

GUIDANCE FOR FUNERALS

Introduction

These guidelines support the safe and dignified conduct of Funeral Services.

Funerals

With the opening of our churches, the pattern of funeral practices can now take place in church.

Before the Service

There should be good collaboration between the family of the deceased, the funeral director and the clergy to ensure that the numbers of people assembling in the church is limited to the immediate family and those very close to the deceased. Any interaction with the family should be done safely — this may mean by telephone, Skype, Zoom etc.

It is important to consider the following issues before the service:

Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Anyone working is not counted in these limits. Alongside the member of clergy, Funeral Director and staff, the government advises that only the following should attend:

- members of the person's household
- close family members
- or if the above are unable to attend, close friends

It is important that anyone attending should not exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 or place themselves at risk.

Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.

The usual guidance on hygiene, hand sanitising and people with symptoms not attending church, as set out in the guidelines for opening for individual prayer, applies.

Preparing the Church for the service

Hand sanitisers should be signposted, readily available and easily accessible. Notices should be clearly placed advising people of correct hygiene practices. Consideration should be given as to the flow of groups in and out of the church to minimise any risk of compromising physical distancing, avoiding overlap between different groups while also leaving time for adequate cleaning. The Church should be well ventilated, preferably by opening windows and doors where possible.

Safeguarding the Priest/Deacon/Minister from infection

Clergy should remain mindful of their own personal hygiene, sanitising/washing their hands before and after the service and again after the committal. Physical contact with mourners and the coffin containing the body is to be avoided.

Physical contact

While it is contrary to human instinct and normal pastoral practice, it is important to advise mourners that there should be no physical contact including shaking hands, hugging or kissing outside their own households.

Reception of Remains

The coffin should be brought into the church on a trolley, supplied by the Funeral Directors, and should be manoeuvred by them alone. There should be no placing of a funeral pall over the coffin or the Christian symbols, flowers or other objects.

During the Service

At this time, there should be no singing. Single-use service sheets can be provided which the participants should take with them as they leave the church. In light of the Government advice, additional people are not encouraged to attend the service, such as an organist, verger, sound system operator etc.

[As the service will be live-streamed and recorded: <https://www.churchservices.tv/wembley3> any music play need to be licenced – “I Tunes”.]

If the family are to participate in the Liturgy of the Word, then they should be provided with single-use gloves. They should avoid unnecessary contact with any microphone or the prepared lectionary or the book containing the Prayer of the Faithful. Portable microphones should not be used or passed from hand to hand.

After the Service

The church should be closed after the funeral service has finished in order to clean the space according to the Bishops' Conference guidelines on individual prayer. Those cleaning afterwards should wear appropriate equipment (gloves/apron) as set out in the guidance on opening churches for individual prayer.

If there is cause for concern regarding the possible contamination of clerical vestments, these should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, using the warmest water setting allowed for the fabric and allowing time for them to dry completely.

[Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas]

Please, be advised when coming to Mass, that due to Covid-19, the heating will remain off and doors open for ventilation. Please wear warm clothing during this cold spell.

GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNION

Distribution of Communion

The people should wait in their places and the priest / Eucharistic Minister go down and distribute communion to them [for those who for some reason cannot receive communion they remain seated having made their *Spiritual Communion*. Communion must be given **silently** in the hand only, with the **communicant standing**, and avoiding any physical contact. When the priest / EM approaches, communicant should stand, arms fully “out stretched” so that there is a good distance between the priest/EM and the communicant. Their hands, palms upwards, one of top of the other, should be extended as flatly as possible. Communicant receives silently and stands/sits to pray in thanksgiving after communion.