

## Things to remember

- *Rectory Phone number 254 6914, or cell 468-1175*
- *Call the priest when your loved one is “actively dying.”*
- *You may want to have a pair of candles and a crucifix on a table by the bedside.*
- *Keep the vigil or “watch” until their death.*
- *Call the priest when death occurs.*
- *Don’t let any one rush your “goodbyes” or your planning—do things on your own schedule if possible.*
- *Do not neglect your loved one’s right to the full Catholic funeral rites.*
- *Though cremation is an option, any dispersal of the ashes is forbidden.*

take good care of yourself, and not to push yourself too hard over the next few days. Do not let the funeral home rush you to remove the body, but take time to say farewell, even after the rites are completed.

These guidelines are meant to help you to know “the right thing to do” for your beloved who are dying and who have just died. In the long run, you will be comforted to know that you did everything possible for your deceased relatives, making sure they have ALL the Catholic Rites to which they have a right.

### **A note about the funeral**

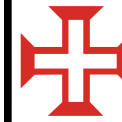
As with the process of dying, it is important that the full major funeral rites of the Church be afforded to every Catholic who dies. These include the Vigil and Rosary, the Funeral Mass, and the Rite of Committal (burial). To not provide for these is a profound disrespect of your loved one.



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Serving the People  
of God

## **What To Do When Death Is Immanent**



Doing the right thing  
for your loved ones near  
death

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St. Peter’s Catholic Church

Tel: 719 354 6914

## A Step by Step Process to Prepare Your Loved One for Death

### When you get the news

When we hear from a doctor or hospice worker that our loved one is near death, our minds race. We are confused, gripped by disbelief, torn by unfinished business, lingering guilt, apologies unspoken, and stunned. All too often we become so preoccupied that we don't even think about the spiritual side of things, and yet this is the moment most appropriate to provide last-stage critical spiritual care for passage into Eternal Life.

#### First:

If the doctor or Hospice is not yet on the scene when your loved one takes that final turn toward their death, call the medical professionals in to help you.

#### Second:

Call your priest to have him give the last sacraments and Commendation of the Soul to your loved one. Then call all the local family members to gather with you for these rites. You may want to find and light two candles and place a crucifix between them on a dresser or on a bedside table before the priest arrives

When the priest arrives, he will ask a few brief questions to determine what rites are most appropriate for the circumstances. Then he will very likely absolve the dying person, anoint him or her, and if the person can receive communion, will also give Viaticm (The last Communion). Following that, the priest will pray the prayers for the Commendation of the Dying. There are opportunities for you to join in these prayers and litanies.

Though you will likely be guided by the priest

through these prayers, it might be good to familiarize yourself with some of the responses that may be asked of you during the rites. Of course you know when to say "Amen" or "And also with you" from your experiences at Mass. There are some others you can say as well.

#### During the Litany of the Saints

Near the moment of death, during the Comendation of the Dying the Litany of the Saints is prayed, as it was at baptism, but with a set of petitions at the end which are more appropriate for this situation.

We pray this litany to call all the Saints of God to come to lead our loved one into Paradise. The first response to each of the named saints is "Pray for him (her)". The second part of the litany are a series of petitions or prayers to which we can respond "Lord, save your people". The last part, also having there is the very familiar "Lord hear our prayer" which we use at Mass.

#### At the end of the Commendation

The final prayer said for the rite (if the person has not yet died) is the Salve Regina, or Hail Holy Queen, which you may remember from the end of the Rosary.

Here is the prayer:

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy; Our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, Most Gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us. And after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

### Between the Commendation of the Dying and the moment of death

After the rites, the priest will likely leave you to be with your loved ones as death approaches. It is a good thing

to begin the Vigil of the Dying, also called "the Watch" at this time. This remaining in vigil consists of praying periodically in the sick-room until your loved one dies. You may want to pray the Rosary, or read scripture, or pray a novena to St. Joseph, or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. It is recommended that this be done every hour or so for about 15-20 minutes when death is imminent.

Only one family member is needed to do the watch, so that the others can rest until it is their "watch."

Family members and friends may want to help with the watch, or come to say good bye and assure the dying that he or she is free to go to God.

### At the Moment of Death

When your loved one takes the last breath it is an awesome and holy moment. The angels and the Saints are already there and are conducting his or her soul to God. It is good to sit in silence for a time before speaking about anything. It is good to take in the sacredness of that moment. However, you may want to say the following prayer:

V. Eternal Rest grant unto him (her) O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him (her).

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Then you can call the local family and your priest or deacon to come and pray the prayers for the dead, before you call the funeral home. After the minister has prayed the prayers of the dead, then the funeral home can be called.

This time can be very stressful, but the comforts of the faith have a unique power to bring call and peace to the household. The coming days will bring enough stress of their own, with planning the funeral, calling family and the like. Be sure to

*The watch is a holy way to help the dying pass into eternity*

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