, we are aware of the blessings in our lives, but also of the need to make peace with others, with ourselves, and with our God who is All Good and All-Loving. This booklet has been designed to help you with many of the practical concerns that need to be addressed at the time of death and is being given to you out of a sense of love and concern for those whom you will leave behind. It is truly your gift of love to those whom you will be reunited one day with you in God's Kingdom .

In the beginning pages, you will have the opportunity to identify your personal preferences for the Vigil and the Funeral Mass. The preference and tradition of the Catholic Church is for the faithful to have an evening visitation, a Funeral Mass the next day, with an immediate full body burial in a Catholic Cemetery. This is, of course the preference, but adaptations for practical reasons can be made. Helping your family understand and you expressing these wishes to them with regard to such things as to an evening visitation or a visitation on the morning prior to the celebration of the Funeral Mass, the choice of an open or closed casket, the level of involvement of loved ones in the liturgies themselves will help ensure that your wishes are carried out and relieve them of any undo anxiety or needless stress.

The Visitation should help your loved ones acknowledge their loss and to celebrate the person's life. On the Road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35), it was important for the disciples to talk about Jesus and all that He meant to them. Those stories would have been a mixture of the grand gestures and miracles, as well as the specific ways Jesus would have touched their hearts. However, the most important and significant part of the Gospel account was the way that Jesus was made known to them in the Breaking of the Bread (Lk 24:31). The Eucharist is absolutely at the center of everything that we do as Catholics. It is the Source and the Summit of our lives. Please make your intentions known that you would like to have a Funeral Mass when the time comes for you to enter into Eternal Life. Making this intention known will help ensure that the Paschal Mystery of Christ and that of His Resurrection will be celebrated in your name to accompany you on that final journey home.

Whether choosing full body burial / entombment or the internment / inurnment of the Cremated Remains of the human body, the Church asks that we be laid to rest in Sacred Ground.

The Catholic Church has allowed cremation to take place since the Second Vatican Council, but She has been very clear on stating that the cremated remains are to be treated with the same dignity and respect given to a full body burial. This means that the Church is vehemently opposed to the scattering or dividing of cremated remains, turning cremated remains of the human body into jewelry or other decorative mementos. The co-mingling of two sets of remains in the same urn is also counter to church teaching and traditions. Making your personal intentions clear, will once again, help your remaining loved ones make the decisions that are true to the faith that you hold so dear and faithfully practiced.

We certainly hope that you will find this booklet is a source of comfort to you in knowing that the faith-based decisions you have made, as well as the pertinent practical information you have entered, will help ease the burdens and questions for those you have entrusted in fulfilling your final wishes.

## ROLE OF THE CHURCH

In the life of every Christian person, there comes the time when we are faced with the death of someone we love. At that moment we rely upon our faith in Jesus and His promise of resurrection to all who believe.

At that same time, we are surrounded by individuals and community of believers wanting to express comfort and consolation. And in the midst of many people and the tumult of many preparations, we turn to the Church. As the final gesture of leave-taking, we gather in a Catholic cemetery and there we entrust the remains of the one we loved to the care of others. Those "others" are known as Catholic cemeterians who perform a ministry of service to all the faithful.

After the funeral director completes their role, the Church commences an obligation that endures through the centuries.

Her beautiful commemoration, starting in church with the Mass, continues in the cemetery, where the presider recites the final liturgical prayers in the interment chapel or at the grave.

The cemetery staff completes the sacred task of burial, entombment, or inurnment, and then assumes the care of the burial place, maintaining it in dignity through all the years of the future.

After the first sharp impact of grief when someone dear is laid to rest, subsequent visits to the cemetery remind us that death is really sad for only those who live without God.

The Catholic cemetery is a silent but serene symbol of the deep, immutable conviction that a truly Catholic life is a passport to heaven.

"He is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things in him, making peace by the blood of his cross [through him], whether those on earth or those in heaven."

Colossians 1:17-20



## PREPARATION FOR BURIAL

People who plan well for their own arrangements leave a gift of inestimable value to their family and loved ones.

