

Funeral Mass Planning – Selecting Readings and Music

If you have made the decision to plan your own funeral Mass, you may use the information below to guide you through the process. Please take your time and keep in mind this is not something to be completed in one sitting. Once you have made your selections, it is important to inform your family and make them aware of where your paperwork is located. We strongly encourage you to use the form provided on our website to record your selections. When you have finalized your selections, please submit a copy to the parish office to help ensure we have the information needed to honor your requests.

When deciding which readings and music you wish to have included in your funeral Mass, you may use the notes and reference below to guide you in making your selections. If at any time you have questions or would like to discuss your selections with a Consolation Minister or Music Director, please contact the parish office and we will be happy to have someone reach out to you.

You can locate suggested readings by visiting the USCCB website at: www.USCCB.org. Select the "**Prayer and Worship**" dropdown menu (top left) and choose "**Bereavement and Funerals**".

- A. ***First Reading***: You will select two different readings for the "First Reading", one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. The reading from the Old Testament will be used unless the Mass occurs during the Easter season (*Easter Sunday through Pentecost Sunday*). Should the Mass fall in this time frame, the reading you selected from the New Testament will be used.

Reference: USCCB - [Old Testament Readings](#) & [New Testament Readings](#)

- B. ***Second Reading***: You will select one reading for the "Second Reading" from the New Testament.

Reference: [USCCB - New Testament Readings](#)

- C. ***Gospel Reading***: Select one Gospel reading. This reading is optional. If you prefer, you may allow the celebrant to make this selection for you.

Reference: [USCCB - Gospel Readings](#)

Music Selections: You have the option to select four hymns to be sung. If you prefer, the Music Director will be happy to select them for you. When making these selections, reflect on hymns you may have heard at Sunday Mass, at another person's funeral, or hymns found in the hymnal in our church pew. The music must be suitable to be sung at a Mass. The Director of Music may alter your selection if the resurrection choir is unable to sing the requested selection, though every effort is made to honor each request.

If you have questions pertaining to music, please contact the parish Music Director, **Michael Davis** at (717) 533-7168 Ext. 109 or email: mdavis@stjoanhershey.org

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Music at Funerals - From the USCCB: The introduction to the *Order of Christian Funerals* devotes four paragraphs to the question of Music in the Funeral liturgy (numbers 30-34).

"Music is integral to the Funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that word alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture."

Thus, while Funeral music may express "convictions and feelings," its subject must always be the paschal mystery and it must be related to the readings from Scripture.

Rather than adopting popular secular songs which are inappropriate to a liturgical setting, we should seek out good liturgical music on a paschal theme which can "support, console, and uplift participants and help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory." (*Order of Christian Funerals*, number 31)

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/bereavement-and-funerals/music-at-funerals.cfm>

PLANNING CHECK LIST – READING & MUSIC:

- FIRST READING (OLD TESTAMENT)** – *This reading will be used unless the Mass occurs in the Easter Season (Easter Sunday through Pentecost).*
- FIRST READING (NEW TESTAMENT)** – *This reading will be used only if the Mass occurs in the Easter Season (Easter Sunday through Pentecost).*
- SECOND READING (NEW TESTAMENT)**
- GOSPEL READING**
- HYMNS**