



ST. EDMUND'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE BURIAL OFFICE OR  
A REQUIEM EUCHARIST:

SOME PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

## **FUNERAL SERVICES**

Unless unusual conditions prevail, the funeral for a baptized Christian should be held in the Church. Burials should be from the Church whether the service is a simple Burial Office or a Requiem Eucharist. Following the church service, or at some later time in case of a cremation, the clergy will go to the cemetery for a Committal if requested by the family. Some families want only a grave-side service. In consultation with the clergy, this may well be an acceptable alternative.

### **FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE?**

The only difference is that the casket is present in the Church at a funeral. In every other respect, the services are identical. Caskets have traditionally been present for services, though this custom seems to be more flexible now than in the past.

### **CAN I DESIGN MY OWN SERVICE?**

Episcopalian clergy are required to use the Book of Common Prayer for all services. While there is some flexibility there is not a great deal of latitude in departing from our established liturgies. The clergy will do their utmost to be pastorally responsive to the family's wishes and needs in planning the service with you.

### **IS CREMATION PERMISSIBLE?**

Yes, it is entirely a personal decision for the family. Cremation may take place before the service or the casket may be taken to the crematorium following the service. Ashes are not normally present in the Church during a memorial service.

### **WHEN THERE IS A CASKET**

As long as the casket is in the Church, it is covered by a vestment called a "pall". This is a beautiful, handmade covering which our St. Edmund's Altar Guild provides. Blankets of flowers, flags, or other coverings may be used to cover the casket during its journey to and from the Church, but once it enters the Church, they are replaced by the pall. The casket should be closed from the time it leaves the home or funeral parlor. If the body is to lie in state, or friends desire to view it, this can be done at the mortuary. The casket is never open in the Church building.

### **IS THE HOLY EUCHARIST APPROPRIATE FOR A FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE?**

If the deceased was a member of the Church it is appropriate for the Holy Eucharist to accompany the Burial Office. This service is called a Requiem. The Requiem Eucharist, although on behalf of the dead, can be a great comfort to the living. The reception of Holy Communion at the time of bereavement gives strength and consolation to family and friends: it is Christ's pledge of Eternal Life. The color of the vestments is white, in

keeping with the message of Resurrection, and the Paschal Candle is lighted. All who attend a Requiem Eucharist are invited to receive the Sacrament.

### **CAN THERE BE A EULOGY?**

Ancient tradition omits eulogies. A brief homily based upon the Scripture readings will usually include some personal references to the deceased. Changing custom has seen the arrival of eulogies in many Anglican services, and when pastoral reasons indicate, brief personal memoirs may be permitted. In some denominations the entire congregation is invited to offer their reflections in an “open microphone” format, and this practice is discouraged at St. Edmund’s.

### **CAN WE SING HYMNS?**

Yes, the clergy will advise you in this connection. If most of those attending are likely to be familiar with the Church’s hymns, singing will add much to the service.

### **HOW DO WE ARRANGE FOR FLOWERS?**

We recommend you contact Jacob Maarse Florist in Pasadena (626-449-0246) or any other florist of your choice.

If a memorial or funeral service is to be held on a Friday or Saturday, flowers on the Altar must be left for the use of St. Edmund’s Church on Sunday. Flowers that are sent to the Church by friends are placed around the door of the Church, and should be removed following the liturgy.

### **HOW LONG IS THE SERVICE?**

The Burial Office is usually about 30 minutes in length, and a Requiem Eucharist is usually about 40 minutes in length. Additional music and eulogies lengthen the time of the liturgy. There is no right or wrong length to a service; it depends heavily on family preference.

### **WHAT ABOUT LODGE RITES?**

The Burial Office of the Church is complete in itself, dignified and brief, and should not be combined with the services of any fraternal group. Fraternal groups may, of course, attend the church service, but if the family desires the rites of a lodge, those rites should take place at the funeral home before the church service.

### **WHAT COSTS ARE INVOLVED?**

There are facility usage fees, available from the parish office. Charges for clean-up, organist, additional musicians or soloist are also available through the parish office. All charges should be paid to the office prior to the time of the service. Maintenance/Clean-

up, organists, musicians, and soloist are usually paid with a check written to them BY NAME (Not to St. Edmund's Church). These checks should also be given to the parish office alt least three days prior to the time of service. An honorarium for the clergy may be given to the priest directly, or through the parish office.

## **GIFTS AND BEQUESTS**

Gifts and bequests to St. Edmund's Church in memory of the deceased are gratefully received in any amount.

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The Central focus of the Burial Office or Requiem Eucharist is the worship of God. When someone we love dies, we gather in the Church to give thanks for the life of the deceased, to pray for comfort, strength, and hope for those who live on. We also seek to renew our faith in the One Lord through whom every Christian lives in the certain hope of resurrection.

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## **PRAYERS FOR THE BEREAVED**

O God of grace and glory, we remember before You this day our brother (sister) N. We thank You for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In Your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by Your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, deal graciously with NN. In *their* grief. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by *their* loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*