Your preparation and arrangements can be solely a matter of business-like efficiency when limited to legal and financial matters. But this preparation can also be an act of faith when people make decisions about the religious rituals that will be part of their funeral and interment. This act of faith will comfort families and loved ones at their time of sorrow and need.

Thus, preparation is an act of faith and a precious gift for surviving family and friends. This booklet is designed to help you plan well for death and burial, both in the legal realm and in the spiritual realm. Parts I and II focus on burial and funeral decisions. Part III helps you provide the legal and financial information needed by your survivors. Part IV, "Guide for Survivors" is about the practical procedures to be followed and decisions to be taken immediately following your death.

# PART I - BURIAL / CREMATION / PLACEMENT OPTIONS

The choice of a funeral home and the choice of a Catholic cemetery are two important decisions to be made prior to death.

## Funeral Home / Director

The funeral home will assist your survivors with the many details which result from death. The Catholic cemetery will be your final resting place.

**I have prearrangements made with this funeral home:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have made prearrangements; I suggest the following arrangements:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Catholic Cemetery

**I have prearrangements made with this cemetery:**

Name of Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot/Crypt Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Easement or Deed Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Legal description of graves or crypts as shown on easement or deed:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you are the lot holder and wish to assign graves to specific individuals, contact the cemetery office to make the necessary arrangements and then list the assignments below.

**GRAVE NUMBER**

**ASSIGNED TO**

**RELATIONSHIP TO HOLDER**

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**I do not have prearrangements made. I suggest the following arrangements:**

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## **Donations of Organs and Body**

Some persons choose to donate their usable organs to "organ banks" or their bodies for medical research. Catholic tradition supports such decisions.

Arrangements for organ donations and a donation of the body should be made in advance. When a death occurs, time is of the essence for useful donation of organs. It is important to discuss your wishes with family and friends. Hospitals and Doctors will often consult a family about organ donations. Following the use of the body for medical reasons, remains may / should be finally released to the cemetery of choice for burial.

**I have made the following arrangements for donation:**

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## **Cremation**

The practice of cremation may be a confusing issue for Catholics. Cremation has been an acceptable option for Catholics since 1963 and since 1997 it has been permissible to bring the cremated remains of the body to the church for funeral liturgy. While it is preferred that the casketed remains be present for the Funeral Liturgy, the urn containing the cremated remains of the body may be brought to the church and placed in the same location where the casket would normally rest.

Cremated remains may be placed in a grave, crypt, or niche. Please contact the Catholic cemetery you have chosen for the available options for the reverent burial of cremated remains.

Catholics considering cremation are encouraged to discuss this with family, friends, and parish ministers. Practical details and expenses should be investigated.

**I wish to be cremated. I have made these arrangements and I ask the following disposition of my remains:**

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## **Memorial Marker and Inscriptions**

The size and style of cemetery markers are determined by the type and number of burial places purchased and the location.

**I have prearrangements for a memorial marker with:**

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**I do not have prearrangements made for a memorial marker. I would prefer the following size and style grave marker.**

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Most burial places are marked in some manner. You may wish to suggest a particular religious symbol, prayer, or text on such a memorial. In keeping with the cemetery as a place of faith, honor, respect and prayer, only appropriate religious art, symbols, and wordings which reflect the true religious nature of the cemetery are permitted to mark burial sites.

Inscribe my Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Religious Symbol: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Prayer or Religious Text:

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"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For Just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall be brought to life."

Corinthians 15:20-23



# **Catholic Cemeteries in the Diocese of Richmond**

## **Diocesan Managed Cemeteries**

### **Roanoke Area**

St. Andrews Diocesan Cemetery, 3601 Salem Turnpike NW, Roanoke, VA 24017  
(540) 595-7173

### **Norfolk Area**

St. Mary's Cemetery, 3000 Church St. Norfolk, VA 23504 (757) – 627-2874

### **Portsmouth Area**

All Saints Cemetery, 2701 Elm Ave. Portsmouth, VA 23704 (757) – 627-2874

### **Palmyra Area**

Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery, 4309 Thomas Jefferson Pkwy, Palmyra, VA 22963  
(434) 589-5201

