

St. Anthony's Parish, East Falmouth

Guidelines regarding the Words of Remembrance (Eulogy)

Does the Church allow someone to speak regarding the life of the deceased?

Yes. At either in the church or at the wake, opportunities are offered for words of remembrance (also known as the eulogy) to be given. In the church, the words are offered prior to the beginning of the Mass after everyone is seated. At the wake, words could be offered either during the wake service, or at some other appropriate time.

What is St. Anthony's parish policy regarding the Words of remembrance at the Funeral Mass?

In the church, one person, representing the family, is invited to offer words of remembrance. These remarks must always be in keeping with the sanctity and reverence of the Mass that is about to be offered for the deceased.

How would I go about preparing these words?

While only one person will offer the words of remembrance, family members should be invited to share in the preparation. Their shared memories often form a beautiful picture of the deceased person.

Please note: The purpose of the eulogy in the church is primarily to speak of the life of the deceased and how he/she bore witness to the faith through their example, practice and living of the faith in their daily lives. If this is not applicable to the deceased, the better option would be to speak at the wake or at the reception following the Mass.

The eulogy in the church should be no more than 5 minutes in length and must be written down since this is obviously a very emotionally moment for the speaker. It is to be sent to Msgr. Avila the day before the funeral Mass either by fax: 508-457-1723 or email: stanthony31@comcast.net

While a humorous story regarding the life of the person could be shared, the remarks should not come across as a comedy act or a "roast" of the deceased. It should never be forgotten that this time in church is first and foremost, the Sacred Celebration of the Mass, offered for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

It should also be noted that, in our Christian understanding of death and life eternal, the words should reflect the faith we will be celebrating at Holy Mass. The Mass is offered to bring hope of eternal life and comfort to the family and friends of the deceased. Care should be taken to continue providing this vision of our faith through the words of remembrance. Any words contrary to our belief as Catholics can never be spoken in church.

While the person chosen to offer the words of remembrance need not be of the Catholic faith, he/she should be very aware of the sacred context in which these words are offered. The priest has the responsibility to safeguard the sacredness of Holy Mass.

In the event that the family wishes to offer reflections or remarks that do not seem to be in line with the above guidelines, they should consider a more appropriate time to offer the eulogy, such as during the wake the previous evening, or perhaps, in the morning in the funeral home as the family and friends await the beginning of the funeral procession to the church, or at the reception following the Mass.

If there are any questions regarding the preparation of the words of remembrance, please feel free to contact Msgr. Avila at the parish office (508-548-0108). He will be happy to assist in answering any questions that you might have.