

## Cost considerations

Don't think making price comparisons is undignified. Ask for a complete and itemized list (including GST) so that you can compare accurately.

The items are as follows:

1. Basic service fees for staff, facilities, vehicles, embalming and preparation, documentation, funeral stationary and additional services.
2. Charges for funeral goods such as caskets, urns and outer burial containers.
3. Funds for such items as flowers, obituary notices, church, musicians, cemetery, crematory or government fees.

## Other considerations

**Find Support.** If the task of organizing is too difficult to handle emotionally, ask someone to help or negotiate for you.

**Making Arrangements in Advance.** If you have some expectations, state them clearly by making arrangements in advance. It frees others from an arduous undertaking at a difficult time. If your tendency is to economize, don't expect others do that.

**Place of Burial.** It is important for people to understand that burial is not required to be in a Catholic cemetery. Clergy will gladly attend a service at public cemetery. In Barrie St. Mary's Cemetery has served the needs of the people for 130 years.

**My spouse is not Catholic. Can we be buried together?** Absolutely, there is no problem with inter-faith families being buried together at St. Mary's Cemetery. Also it is worth noting that when a non-Catholic family member dies, who has not had strong attachment to another church, it is quite appropriate to ask St. Mary's to assist by providing a funeral.

**Do Catholics have particular ways of expressing sympathy?** For centuries Catholics have "had masses said" for the dead. Sometimes these are on a specific date and are called announced masses. More often a mass is offered without a particular date. They are often said by priests in other parts of the world and the funds used in those communities. The donor of the stipend (\$10 for a mass and \$20 if it is announced) sends the card to the family as an act of sympathy and to inform them that a mass is being said.

## Choosing a Provider

**Funeral Homes** provide a broad selection of services, from simple transfer of the body to the crematorium to full funeral rites at the funeral home and church.

**Transfer services** provide a basic service. They may remove the body of the deceased from the place of death, place it in a casket or container, deliver it to a cemetery or crematorium and file necessary documents. They cannot attend or conduct visitations or funerals. They cannot embalm nor do any other preparation of the body.

## Archdiocese of Toronto

Funeral Information

<https://www.archtoronto.org/pt/our-faith/sacraments--sacramentals/funerals/>

## St. Mary's Cemetery

208 Sunnidale Road,  
Barrie, Ontario

<https://www.catholic-cemeteries.ca/cemeteries/st-marys-catholic-cemetery/>

---

Eternal rest grant unto them,

Ⓞ Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May their souls and the souls of all the  
faithful departed through the mercy of

God rest in peace.

Amen.

# St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

## Arranging a Funeral: What you need to know.

This document is an initiative of St. Mary's Parish to address a number of issues related to funerals. It is designed to help the members of the parish better understand what is expected of them as Catholics and to assure them that they are free to determine what is best for their family as they mark the passing of someone they love.

## Death in the Christian Context

When someone dies we seek to honour them, to connect them with the larger community and express our sense of loss.

For the Catholic these traditions are intimately entwined with our belief in the dignity of each person and the promise of eternal life. We as Catholics have over the years developed some very clear expectations for the time of death.

The challenge that the rituals present for many is cost. From a Christian point of view it is a fair question to ask at what point do the expenses involved in funerals and associated rituals contradict the faith that we try to live.



# What you need to know

There are many things to consider when arranging a funeral. No matter what arrangements are made, it is essential that Christian beliefs be reflected in the funeral rites and that care of the body of the deceased and the consolation of the living are priorities.

There are **four key decisions** you will have to make when arranging a funeral.

**Decision 1:** What will happen with the body of the deceased? Will their body be interred in a cemetery or cremated? If they are to be cremated, will the ashes be interred at a later date?

**Decision 2:** What type of memorialization do you wish for the deceased?

A traditional Catholic order would involve a day of visitation normally at a funeral home, with parish prayers in the evening followed by a funeral mass the following morning. Interment would occur after the funeral mass.

There can be alternatives:

**Visitation** may be of a varied length, including one hour before. Because of the demands on the church for other liturgies, this time cannot be extended and is only offered when visitation has not taken place elsewhere.

There are cases when visitation is not undertaken at all; this is often indicated for those of very advanced age or who, for whatever reason, do not have a large circle of friends or family. The emotional state of the family may limit visitation as well.



**Funeral Mass or Funeral Service?** The celebration of the **Mass of Christian Burial**, traditionally called a funeral mass, is strongly encouraged when we mark the passing of any of the faithful. The alternative is a service with a member of the clergy, a priest or deacon, at the funeral home.

We need to be very careful as a community that we do not get into the habit of seeing the celebration of mass as something we do for “some Catholics”. We welcome the opportunity of celebrating mass to mark the passing of any baptized Catholic.

**Decision 3: What kind of casket do I want? What are the expectations on urns?**

Caskets vary in price and style. Prices range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. Caskets do not preserve human remains. Ontario law does not require that a casket be placed in an outer burial container or vault.

When the body is cremated the ashes are returned to the family in a biodegradable box. An urn is not required. In the church the box is covered with a white cloth.

**Decision 4: What is embalming and is it required?**

Embalming is the process of replacing blood and bodily fluids with chemical preservatives. It is a process of sanitation, restoration and temporary preservation. Embalming is not legally required in Ontario but may be recommended to preserve the body between the time of death and visitation. Some cosmetic preparation is usually recommended, but that is not embalming.



## Cremation: What Catholics should know

In 1983, the Catholic Church lifted its prohibition forbidding Catholics to choose cremation. Canon 1176 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law states: “The Church earnestly recommends the pious custom of burying the bodies of the dead be observed, it does not however, forbid cremation unless it has been chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching.”

### When should cremation take place?

Cremation normally takes place after the full funeral liturgy. It may in fact occur earlier for a number of reasons:

1. The funeral with a casket may prove too costly.
2. Because of a tragic loss of life, immediate cremation may be indicated.
3. There may be a strong personal preference for cremation immediately after death.

### What Catholic rites are available for those choosing cremation?

The essential difference between the rites, if the body is present as opposed to cremated, rest in the understanding that cremated remains are no longer a body. In our parish, before a funeral mass with ashes, the container is placed on a table near the altar and the rite of welcoming is omitted. The ashes are not incensed since this is an act of honoring the body of a deceased. Beyond that, the ritual proceeds as usual including parish prayers, full mass and committal.

### What to do with the cremated remains?

Catholics should avoid some of the more current tendencies that have developed in the disposal of the ashes of loved ones. The practice of sprinkling ashes in public places is illegal. The practice of dividing up ashes of family members should be avoided. It is the church's preference that ashes are interred in the earth or a niche in a cemetery. It is valuable in the process of grieving to have a single focused place to return either physically or mentally as we remember those who have gone before us. St. Mary's Cemetery has niches available for cremated remains as well as provision for burial.