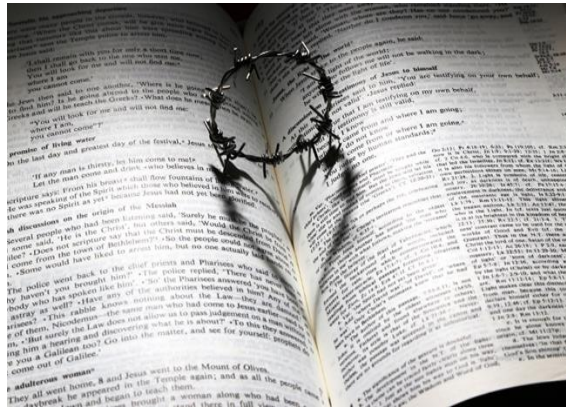


A Guide to Choosing Readings for A Funeral Mass



In every funeral liturgy or remembrance of the dead, “the Church attaches great importance to the reading of the word of God.

The readings –

proclaim to the assembly the paschal mystery,

teach remembrance of the dead,

convey the hope of being gathered together again in God’s kingdom,

and encourage the witness of Christian life.

Above all, the readings tell of God’s designs for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own. A careful selection and use of readings from Scripture for the funeral rites will provide the family and the community with an opportunity to hear God speak to them in their needs, sorrows, fears, and hopes.”¹

¹ Order of Christian Funerals, General Introduction, 22.

The Different Readings for a Funeral Mass

At each Funeral Mass there are three Readings from Scripture, in addition to the Psalm and Gospel Acclamation –

- The First Reading
- The Responsorial Psalm
- The Second Reading
- The Gospel Acclamation
- The Gospel Reading

The Church provides a selection of fitting Readings to choose from. These will be provided to the family at the first meeting with the priest after the death, or they are available at any time on the parish website.

The First Reading: This Reading usually comes from the Old Testament. During the season of Easter, it is more appropriate that, like the First Reading at other Masses during the season, this Reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles or the Book of Revelation (Apocalypse).

The Responsorial Psalm: This is usually sung and, as with other pieces of music at a Funeral Mass, it must be an appropriate psalm or hymn. Where this is not sung, the Church provides a selection of fitting Psalms to choose from.

The Second Reading: This Reading usually comes from the New Testament.

The Gospel Acclamation: This is usually sung. Where this is not sung, the priest will choose this based on the Gospel Reading.

The Gospel: This is chosen by the priest celebrating the Funeral Mass.

Choosing the Readings

God seeks to speak to us especially through the Scriptures. Spend some time reading and reflecting on the Readings given here. Pray with them. Each one has something to say about the experience of death and the role of our faith in navigating that experience. You may find one that speaks to you at this time, or that has been chosen before for funerals of family members.

The priest celebrating the Funeral Mass will need to know which Readings you have chosen, at least the day before the Mass. This helps him prepare the homily for the Mass and answer any queries you may have about the Readings.

Choosing Who Will Proclaim the Readings at the Mass

Proclamation of the Word of God is a serious responsibility and so it is important that those chosen to proclaim the Readings at the Funeral Mass can do so clearly and audibly. Let the priest know who is proclaiming the Word so that he can invite them up at the appropriate time.

Copies of the Readings will be provided for those who will proclaim the Readings. At the Funeral Mass, the Readings will be present at the ambo so no one needs to remember to bring them with them.

Fr. Damien Quigley, PP

Parish of Dunleer

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