

# A Guide for the Speaker at a Funeral Liturgy

You have been invited by the family to offer some words of remembrance at the funeral liturgy for someone who was important to them. It is the policy in all parishes in the diocese that there be only one speaker. This is an honor and a responsibility. This guide is to help you plan your remembrance and to deliver it well.

The primary focus during the days immediately following death is on the family—making funeral preparations and dealing with their own feelings and needs. The wake is a time to focus on the deceased—a time to tell the stories that gave meaning to the many relationships that have been a part of that person's life.

When we get to the Church for the funeral liturgy, the focus shifts to what Jesus has done for us and how our faith offers us hope. It marks the end of an earthly journey that began in the context of faith at baptism and continues with a new life in God. It is within this context that you are asked to prepare your remembrance—to remember the ways a person was faithful to their Baptism call by loving God and loving their neighbor. It is not a place to list accomplishments or summarize the deceased life story. Rather, if you share a single blessed memory that indicates the deceased faith and character, the hearers can recognize their giftedness as God-given and how they shared that gift with others. Keep in mind that the purpose of the liturgy is to thank God for the resurrection of Jesus that the deceased now shares, to celebrate the life we share together and to pray for strength to continue to faithfully continue the journey.

- Use your own words and speak from your own experience.
- Prepare your remembrance in writing. It makes your delivery easier for you and your thoughts clearer to the listener.
- Avoid inside jokes or humor which may be misunderstood.
- Begin by praying that you will honor the person you are speaking about and that your words will be a witness to his or her faith and a blessing to family and friends.
- You might read the scripture texts that the family has selected. It may bring to mind a specific quality or an incident or a deed which symbolizes his or her faith.
- Please keep your remembrance short – between 3 and 5 minutes. That is about one page of printed text.
- If possible leave the text of your remembrance on the lectern before Mass and leave it behind when you walk away from the lectern.