



Church of St. Bernard

Ministry of Consolation

Words of Remembrance at the Death of a Loved One

On the occasion of the death of a loved one, it is very natural to remember this person by way of reflecting on the qualities of the individual, sharing stories, bringing to mind the many ways he or she brought life to others. This takes place as family and friends gather at the home and at the funeral home.

Occasionally a family member wishes to offer words of remembrance or a eulogy in a more public way. It is most fitting to have such personal reflections shared in the context of the Prayer Service conducted at the funeral home or at the cemetery. This allows for extended time for remarks, for several people to speak, and for freedom in terms of what is said – poems, songs, stories, etc.

The funeral Mass in church is a more formal, communal celebration of Christian faith where the primary focus is the Paschal Mystery, the death and resurrection of Christ, through whom we are given the promise of eternal life. While we want to honor the life of the deceased, it is always done in light of the life of Christ, our Lord and Savior. This is why the Church asks that any words of remembrance that a family member or friend may wish to offer at the funeral Mass be given strictly according to the following guidelines:

The Words of Remembrance are given at the beginning of Mass right after the entrance procession. They are limited to 2-3 minutes and are to be written out in advance.

The Words should communicate the ways in which your loved one imitated Christ in his or her life and was truly a person of faith. Other stories, memories, anecdotes and personal testimonies should be shared at the time of the wake or burial.

Only one person may speak on behalf of the whole family. The speaker must be comfortable speaking from a podium into a microphone in a public place, and must not be too emotionally distraught to offer the Words of Remembrance in a dignified way.

If there is someone who wishes to offer such Words of Remembrance and can do it in accord with these guidelines, this must be arranged in advance, so please inform the Consolation Minister when you meet with him or her to plan the Mass. Be sure to give a copy of this sheet to the person who will be speaking. The priest may request to see the written Words before the funeral Mass.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Consolation Minister.