### **Lake Gaston Area**

St. Peter the Apostle Cemetery, 31 Ebony Rd. Ebony, VA 23845 – (434) 636-6277

### **Virginia Beach Area**

St. Matthews Columbarium, 3314 Sandra Ln. Virginia Beach, VA 23464  
(757) 420-6310

## **Board Managed Catholic Cemeteries**

### **Richmond Area**

Mount Calvary Cemetery, 1400 S. Randolph Ave. Richmond, VA 23220  
(804) 355-5271

Holy Cross Cemetery, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Richmond, VA 23222 – (804) 321-5936

### **Parish Managed Cemetery locator**

<https://richmonddiocese.org/cemeteries/>



## PART II - THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Your thoughts and preparation of the Vigil Service and the Funeral Mass is a significant part of your legacy.

### The Vigil Service

The vigil or wake is the principal service in the time following death and before the funeral Mass or, if there is no funeral Mass, before the rite of committal at the cemetery.

The Order of Christian Funerals encourages a Vigil Service similar to the Liturgy of the Word. Appropriate readings from scripture may be chosen with this in mind. One of the readings should be from the gospels. These readings should be different from the readings selected for the funeral liturgy (see page 10). Intercessions follow the gospel reading.

1. Choice of Readings:

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2. Intercessions:

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In addition to or in place of the Vigil Service modeled after the Liturgy of the Word some people prefer other types of prayers. If you have any additional or alternate requests, make note of them here:

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Flowers, Masses, and contributions to charities are frequent memorials given by family and friends at the time of death. Many people prefer to give specific memorials in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. Indicate any special preferences of memorials you have.

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Memorial cards list the name, date of birth and death and sometimes other information about the deceased. Is there a specific text of scripture, prayer, image, or other words you wish to have on the memorial card?

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## The Funeral Liturgy

The funeral liturgy is either a Funeral Mass or a Liturgy Outside Mass. The Funeral Mass includes the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Final Commendation, and farewell. The Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass includes everything but the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The following need to be planned and one can make choices in advance.

1. READINGS. These readings should be different from the Wake Service readings:

First Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

2. MUSIC. Most of the music is determined by the liturgy itself. There is also the opportunity for the congregation to sing appropriate hymns. Note your suggestions here:

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3. GENERAL INTERCESSIONS. Note here people and special intentions you would like prayed for at your funeral liturgy:

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Suggested persons for the following roles in my funeral liturgy:

1. Persons to place the pall which covers my remains at the funeral liturgy as a reminder of my baptismal garment:

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**Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.**

Luke 23:42-43



2. Lectors for the readings and intercessions:

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3. Musicians to assist parish music director and choir:

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4. Presentation of the bread and wine:

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5. Pallbearers:

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6. Ushers:

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7. Acolytes:

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8. Ministers of Communion:

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9. Priest/Celebrant of Funeral Mass:

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# Scripture Readings for Vigil and Funeral Liturgies

## Old Testament Readings

Job 19:1, 23-27a – *I know that my Redeemer lives.*  
Wisdom 3:1-9 – *He accepted them as a holocaust.*  
Wisdom 4:7-15 – *A blameless life is a ripe old age.*  
Isaiah 25:6-9 – *The Lord God will destroy death for ever.*  
Lamentations 3:17-26 – *It is good to wait in silence for the Lord God to save.*  
Daniel 12:1-3 – *Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake.*  
Maccabees 12:43-45 – *It is good and holy to think of the dead rising again.*

## Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 23 – *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*  
Psalm 25 – *To you I lift up my soul, to you, I lift up my soul.*  
Psalm 27 – *The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom should I be afraid.*  
Psalm 42 – *My soul is thirsting for the living God.*  
Psalm 63 – *My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.*  
Psalm 103 – *The Lord is kind and merciful, merciful is the Lord.*  
Psalm 116 – *I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.*  
Psalm 122 – *Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.*  
Psalm 130 – *Out of the depths, I cry to you Lord.*  
Psalm 143 – *O Lord, hear my prayer.*

