

DEACON POLICY COMMITTEE FUNERAL GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Purpose:** In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. This saving mystery is at the center of the Church's life. (Order of Christian Funerals)

The death of a deacon is a significant event in the life of his family, his friends, his parish, and his local Church. By virtue of his service as an ordained minister of the Church, the death of a deacon includes a public, as well as an individual dimension, and his death becomes of great concern to the Archdiocese and to the deacon community. It is the earnest desire of the Deacon Personnel Board to provide compassionate presence and practical support to those who suffer the loss of a deceased deacon.

The death of the wife or widow or close family member of a deacon is also of great concern to the deacon community. The communication process described below is also to be followed when notice is received of the death of a deacon's wife or close family member.

- 1.2 **Interaction with Family:** The guidelines which follow are designed to help the Archdiocese and its deacon community respect and honor the memory of one of its good and faithful servants while making available assistance and support to the family of the deacon who has died. Family wishes will always have the highest priority in the preparation and execution of funeral arrangements. Respect and sensitivity to the family's wishes guide the coordination of funeral planning.
- 1.3 **Preliminary Instructions:** All deacons should prepare and maintain current funeral and burial instructions, using the form provided by the Pastoral Personnel Office where it will be kept on file. (See attached) Copies of this form may also be given to the next of kin, a funeral director, and/or a personal representative.

2. Notification & Communication

- 2.1 **Initial Notification:** As soon as possible following the deacon's death, a family member, the deacon's pastor, or another appropriate person should notify the Pastoral Personnel Office. The Director, or his designee, shall then notify the Chancellor and the Chair of the Deacon Personnel Board.

In the initial conversation with the family member the Director, or his designee, will offer the assistance of the Office and the Board in preparing, coordinating, and communicating funeral related plans. This would include reviewing and confirming information detailed in the "Funeral and Burial Instructions Form" kept on file in the Office.

The Director, or his designee, will also inform the Archbishop and Vicar Bishops of the deacon's death and related funeral information. He will also notify "The Catholic Review".

- 2.2 **Contact with the Deceased Deacon's Family:** When the initial conversation occurs between the deacon's family and the Director or his designee, mention will be made that a representative of the Deacon Personnel Board will be in touch to offer support and assistance.

Generally, this contact will be made by the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or another member of the Deacon Personnel Board. The purpose of this contact is to extend sympathy to the family on behalf of the deacon community, and to offer assistance in preparing arrangements for the vigil service and funeral Mass. Sensitivity to the family's sorrow and respect for their grief should be of great concern, taking care to avoid becoming intrusive of their personal needs and desires.

- 2.3 **Communication to Deacon Community:** Once the funeral arrangements have been finalized, the "Telephone Tree" will be activated to communicate the pertinent information to the deacon community.

3. Funeral Arrangements

3.1 Guiding Principles

- 3.1.1 **Plans & Arrangements:** The planning and final arrangements for a deacon's funeral are the privilege and responsibility of the deacon and his family. Representatives of the Pastoral Personnel Office and the Deacon Personnel Board are available to consult with the family and offer assistance for facilitating and coordinating the funeral arrangements. While suggestions

and ideas for consideration may be offered, the wishes of the family will always take precedence.

The pastor of the church where the funeral will take place exercises the primary responsibility for coordinating funeral plans with the family. Deacon representatives should communicate with the pastor before taking any action with regard to the funeral. A mutual and cooperative approach between family, pastor, and the deacon community will help to insure that clarity is increased and confusions & misunderstandings are avoided.

Funeral arrangements for a deacon's spouse are also the responsibility of the deacon and/or his family. The deacon community wishes to offer its assistance and help at these times as well.

- 3.1.2 **Attire:** A deacon may be dressed for burial in either secular clothing or in liturgical vesture. The deacon may indicate his preference in his Instructions Form. If not, the family makes this choice.

If dressed in secular clothing, a stole may be placed on or near the casket, along with other appropriate Christian symbols such as the Book of the Gospels or a crucifix. As it is a liturgical vestment, the stole is not worn over secular clothing.

If dressed in liturgical vesture, the deacon's alb and white stole are to be used. If he wishes, the deacon may also be vested in his dalmatic.

- 3.2 **The Vigil Service:** While the Vigil Service for most deacons occurs in a funeral home, arrangements may also be made for the deacon to lie in state in the church, with the Vigil Service taking place there.

It is most fitting that a deacon be invited to preside at the Vigil Service, and that deacons also participate in other ways, such as proclaiming Scripture Readings, offering Intercessions, etc. If the Vigil Service occurs in a church, liturgical vesture may be appropriate for the deacon presiding at the service. Secular clothing would be the customary attire for a deacon presiding at a Vigil Service taking place in a funeral home.

