

**PROCEDURES FOR THE ARRANGEMENT OF
FUNERAL MASSES AND BURIAL FOR CATHOLICS
AT ST JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL KUCHING**

THE PROCEDURES

The following are the steps that are needed for the funeral and burial of the deceased. The obituary MUST NOT be published until all these have been determined and confirmed by the parish office in consultation with the parish priest and relevant parties.

1. **Inform the parish office**
2. **Present Baptismal certificate of the deceased**
3. **Obtaining and preparation of burial plot, or arrangement for cremation of the deceased**
4. **Preparation of the body and reservation in the coffin**
5. **Reservation of the deceased in the home or funeral parlour**
6. **Arrangement of the Funeral Mass**
7. **Publication of obituary**
8. **Burial**
9. **Offerings**
10. **Requiem Masses**
11. **Erection of Headstone / Memorial**

Relevant contact numbers:

- SJC Parish office – 082-423424
- Archbishop's office – 082-242634
- Catholic Mutual Benefit Society of the Archdiocese of Kuching
 - Office - Beatrice Mary Goh - 082-244493
 - Funeral Service - Person-in-charge: Christopher Chin - 019-8563438
Assistants: Joseph Then - 013-5799047 &
Edmund Ang - 019-8280999

1. Inform the parish office

You will need to inform the parish office (Tel: 082-423424) of your intention to arrange a Catholic funeral in the Cathedral. The parish office will also be the place where you will (most likely) be able to sort out some of the other required arrangements i.e. Steps 5, 6 & 10.

2. Present Baptismal certificate of the deceased

In order for the deceased to receive a Catholic funeral and burial, there has to be proof of membership in the Catholic Church with a baptismal certificate. The parish where the deceased was baptised would be able to issue the baptismal certificate.

3. Obtaining and preparation of burial plot, or arrangement for cremation of the deceased

The Catholic Mutual Benefit Society (CMBS) offers assistance and services for Catholic funeral arrangements and other related services at very reasonable rates. In times of bereavement, Catholics are advised to contact CMBS for assistance (instead of engaging other external funeral service providers). This is to avoid unnecessary hassle and confusion with regards to Catholic funeral rites and services: contact CMBS office (Tel: 082-244493) OR Christopher Chin (On-call # 019-856 3438).

However, should you decide to engage other external undertaker or funeral service provider, you must instruct them to comply with the requirements stipulated in our *Procedures for the arrangement of Funeral Masses and Burial for Catholics*.

3.1 Burial: Obtaining and preparation of burial plot

a) Burial plots in Catholic cemeteries are arranged with the Archbishop's office (contact Kattelia Shim - Tel: 082-242634 / 016-8899237). Those without prior booking have the following options:

- The Lord's Resting Ground (Mile 7½) – RM1,500 per plot. The cemetery permits only the construction of a simple tombstone in a largely lawn set-up; OR
- Catholic Memorial Park (Mile 13) – RM2,000 per plot. This is a cement style cemetery.

b) You will need to arrange with an undertaker to have the plot prepared. The CMBS may be contacted for this purpose.

3.2 Cremation: Arrangement for the cremation of the deceased

Cremated remains should be placed in a worthy container. Then they should be buried in a grave or inurned in a columbarium niche, preferably in a Catholic cemetery.

4. Preparation of the body and reservation in the coffin

The CMBS can arrange for the body of the deceased to be transported from the hospital, prepared and dressed (in some cases with help from the family members of the deceased), and placed temporarily in a chiller or in a coffin. After preparation, the body is brought either to the home of the deceased or the funeral parlour of the parish. The rates for preparation, coffin and transport depends on the undertaker.

5. Reservation of the deceased in the home or funeral parlour

It is customary to have a gathering of the family and friends of the deceased between death and burial. The wake or prayer service, involving the recitation of the Rosary, is organised by the family with the support of the Catholic community of their parish during the evenings before the funeral. The prayers may take place in the home or in the parish funeral parlour depending on where the deceased is reserved.

- 5.1 The fully air-conditioned funeral parlour may be available for the reservation of the deceased during the days before the Funeral Mass/Rite. Bookings require the completion of the *Request for use of funeral parlour form (SJC.FORM.05b)* available at the parish office. The funeral parlour fee is RM300 per day / night (not exceeding 24 hours). Payment for the funeral parlour fee incurred must be settled in full at the parish office prior to the Funeral Mass/Rite.
- 5.2 Usually it is the deceased parish communities who are contacted to support the family of the deceased for the wake prayers either in the house or parlour. The parish office may furnish contact numbers for parishioners of St Joseph's Cathedral. Please check with your own respective parish offices for the contact number of other groups if you come from a different parish. Standard books for the wake prayers may be purchased at the Parish Gift Shop.

6. Arrangement of the Funeral Mass

The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral. The Funeral Mass is celebrated in the Cathedral.

- 6.1 You must consult the parish office for a suitable time when the Cathedral and a priest is available to celebrate the Funeral Mass.
- 6.2 The parish office may be able to assist with arranging the choir, reader, commentator, and other liturgical ministers to assist during the Funeral Mass.
- 6.3 The coffin is placed in the Cathedral about thirty minutes before Mass begins.
- 6.4 Eulogy - It is not customary for Catholics to give eulogy at Funeral Masses. However, a brief eulogy of no more than five minutes MAY be permitted by the officiating priest before the Funeral Mass begins. The speaker must be of upright reputation and have a written text that is approved beforehand by the priest.

7. Publication of Obituary

Any newspaper publication must not be done before the date and time of the Funeral Mass is set by the parish office. The family is responsible for arranging the obituary in the newspapers.

8. Burial

The Cathedral Parish will provide a minister to lead the prayers at the burial site or crematorium. Note that the wreaths/flowers for the deceased are not permitted to be left at the cemetery. They must be removed after the burial and properly disposed of at facilities outside of the cemetery.

9. Offerings

- 9.1 The Church does not charge for the sacred celebrations. However, an offering of a reasonable amount to the parish as a sign of appreciation is customary. This will serve to cover the operation cost for using the Cathedral. Please clearly indicate on your offering envelop: "For St Joseph's Cathedral".
- 9.2 The family of the deceased should give tokens of appreciation to the groups that have helped out during the funeral. For example, the choir, the commentators, readers, altar servers, etc. For the ministers who perform the prayers at the grave or crematorium, we have determined that you should give RM30 as appreciation and to cover for transportation cost. Please label the envelop clearly: "Minister of Burial".
- 9.3 Also commendable are gifts offered towards the mission of the Church, or to worthwhile charities in memory of the deceased.

10. Requiem Masses

- 10.1 Mass and prayers offered for the deceased are important practices of Catholic life. The paschal sacrifice offered for the dead assures that the deceased obtains spiritual help and the living receive the consolation of hope.
- 10.2 Masses for the deceased can be arranged with the parish office. It is customary to accompany requests for Masses with offerings of reasonable amount in support of the parish.

11. Erection of Headstone / Memorial

After the burial, the family of the deceased will have to make arrangements to erect headstones and ensure the tomb is properly finished following the requirements set by the Archbishop's office. Only contractors registered with the *Kuching Catholic Cemeteries & Columbaria Services* are authorised to erect and/or repair the monuments in our cemeteries. They are:

- Albert Sim Soon Chai: 016-8899344
- Simon Sim See Huat: 013-8117616

For further details, check out our Parish Website: stjosephkuching.org

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