**Funerals**

Dear Parishioner,

Although people are uncomfortable talking about death it is something that we as Catholic Christians should have the confidence to face. After all the very heart of our faith is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that we will be raised with him to what he called 'eternal life'.

Here on earth we already have, through our baptism a bond with him that nothing - including death can ever destroy. This is why we can pray the following in the Funeral, or Requiem, Mass:

***'In him he rose from the dead our hope of resurrection dawned***

***The sadness of death gives way to the bright promise of immortality***

***Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended***

***When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death***

***We gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven'***

Nevertheless, the prospect of our own death can worry and even terrify us. We don't like to think about it and we put off making arrangements such as our Will, or our funeral, to another day.

Completing the document 'instructions for my funeral' which follows below will help you to think about your death in a practical way. It also will make it so much easier for your family or friends to make the arrangements for your funeral at what will be a sad and difficult time for the. More importantly, when perhaps your family are not Catholics, or have lapsed from the practice of the faith or where there is no family around to ensure that your wishes will be followed - it will ensure that you will receive what is your right as a member of the Catholic Church.

When using this form, I suggest that you make a number of copies. You can keep one among your papers so that those who want to find out your instructions will find it there. You also might give another copy to a member of your family or a friend and if you wish you may give one to your parish priest who will be able to have it at hand when preparations are being made for your Funeral Mass.

If you need any assistance with filling out the sections of this leaflet, please contact me and I will be happy to help you.

Many of the saints and great spiritual writers have written that it was only when they faced up to the reality of their own death that they began to discover the wonder and joy of life. I hope the exercise of completing this document will help you with doing just that.

Requiem Masses

Non-Catholic people, especially those who have supported the Catholic spouses or children, may have their funerals held in the Catholic Church. These can be either the full Requiem Mass or the shorter Funeral Service.

Burial of ashes

Parishioners may not be aware that following a cremation the Catholic Church has a Rite for the Burial of Ashes. This short ceremony - which can take place sometime after the funeral, is held with the family and friends of the deceased at the site of the burial.

Wishing you every blessing

Father Michael Whalen

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