

# St. Joachim & Immaculate Conception Churches

## Guidelines for a Eulogy at a Funeral Mass

In times of loss, it is natural to want to honor the memory of a loved one with words of remembrance. While many people commonly associate a eulogy with a funeral Mass, the Catholic Church envisions it differently. The primary focus of the Funeral Mass is on the **Paschal Mystery**—the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—and the prayers we offer for the soul of the deceased.

For this reason, the most fitting places for a eulogy are often outside the Funeral Mass itself:

- At the funeral home, when mourners are gathered.
- During the Vigil (the evening before the funeral).
- As part of the farewell at the cemetery (apart from the Rite of Committal).
- At the meal or reception following the funeral rites.

However, the *Order of Christian Funerals* does allow for brief words of remembrance at the Vigil (OCF #80), during the Funeral Mass (OCF #170), or at a Funeral Liturgy outside Mass (OCF #197). To help families prepare in a way that respects both the memory of their loved one and the sacredness of the liturgy, we offer the following guidelines.

### 1. Who May Speak

- Only **one individual** should be designated to deliver the eulogy. This keeps the liturgy simple, prayerful, and focused.
- The person chosen should be someone respectful of Catholic faith and practices (ideally a practicing Catholic).

### 2. When the Eulogy May Be Offered

- The eulogy may be placed **before the start of the Funeral Mass** or **immediately before the Final Commendation** (after the Prayer after Holy Communion).
- The celebrant will work with you to determine the most appropriate placement.

### 3. Content and Tone

- The eulogy should be an **expression of gratitude**, highlighting treasured stories or qualities that reveal the person's faith, love, and character. Avoid repeating details already included in the obituary.
- The text should be **typed**, no more than **one page**, and delivered in **3–5 minutes**. Out of consideration for people attending the Mass, cemetery staff, and other commitments, please avoid lengthy remarks.
- The tone should be **noble and simple**, in harmony with the sacred character of the liturgy.
- Please avoid crass humor, irreverent comments, or anything contrary to the Church's teachings.

- An **electronic copy** of the eulogy must be sent to the priest or deacon celebrant **at least one day before the funeral** (for example, by Thursday evening for a Friday funeral), with a follow-up phone call to confirm receipt.

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#### **4. Purpose**

- A eulogy is not meant to be a full biography.
- Its purpose is to **thank God for the gift of the person's life**, to highlight how they touched others, and to point toward the love of God reflected in their lives.

#### **5. Delivery**

- The presider will invite the designated speaker forward at the appropriate time.
- Speak slowly, clearly, and prayerfully, remembering that all present share in your love and grief.

#### **Closing Note**

Walking with grieving families is a responsibility we take to heart at **St. Joachim and Immaculate Conception Parishes**. These guidelines are meant to provide clarity and peace, helping to ensure that the Funeral Mass remains a truly prayerful experience.

Please remember: the Funeral Mass is first and foremost about the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Even in the midst of sorrow, our eyes are lifted to the hope of the resurrection.

It is our honor and privilege to accompany you in this sacred moment. Please be assured of our continued prayers and support for you and your family.

In the peace of Christ,

**Fr. Tojy Jose, OFM**

Pastor

**NB:** These guidelines are to be shared with the person who will prepare and deliver the eulogy during the Funeral Mass.