## New Testament Readings

Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43 – *God has appointed Jesus to judge everyone, alive and dead.*  
Romans 5:5-11 – *Having been justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's anger through him.*  
Romans 5:17-21 – *When sin increased, there grace abounded all the more.*  
Romans 6:3-9 – *Let us walk in newness of life.*  
Romans 8:14-23 – *We groan while we wait for the redemption of our bodies.*  
Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39 – *Who can ever come between us and the love of Christ?*  
Romans 14:7-12 – *Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.*  
1 Corinthians 15:20-28 – *All people will be brought to life in Christ.*  
1 Corinthians 15:51-57 – *Death is swallowed up in victory.*  
1 Corinthians 4:14-5:1 – *What is seen is transitory; what is unseen is eternal.*  
2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10 – *We have an everlasting home in heaven.*  
Philippians 3:20-21 – *Jesus will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours to be like his glorious body.*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 – *We shall stay with the Lord forever.*  
1 Timothy 2:8-13 – *If we have died with him, we shall live with him.*  
1 John 3:1-2 – *We shall see God as he really is.*  
1 John 3:14-16 – *We have passed from death to life because we love*  
Revelation 14:13 – *Happy are those who die in the Lord.*  
Revelation 20:11-21:1 – *The dead have been judged according to their works.*  
Revelation 21:1-52, 66-67 – *There will be no more death.*

## Gospel Readings

Matthew 5:1-12a – *Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.*  
Matthew 11:25-30 – *Come to me ... and I will give you rest.*  
Matthew 25:1-13 – *Look, the bridegroom comes. Go out to meet him.*  
Matthew 25:31-46 – *Come, you whom my Father has blessed.*  
Mark 15:33-39, 16:1-6 – *Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.*  
Luke 7:11-17 – *Young man, I say to you arise.*  
Luke 12:35-40 – *Be prepared.*  
Luke 23:33, 39-43 – *Today you will be with me in paradise.*  
Luke 23: 44-46, 50, 52-53, 24:1-6a – *Father, I put my life in your hands.*  
Luke 24:13-35 – *Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?*  
John 5:24-29 – *Whoever hears my word and believes, has passed from death to life.*  
John 6:37-40 – *All who believe in the Son will have eternal life and I will raise them to life again on the last day.*  
John 6:51-59 – *All who eat this bread will live forever; and I will raise them up on the last day.*  
John 11:17-27 – *I am the resurrection and the life.*  
John 11:32-45 – *Lazarus, come out.*  
John 12:23-28 – *If a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it yields a rich harvest.*  
John 14:1-6 – *There are many rooms in my Father's house.*  
John 17:24-26 – *Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am.*  
John 19:17-18, 25-39 – *Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

## PART III - BIOGRAPHICAL, LEGAL, & FINANCIAL MATTERS

Obituary and death notices include information on one's family, occupation, and employment. By filling out this section carefully and completely you will leave these needed records. You can also give information here about those who will want to be informed of your death.

### Personal Information - Self

Full Name	Birthdate	Birthplace
Address	Since (Date)	E-mail Address
Previous Address	Dates	
Occupation	Title	Social Security Number
Employer	Position	Dates
Business Address		
Previous Employer		
Schools Attended	Certification / Degree	Dates
Fraternity / Honor Society	Position	
Civic / Public Offices Held		Location / Dates
Branch of Military Service	Service Number	Location / Dates
Unit or Theaters of Service	Dates	Grade, Rank or Rating
Citations, Recognitions or Awards		
Veteran or Reserve Organization		

### Organizations / Affiliations

Organization Name	Office/ Position	Contact Info	Death Benefit Payable?

## Personal Information - Spouse

Full Name	Birthdate	Birthplace
Address	Since (Date)	E-mail Address
Previous Address	Dates	
Occupation	Title	Social Security Number
Employer	Position	Dates
Business Address		
Previous Employer		
Schools Attended	Certification / Degree	Dates
Fraternity / Honor Society	Position	
Civic / Public Offices Held		Location / Dates
Branch of Military Service	Service Number	Location / Dates
Unit or Theaters of Service	Dates	Grade, Rank or Rating
Citations, Recognitions or Awards		
Veteran or Reserve Organization		

## Organizations / Affiliations

Organization Name	Office/Position	Contact Info	Death Benefit Payable?

**Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me."**

John 14:6









## Health Insurance

Name of Company	Name of Insured	ID / Group#	Website

## Automobile Insurance

Name of Company	Policy Number	Beneficiary	Date of	Weekly	Death

## Insurance Agent

Agent Name	Company	Address	Phone#	E-mail Address

## Life Insurance

Insurance Company	Address	Name of Insured		Primary & Contingent Beneficiaries	
Double Indemnity Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Waiver of Premium Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maturity Date	Policy Number	Policy Amount
Insurance Company	Address	Name of Insured		Primary & Contingent Beneficiaries	
Double Indemnity Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Waiver of Premium Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maturity Date	Policy Number	Policy Amount
Insurance Company	Address	Name of Insured		Primary & Contingent Beneficiaries	
Double Indemnity Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Waiver of Premium Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maturity Date	Policy Number	Policy Amount
Insurance Company	Address	Name of Insured		Primary & Contingent Beneficiaries	
Double Indemnity Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Waiver of Premium Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Maturity Date	Policy Number	Policy Amount

## **Advance Health Care Directives**

Catholics believe that life is a sacred gift from a loving God. We are called to be good stewards of our lives and are responsible for protecting and using them for the glory of God. There may come a time when a person becomes incapacitated and unable to make their own health care decisions. Advance health care directives are legal documents that instruct responsible parties to make decisions in accordance with the person's wishes, while treating the gift of life with respect and dignity. Every human life is unique and the same can be said for medical situations, which are rarely black-and-white cases. Most situations require judgment and as good Catholic stewards of life, we are urged to prepare our wishes and decisions in accordance with Catholic Moral Teaching.

Before advance health care directives are completed, the person should discuss their specific health care wishes with people who will be responsible for making these difficult decisions if such a time may arise. An attorney may also be consulted but are usually not required to complete an advanced directive.

Health care directives may differ in structure and content from state-to-state, so you are encouraged to first research existing documents in the state in which you reside. Completed healthcare directives should be reviewed and changed periodically if certain wishes or circumstances have changed. Copies of the updated directives should be given to responsible parties, such as family members, physicians, and legal agents or representatives . The various forms of health care directives are as follows:

### **Health Care Proxy (Health Care Power of Attorney)**

A legal document where a patient appoints a representative or agent to legally make decisions for them if they become unable to make such decisions physically or mentally on their own. This agent(s) should fully understand the patient's wishes and should share their Catholic values, thus minimizing the need for interpretation. Additionally, the patient need not attempt to document all foreseeable medical situations and circumstances, which would be impossible. Therefore, this directive is the most preferred due to its flexibility.

### **Living Will**

A legal document that specifies medical treatments to be received or foregone if a person becomes unable to consciously make these decisions on their own. These instructions may be specific or general and may require interpretation from caregivers. Because not every situation can possibly be predetermined and documented, this would be considered an inflexible directive.

### **Medical Orders (i.e. POLST, DNR, etc.)**

Pre-determined documents, usually at the state level, signed by the patient and physician in advance. These documents offer specific medical treatments to be received or forgone if certain circumstances were to arise. They are not contingent on the patient losing decision-making capacity and have been criticized for giving too much power to the physician, rather than the patient's family. These directives may also apply in non-terminal situations, resulting in foregoing simple services that can be lifesaving.

### **Access to Your Online Presence**

Another valuable source of information is a listing of the usernames and passwords for your various online accounts. Examples are for banking, cell phones, credit cards, e-mail, investments, telephone, social media, utilities, etc. This highly confidential information should be kept securely in a place where a loved one can locate them when necessary. By having this information documented you will alleviate any unnecessary stress for those who will be finalizing your accounts after your death.

# Location of Important Papers

Indicate the location of important papers by inserting the appropriate letter in the boxes below.

