

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT
POLICY FOR FUNERALS FOR PRIESTS REMOVED FROM MINISTRY
(BUT NOT LAICIZED) ACCORDING TO THE NORMS OF THE DALLAS CHARTER

Preamble

Acknowledging the difficult experience that has occurred in the life of the Church as the Body of Christ, the following policy has been developed at the request of the Archbishop of Detroit. Through the consultative efforts of the Presbyteral Council and the Archdiocesan Review Board, we wish to express the need to focus on God's healing love and mercy. Through these efforts, we express our prayerful support to the victims of clergy sexual abuse. And, in sympathy to the families of priests removed from the active ministry, in particular, parents and siblings, the desire to provide assistance at the time of death. It is with compassion for those who have been hurt, with prayerful desire for God's mercy on those removed from ministry, that this policy has been implemented for the benefit of the people of God of the Detroit Archdiocese.

As Christian faithful, we gather at the time of death to affirm our hope in the Lord's promise of resurrection. Through baptism, the Christian person has been marked for eternal life (Ordo Exsequiarum #10), and so, the body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, is honored with Christian burial. As the Christian community gathers, it does so trusting in the mercy of God. The Archdiocese puts forth this policy for priests removed from ministry, yet not laicized, trusting in God's mercy and forgiveness.

1. Upon the death of a priest removed from the active ministry, but not laicized, the responsible party for the deceased is to contact the Office of the Archbishop. The Archbishop's secretary is then to notify the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry of the death.
 - a. Because a priest's funeral is considered a diocesan liturgy, the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry will contact the priest assigned to coordinate priest funerals so as to provide guidance to the pastor of the host parish in the planning of the funeral liturgy. Arrangements are to be finalized through the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry.
 - b. The Office for Clergy Life and Ministry is to contact the family of the decedent to assist them in making arrangements with a funeral director and to establish the date, time, and place of the Mass of Christian Burial and interment.
 - c. The Office for Clergy Life and Ministry can assist the family in determining an appropriate location for the Mass of Christian Burial. The

Funeral Mass may not be held in any parish to which the deceased had been assigned or in which he was in residence during his years of priestly ministry.

- d. The interment may not take place in a parish cemetery where the deceased had served. Burial may take place in the priest section of a Catholic cemetery, or in the cemetery stipulated in the priest's will, so long as it meets the criteria previously stated. The title "Reverend" or "Father" may appear on the headstone in the cemetery.
2. The Office of the Archbishop, or his designate, will assign a celebrant and/or homilist. If the decedent has specified a presider and/or homilist in his Last Will and Testament, such testimonials will be honored to the degree it is possible or deemed appropriate. The music selected is to reflect a simple beauty and reverence (Order of Christian Funerals #21). As in the case of all Funeral Masses, care is to be taken that the tone of all aspects of the Mass be one of celebrating the Paschal Mystery and trusting in God's mercy and forgiveness.
3. In keeping with the Order of Christian Funerals (#27), the homilist is asked to " *dwell on God's compassionate love and on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord*" in the homily. The Order of Christian Funerals (#4) further reminds us that the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased, while at the same time, bringing consolation to the sorrowful through the Eucharist and the Word of God. The homilist must keep in mind the responsibility of bringing comfort to the sorrowing while being sensitive to victims who must carry the burden of their experience. Therefore, as is required in the Order of Christian Funerals (#27), " *there is never to be a eulogy.*"
4. The deceased may be vested in Mass vestments as long as there were no canonical restrictions prohibiting the decedent from the private celebration of the Eucharist.
5. Public viewing of the decedent is to take place at a funeral home. Public viewing on the day of the Mass of Christian Burial may take place at the designated church; however, the body is to be reposed in an area separate from the center aisle of the church.
6. The death notice from the Office of the Archbishop, sent to all priests, may list the date, time, and location of the Mass of Christian Burial and the place of interment. The use of the term "Father" or "Reverend" is permitted, as is a listing of the decedent's ministerial assignments. There must be, however, the statement " *removed from active ministry according to the norms of the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.*"
7. The obituary in The Michigan Catholic newspaper may list the date and location of the Mass of Christian Burial and the place of interment. The use of the term "Father" or "Reverend" is permitted, as is the listing of the decedent's ministerial assignments, and may include a photo of the priest in clerical garb. There must be, however, a statement " *removed from active ministry according to the norms of the Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.*" Testimonial quotes and/or anecdotes about the decedent should be avoided. The decedent's family, in preparing an obituary for the secular press, is encouraged to follow this particular aspect of the policy.

8. Any desire on the part of the family of the decedent to deviate from these guidelines must be presented to the Office for Clergy Life and Ministry for consideration and approval.

Given at Detroit, Michigan, on the twenty-eighth day of August, in the year of our Lord two thousand and seven.

ADAM CARDINAL MAIDA
Archbishop of Detroit

Moderator of the Curia