Deacons are encouraged to attend the Vigil Service with their wives, and be seated together as one body.

- 3.3 **The Funeral Mass:** The presider of the Mass of Christian Burial would be either the Archbishop, a Vicar Bishop, the pastor of the

parish, or another priest requested by the family. Priests will be invited and encouraged to concelebrate, and deacons will be invited and encouraged to vest and be seated together. The deacon may indicate on his Instructions Form who he requests to serve as the homilist. If no such indication has been made, the family will be consulted by the pastor.

It is also to be encouraged that two deacons assist in the sanctuary, one as Deacon of the Word and the other as Deacon of the Eucharist.

Note is to be made that the casket of the deacon is to be placed with the head closest to the sanctuary, reflecting the custom of placing the deceased in the midst of the worshipping assembly in death in the same posture which they assumed in life.

The general liturgical norms are to be followed. It is encouraged that the presidential prayers in the Sacramentary designated for deacons be used. If the deacon has not already indicated on his Instructions Form specific choices for Scripture Readings, Music, and persons to exercise roles in the liturgy, the family should be encouraged to offer their suggestions. Unless instructed otherwise per the request of the deceased deacon's family, deacons attending the funeral Mass are welcomed to vest and be seated together at the liturgy. The Office is available to serve as a resource for the funeral planning.

- 3.4 **The Grave-Side Service:** The prayer at the grave may be led by a deacon, with other deacons assisting with other elements, if this reflects the wishes of the family.
- 3.5 **Post-Funeral Follow-Up:** Some time after the funeral events have taken place, the Chair of the Deacon Personnel Board will insure that some supportive contact is offered to the deceased deacon's spouse/family as sign of the deacon community's continuing care and concern for the healing of their sadness and loss.

DEACON
FUNERAL AND BURIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The following information concerning funeral and burial instructions reflects my preferences and desires with regard to the actions to be taken upon my death. This information has been discussed with my spouse and/or close family members as indicated by the signatures below. This information is intended to assist my family and the Office of Pastoral Personnel Services carry out their responsibilities for making the necessary arrangements upon my death.

I GENERAL INFORMATION

1. NAME : _____
 (First) (Middle) (Last)

2. ADDRESS: _____

3. PHONE: () _____

4. SPOUSE'S NAME: _____

5. NEXT OF KIN/PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: (Spouse, family member, etc.)

(Name)	(Address)	(Phone)
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6. ALTERNATES:

1. _____

(Name)	(Address)	(Phone)
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2. _____

(Name)	(Address)	(Phone)
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II FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT PREFERENCES

1. Vigil Service:

Presider: _____

1st Alternate: _____

2nd Alternate: _____

Homilist: _____

1st Alternate: _____

2nd Alternate: _____

Scripture Readings: _____

Other Notes: _____

2. Mass of Christian Burial:

Presider: _____

1st Alternate: _____

2nd Alternate: _____

Homilist: _____

1st Alternate: _____

2nd Alternate: _____

Major Concelebrants:

Rev. _____

Rev. _____

Rev. _____

Assisting Deacons:

Deacon _____

Deacon _____

Alternate: _____

Alternate _____

Readers:

1st Reading: _____

2nd Reading: _____

Intercessions _____

Gift Bearers _____

Scripture Readings:

1st Reading: _____
(Scripture Passage) (Lectionary No.)

2nd Reading: _____
(Scripture Passage) (Lectionary No.)

Gospel: _____
(Scripture Passage) (Lectionary No.)

Liturgical Music:

Prelude _____

Opening _____

Responsorial Psalm _____

Gospel Acclamation _____

Preparation of Gifts _____

Eucharistic Acclamations

Holy, Holy _____

Memorial _____

Great Amen _____

Lamb of God _____

Communion _____

Song of Farewell _____

Closing _____

Postlude _____

Other Requests: _____

III BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. FUNERAL DIRECTOR:

Name: _____

Address _____

Phone: (____) _____

Burial Clothing: _____ Alb & Stole _____ Secular Clothing

2. CEMETERY

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
Grave Site _____

IV AUTHORIZATION

Deacon's Signature: _____ (Date)

Spouse's/Representative's Signature: _____ (Date)

Received by Pastoral Personnel Office: _____ (Date)

PLEASE NOTE: Copies of this information should be shared with your spouse, your pastor, other family members, personal representative, funeral director, and others. It will be helpful if a family member/personal representative *contact the Pastoral Personnel Office as soon as possible* at the time of death so that assistance with arrangements and communication of information can be taken care of promptly.