H- Home    W-Work    A-Attorney    S-Safe Deposit Box    0-Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Durable Power of Attorney                | <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage License                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care Power of Attorney            | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship Papers (if applicable)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advance Health Care Directive            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military Discharge Papers                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easement or Certificate of Burial Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Mortgage or Lease                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Deed to Home                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance Policies                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Title or Bill of Sale           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accident & Health Policies               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Returns and Information                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property Insurance                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Checkbook, Bank Statements                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Insurance                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Important Documents or Valuables     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Certificates                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Information to Access Your Online Presence |

# Safe Deposit Boxes

Name and Address of Bank	Box Number	Location of Keys	Persons with Access

# Financial Information

## Bank Accounts

Name and Address of Bank	Account Type	Account Number

**“I consider that the suffering of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.”**

Romans 8:18



## Credit Accounts

Name and Address of Creditor	Account Type	Account Number	Website

## Retirement Income

Source of Income	Insurer	Policy Number	Beneficiary	Date	Benefit

## Assets

### Real Estate

Location of Real Estate	Acquisition Date	Acquisition Cost	Name on Title
Mortgage Holder Name and Address	Original Amount	Term	Payment Amount
Location of Real Estate	Acquisition Date	Acquisition Cost	Name on Title
Mortgage Holder Name and Address	Original Amount	Term	Payment Amount



## Wills

Self

Spouse

Name:		
Date of Will:		
Location of Will:		
Name of Executor:		
Address:		
City, State Zip:		
Phone# / E-Mail:		
Attorney Name:		
Law Firm Name:		
Address:		
City, State Zip:		
Phone# / E-Mail:		

## Planned Giving / Trusts

As Christian stewards we have an obligation to pass on the Catholic faith and life we have received to future generations. Making a planned gift to the Church is one way to thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed on us. Planned giving enables the Church to continue the mission entrusted to it by Christ. It is a way for us to continue the witness of generosity, which we have shown throughout our lives.

The most common planned gift is a bequest in a will. Bequests can be made to your Archdiocese or Diocese; to a specific parish, cemetery, or school; or to another church-related organization or ministry. Another frequently used planned gift is a charitable gift annuity. This type of annuity provides immediate tax deductions, lifetime income, and a gift to the church. Depending on the size and complexity of your estate, other planned gift options include retained life estates, charitable remainder trusts, and charitable lead trusts. Most Archdioceses and Dioceses have planned giving offices that can provide additional information and assistance in how to establish a charitable gift annuity or other plan. It is also wise to consult with an attorney who is familiar with estate planning to determine the most suitable planned giving method for your estate.

**"For he who finds Me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD."**

Proverbs 8:35



## **PART IV - GUIDE FOR SURVIVORS**

You have a difficult but important task. The information in this section contains practical information to assist you in the hours and days following the death of a loved one.

### **Death Certificate**

The law requires a death certificate be issued by the county in which a person dies. The death certificate must be signed by a doctor. If the deceased has been under a doctor's care, or has died in a hospital, this is a routine and expected duty of the attending doctor. If the deceased has died unexpectedly, a doctor needs to be called immediately. Copies of the death certificate will be needed at a later date when filing insurance claims and executing the will.

### **Prayers at the Time of Death**

At the time of a death, Christians need to pray. The Church has traditional prayers that are intended for the time immediately following the death of a person if possible before the body is removed for funeral and burial preparations. These prayers may be led by a priest, by a non-ordained chaplain or pastoral minister, by a family member or a friend. If the official ritual (see **Pastoral Care of the Sick**) is unavailable or not suitable, other prayers may be substituted.

### **Funeral Home Arrangements**

Check to see if the deceased has made arrangements with a specific funeral home or has suggested arrangements (see page 3). If the deceased has made no arrangements nor suggested arrangements, you will need to select a reputable funeral home. Consult your pastor / priest along with consulting family and friends for suggestions.

If arrangements have not been made, you will need to select a casket, determine the clothes in which the deceased will be dressed, choose any floral arrangements desired, and decide on the times for the vigil, funeral, and burial (in coordination with the funeral director, parish church and cemetery). The funeral director will coordinate these matters, but family involvement is important and is a way in which love is shown and grief expressed. The funeral director will need information for the preparation of the obituary and / or death notice to appear in newspapers. The biographical information in this booklet will assist you in this task.

