



**PLANNING A REQUIEM MASS AT
ST PANCRAS CATHOLIC CHURCH, IPSWICH**



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WELCOME

First, Fr Joseph would like to extend his condolences to you at this time, and assure you of his prayers for the repose of the soul of your loved one, and for you and your family.

You will have many things to think about and to arrange in the coming days. The following notes are designed to help you plan a requiem Mass at St Pancras and provide guidance for producing an Order of Service.

As you prepare for the funeral, please bear in mind that a Catholic church is the house of God and a house of prayer, and that secular readings, secular music, and eulogies should be reserved for the social gathering after the Mass.

REQUIEM MASS

When a Catholic dies the most important thing that follows, from a spiritual point of view, is to pray for the repose of his or her soul. With that in mind, a Catholic Requiem Mass is not so much ‘A service in thanksgiving for the life of...’ but, rather, an act of worship of Almighty God during which the Church and the mourners commend the soul of the departed to His mercy and entrust the soul to His care. Any wording on the front of the Order of Service should reflect this.

TIME

The requiem Mass can take place at almost any time, Monday to Friday, so long as it does not clash with other services in the church. Please speak to Fr Joseph.

READINGS

All readings for the Mass should be taken from the scriptures using the Lectionary from which Mass readings are drawn. The priest will help you to choose them if you wish. (Non-scriptural readings are not allowed.)

Usually there is a *First Reading* from the Old Testament, followed by a *Responsorial Psalm* (which may be replaced by a psalm-based hymn). If there is a *Second Reading* (which is optional) it should be from the New Testament.

Then follows a *Gospel Acclamation*, or ‘Alleluia!’ verse, which, in turn, is followed by the *Gospel Reading* itself. Again, the priest will help you to choose one if you wish.

A selection of possible readings may be found at: <https://rcdow.org.uk/liturgy/preparing-for-a-funeral/> (then scroll down to 'Scripture readings approved for Catholic funerals') These readings are especially appropriate, but you are not limited to readings from this selection.

Non-scriptural readings, such as poems and so forth, may be read at the graveside or at the crematorium, or at the reception afterwards.

MUSIC

All music should be sacred in nature. (Secular music, even secular classical music, is not allowed.) All hymns must be chosen from our parish hymn book, the *Celebration Hymnal for Everyone*, published by McCrimmon, 1994.

Only organ music is permitted, or unaccompanied singing. (Recorded music is not allowed.) St Pancras Church can arrange for an organist for an additional fee of £40. Family members or friends of the deceased may sing as cantors or form a choir for the Mass.

Hymns may be sung at one or more of the following points during the Mass:

- the beginning of the Requiem Mass
- in place of the Responsorial Psalm
- at the Offertory whilst the Bread and Wine are being prepared
- during or immediately after Holy Communion
- as the pall bearers carry the coffin from the church.

FLOWERS

You are welcome to arrange to have flowers in the church for the Mass, for example two pedestals on the sanctuary, but please speak to the priest first. Any such arrangements would be in addition to the flat fee. Otherwise, flowers that accompany the coffin may be arranged, and paid for, through your funeral director as part of their service.

EULOGY

A eulogy does not form part of the Mass, and therefore may not be given in church. Family and friends are encouraged to pay tribute to the deceased at the reception afterwards. This helps to ensure that the Requiem Mass serves its primary purpose as an act of worship rather than a memorial service. It also enables speakers to share their thoughts in a less emotionally charged

atmosphere, and perhaps even share jokes which may not be appropriate in church.

FEES

St Pancras has a flat fee of £150 which will be incorporated into the fee charged to you by your funeral director.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Please do not hesitate to contact Fr Joseph using the e-mail address on the front of this leaflet if you have any further questions.

BURIAL, CREMATION, AND THE SCATTERING OF ASHES

‘The girl is not dead, but sleeps’ (Mt 9:24)

‘Rise, you that sleep, and arise from the dead and Christ shall enlighten you’ (Eph 5:14).

Much of the imagery for Catholic funerals is about sleeping because, as it says in the Preface for the requiem Mass, ‘life is changed, not ended.’

As a result, the Catholic Church has always insisted that Catholics be laid to rest after they have died so that, asleep for a while, they may rise from the dead when the trumpet sounds (1 Cor 15:52). For many centuries Catholics were not allowed to be cremated because this was seen as a denial of the bodily resurrection of the dead on the last day. Now, the Church has modified this practise and allows (although still discourages) cremation.

However, the scattering of ashes is still seen as a denial of the resurrection of the body, and the Church, as a result, does not allow the ashes of Catholics who have been cremated to be scattered. Instead, ashes are to be interred in the ground, buried as soon after the cremation as possible. (The ashes may not, for example, be kept at home until the remaining spouse also dies.)

‘For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.’

(1 Thess 4:13-14)

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