

22/02/2019

Re: Funerals in Catholic Churches

To whom it may concern,

Please forgive the impersonal nature of the greeting!

At our last deanery meetings, the local priests asked if I would write to all funeral directors in the area to address some concerns they had. The points are general and are not directed at any funeral directors in particular.

The first and foremost request is that the priest (or deacon) be consulted before any fixed arrangements are made with the family. Sometimes incidents have arisen where inappropriate readings or songs have been agreed to by the funeral directors and we have had to say no.

This goes for Masses, Services in church and simple services at the Crematorium which are still religious services and are governed by our church law.

Also the "video loop" at some crematoria is not currently permitted by our Church, the focus should be on Christ first and foremost and the deceased secondly. The video means people focus on the pictures not the message of the Gospel.

There is also no requirement that a body should be brought into church the night before. While this was a very common practice in the past, brought over from Ireland, it happens less so now. If the family request it, then we are happy to do it, however, they should talk with the priest or deacon first before agreeing to it.

With all good wishes

Yours faithfully

Canon Alan Sheridan