Death notices also frequently have information suggesting memorials to commemorate the deceased. See pages 5 and 6 for specific memorial preferences of the deceased. Be sure to have this information included in the death notices.

### **Cemetery Arrangements**

See pages 3 through 4 to determine if the deceased made arrangements for burial or has suggested arrangements. If the deceased has neither made nor suggested cemetery arrangements, a consultant or a service representative from the Catholic Cemeteries will present the various burial options available.

## **Liturgical Arrangements for Vigil and Funeral**

See pages 7 through 10 to determine the wishes of the deceased for the wake and funeral liturgy. Work with the priest and / or pastoral minister from the parish of the deceased. If the deceased has not made his / her suggestions known, follow the format on pages 8 and go to prepare an appropriate vigil and funeral liturgy. Rely on family members and friends for assistance in planning and participating in the wake and funeral liturgy.

## **After the Burial**

Many families share a meal with other mourners after the burial. This too should be planned, and invitations extended to family and friends. Some parishes have the custom of using the parish hall for such a gathering. At other times the home or a restaurant is preferred.

## **After the Funeral and Burial**

If the deceased has made a will (see page 20), be sure to share the financial information with the executor. It is the executor's duty to file the will in court, usually within 30 days of death. If there is no will, consult a lawyer or other legal authority to determine the proper procedure to be followed.

## **Memorial Marker and Inscriptions**

See page 6 to determine if the deceased made arrangements for a memorial marker or suggested inscriptions. If arrangements have been made, be sure to contact your Catholic cemetery shortly after the burial.

A provision in most wills gives the executor power to pay funeral and burial costs from the estate of the deceased. If no arrangements have been made, work with the executor of the will regarding the purchase of an appropriate burial marker.

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."**

John 3:16





## ***A Suggestion***

Select someone whom you know and trust. Tell that person about this booklet. Be sure that person knows the whereabouts of this booklets and has access to it when you die.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

As we have previously discussed, I have used this "Catholic Personal Reference File" book to record my desires regarding my death and burial.

At the time of my death, I ask that you use the information in this book to the extent possible.

With gratitude,

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(Signature)

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(Date)

**“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”**

Jude 1:21





## Social Security Death Benefits

The federal government provides a varying death benefit to those covered by social security. This is payable to the surviving spouse or whoever pays the funeral bills. Certain dependency benefits for children under 18 years of age may also be applicable. **The family must apply at the nearest Social Security Office for these Benefits.** Consult the Social Security Administration at:

**[www.SSA.gov](http://www.SSA.gov)**

## Veterans Death Benefits

The federal government provides a number of benefits to the family of a deceased veteran. Some of these include an allowance toward the burial, a grave marker, and an American flag. **The family must apply at the nearest Veterans Administration Office for these benefits.** Some funeral homes & cemeteries have the necessary VA applications to request the marker and flag. They can assist you in filling out the application. **A DD Form 214, Separation/Discharge Document is required (always keep this document in a safe location).** Consult the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the most current information regarding benefits at:

**[www.VA.gov](http://www.VA.gov)**

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## Links to Other Helpful Resources

Catholic Guidance for End-of-Life Decision Making

<http://www.catholicendoflife.org/resources/>

## United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Resources

Advance Medical Directives Brochure

<http://bit.ly/1tAqKag>

End of Life Resources

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/end-of-life/index.cfm>

Funerals: Bereavement and Funerals

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/bereavement-and-funerals>

Funerals: Overview of Catholic Funeral Rites

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/bereavement-and-funerals/overview-of-catholic-funeral-rites>

Funerals: Readings for the Funeral Liturgy

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/bereavement-and-funerals/order-of-christian-funerals-general-introduction-nos-22-23>

O Blessed Joseph,  
You gave your last breath  
In the loving embrace of Jesus and Mary.  
When the seal of death shall close my life,  
Come with Jesus and Mary to aid me.  
Obtain for me this solace for that hour  
To die with their holy arms around me.  
Jesus Mary and Joseph,  
I commend my soul,  
Living and dying,  
Into your sacred arms.  
Amen.