

Excerpts from National Manual of Policy and Procedure re: Deceased Members

FUNERAL AND HONOUR GUARD PROTOCOL

Preface:

“The ritual gestures, processions, and postures should express and foster an attitude of reverence and reflectiveness in those taking part in the funeral rites” (*Order of Christian Funerals*).

Supplies:

- League scarf
- League pin
- *Candles (one each for the members of the honour guard)
- *Candles may be new tapers or battery-operated candles, as determined beforehand by the parish priest in consultation with the council president.
- Matches or butane lighter (if required)

Protocol:

When a member of a parish council dies, all members share in the loss. Members should console mourners and support them with appropriate acts of kindness, such as assisting the mourners with routine daily tasks and offering assistance of any kind to the family so they may focus on planning of the funeral with the priest and lay ministers. This will give the family time to be together in mutual support and comfort (ibid, no. 10).

If invited or requested, members of the parish council may assist the priest and family with the organization of the funeral and during the preparation, and the priest and family may request a prayer vigil (*Ceremonies Booklet*). Assistance may also be offered with the choice of readings and hymns or as readers so as to alleviate undue stress on the family during this time of grieving.

During these preparations and in consultation with the parish priest, family and funeral director, the council president (or her designate) may request that members be permitted to form an honour guard at the funeral. If there is to be an honour guard, the president (or her designate) will provide the priest and funeral director with an approximate number of members who will participate so as to ensure sufficient reserved seating and to receive directions on alignment of the members for the reception of deceased (i.e. casket or urn), entrance procession and the prayers of final commendation prior to the dismissal. At this time, request from the priest and funeral director any further instructions for the day of the funeral.

Members will:

- a) Arrive at the church at least 45 minutes prior to the funeral and await directions from the funeral director for lining up and filing into the church.
- b) Listen carefully to the directions from the funeral director when moving into the aisle of church to receive the deceased (i.e. casket or urn) and the family.
- c) Wear the League scarf and pin.
- d) Each hold a lighted candle in a uniform manner before the funeral liturgy begins and maintain a dignified upright posture.

If reserved spaces have been made available, members file into the designated pews after the entrance procession and family have moved to the front of the church. Following the concluding funeral rite, and prayers of commendation, members will again assume their honour guard positions for the recessional hymn and procession out of the church. Candles may be lit uniformly at the outset, as determined before the concluding rite of the funeral liturgy begins.

Other Considerations:

1. To emphasize the importance of the person's baptism, the church in Canada encourages the use of a funeral pall at the liturgy. It is placed on the coffin during the reception of the body but not for an urn with the cremated remains of the deceased. This pall is a reminder of the white baptismal garment, the sign of the Christian dignity of the person. This makes the statement that she is a sister of Christ, a member of the church. NOTE: No other symbols, such as the "insignia of associations", have any place in the funeral liturgy (i.e., CWL funeral pall is NOT permitted) (ibid. no. 38).
2. In the case of a member who was in the military, the Canadian flag could be located near the entrance of the church where it is visible to all. If the family wishes to drape the flag over the coffin, it may be done only when the deceased is transported to and from the church where the funeral liturgy is to be celebrated. The flag can then be removed and folded with appropriate ceremony and respect just before the funeral pall is to be placed on the coffin during the welcoming rite for the deceased. Following the conclusion of the liturgy, the pall is removed, and the flag may once again be placed on the coffin for transport out of the church (Catholic Funerals and Eulogies, the Pall and the Flag, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 5, 2010).

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Online Membership Process: Contact national office for information on how to register for online administration through a secure website and to use a pre-authorized debit payment system for payment of per capita fees. The online system may be used to request a new member be added; update a member's name, address or other information; request an update to a member's years of service; request a transfer between councils; report a deceased member; cancel a renewal when a member will not be returning; or request a replacement membership card. The reports feature allows for access to and printing of current paid, unpaid and deceased members.

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Contents of Binders or Archival Files

a. Members: Councils are encouraged to set up a binder with a page, in alphabetical order, for each member. This page will include information about the member, including the year she became a member, offices held (which should be updated if the member advances to other League levels), other League work (projects, convention chairperson, dinners, League community related activities, World Day of Prayer, etc.), ministries in the church, awards and pins received, a photograph of the member and any other pertinent information as determined by the council. In large councils, a file box could be used for each member's information. This page should be sent to the new council when a member moves. When the member dies, this page should be transferred to a separate binder or file for deceased members, noting the date of death and including death notices and funeral cards where available (see "c" below).

c. Deceased Members: When the council keeps a page record of each member (as indicated in "a"), the page will be kept in an archival binder, alphabetically or by the year of death, to be determined by the council. This file can be in addition to or as part of the *Book of Life*, in which the names of all deceased council members are kept.

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