



## NORMS AND REGULATIONS FOR FUNERAL EULOGIES

*“Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be comforted.”*

- Matthew 5:3

### Introduction

The Catholic funeral liturgy is first and foremost an expression of hope. In the General Introduction for the Order of Christian Funerals, the Church reaffirms her “confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life.” At the funeral liturgy, we thank God for the gift of the deceased’s life and, most importantly, we pray for the soul’s salvation.

The Church allows the *option* for a family member or friend of the deceased to deliver a eulogy as part of the funeral liturgy. These norms and regulations are intended to shed light on the Church’s vision of the eulogy, provided the family opts to have one.

### The Purpose of the Eulogy

Eulogies are not an essential element to the Catholic funeral Mass. However, they can be an effective tool in leading the congregation to a deeper contemplation of the mercy of God and an increase in the theological virtue of Hope.

Every beautiful and effective eulogy answers all, or at least one, of the following questions:

- “What did this person’s life mean?”
- “What word of comfort and consolation do we need to hear as a congregation and as family and friends of the deceased?”
- “How can I more intentionally pray for the deceased and the grieving family?”

Every single element in a Catholic liturgy is ordered to foster prayer and devotion in the hearts of the faithful. The eulogy is no different. If a eulogy does not lead someone to prayer and intimate dialogue with God, it is not fulfilling its purpose.

A eulogy must be more than a biographical recitation of the deceased’s life; rather, it must be a plea for continued prayers and a confident message of hope on behalf of the deceased. Moreover, the eulogy is not a performance. It must be in keeping with the spirit of reverence and prayer intended by the Mass.

### Norms and Regulations

The following list enumerates the norms and regulations of St. Joseph Parish regarding eulogies delivered at funerals (*should the family decide that one ought to be given*). These norms are to be followed without exception:

- Only *one* individual is to be designated to deliver the eulogy.

- The eulogy will take place either before the start of the Funeral Mass, immediately before the final blessing, or at the cemetery during the Rite of Committal. The celebrant will discuss this with you.
- The content of the eulogy is to be typed in a Word document and no longer than one page in length.
- The eulogy, when delivered, must not be longer than 3 - 5 minutes in length.
- An electronic copy of the eulogy must be emailed to the priest celebrant of the funeral. The document should be sent at least one day before the funeral itself. (For example: if the funeral is on Friday, the eulogy should be emailed to the priest before the end of the day on Thursday *at the latest*).
- Any crass, suggestive, or irreverent jokes should not be included in the eulogy.
- Any comments that contradict the Church's teachings must likewise be avoided.
- The eulogy should be noble and simple, in continuity with the noble simplicity of the Catholic Liturgy.

### **Rationale for these Norms and Regulations**

Grief is a complicated and difficult aspect of human life. Many people find the prospect of speaking on behalf of someone's life to be an overwhelming responsibility. Often, the range of emotions that inevitably occur during a funeral liturgy adds another layer of difficulty in speaking effectively.

Furthermore, many cemeteries (*especially Jefferson Barracks*) have strict timelines regarding the Rite of Committal that takes place after the Mass. When a eulogy goes on too long, this creates delays and complications with the cemetery. These regulations and guidelines are intended to allow the family and friends gathered for the funeral to have a prayerful and peaceful experience.

### **Conclusion**

Walking with grieving families is a task and responsibility that we take seriously at St. Joseph Parish. We hope that these guidelines will help grieving families in the process of planning the funeral service for their deceased loved ones.

It is our honor and privilege to walk with you. Please know of our continued prayers and support.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May the souls of all the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
Amen.*

*St. Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, pray for us!*