

St. Mary Parish Guidelines regarding the Words of Remembrance

Does the Church allow someone to speak regarding the life of the deceased?

Yes. At both the Mass and the Vigil service, opportunities are offered for words of remembrance (also known as a eulogy) to be given. At the Mass, the words are offered after the Prayer after Communion. At the wake, words could be offered either during the wake service, or at some other appropriate time when family and friends are gathered.

What is the parish policy regarding the Words of remembrance at the Funeral Mass?

Regarding the Mass, one person, representing the family, is invited to offer words of remembrance. These remarks must always be in keeping with the sanctity and reverence of the Mass that is being offered for the deceased.

How would I go about preparing these words?

While only one person will offer the words of remembrance, family members should be invited to share in the preparation. Their shared memories often form a beautiful picture of the deceased person.

The words should speak of the life of the deceased and how he/she bore witness to the faith through their example, practice and living of the faith in their daily lives.

The remarks should be approximately 3-6 minutes in length and must be written down since this is obviously a very emotionally moment for the speaker.

While a humorous story or two regarding the life of the person could be shared, the remarks should not come across as a comedy act or a “roast” of the deceased. It should never be forgotten that this time in church is first and foremost, the Sacred Celebration of the Mass, offered for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

It should also be noted that, in our Christian understanding of death and life eternal, the words should reflect the faith we have just celebrated in word and sacrament. The Mass is offered to bring hope and comfort to the family and friends of the deceased. Care should be taken to continue providing this vision of our faith through the words of remembrance.

While the person chosen to offer the words of remembrance need not be of the Catholic faith, he/she should be very aware of the context of the Liturgy in which these words are given out of respect for the community which has gathered in prayer.

In the event that the family wishes to offer reflections or remarks that do not seem to be in line with the above guidelines, they should consider a more appropriate time to offer these, such as during the wake the previous evening, or perhaps, in the morning in the funeral home as the family and friends await the beginning of the funeral procession to the church.

If there are any questions regarding the preparation of the words of remembrance, please feel free to contact the pastor. He will be happy to assist in answering any questions that you might have.