



July 2023

Dear St. Mary of Gostyn Parishioners:

In the funeral liturgy, the sadness of death should give way to the promise of resurrected life. The celebration of a person's life should reflect our conviction that in Jesus Christ and His Church, we have eternal life beyond earthly life. At St. Mary of Gostyn Parish, we are blessed to have our staff to assist in planning the funeral liturgy for your loved one. Experiencing the loss of a loved one, can be extremely difficult. Our loving Triune God, with the assistance of the Church, is here to provide consolation for the living and grace-filled assistance for the deceased. The Mass of Christian Burial is celebrated in the parish church, in the presence of the Christian community of faith. We realize that family members of the deceased are more or less comfortable with the planning and participation of liturgies, especially during such a difficult time. Please feel free to do as much or as little according to your personal comfort level when planning for a funeral Mass. As a faith community, we are here to pray for you and your loved ones as we provide comfort, consolation, and assistance.

**At St. Mary's, we are reiterating our current policy regarding Eulogies. There will be NO EULOGIES given during the Mass of Christian Burial in the church. We are reinforcing our policy to help draw the faithful into the mystery of God's consoling love by fully embracing the beauty of the funeral liturgy that the church provides. Eulogies can be given at the Vigil (Wake) Service during the Visitation at the Funeral Home or at the funeral luncheon, but not during the Mass of Christian Burial in church. Also, Visitations are not permitted at St. Mary's. Unfortunately, we do not have adequate space in our Narthex and entrance areas to accommodate funeral visitations. Visitations should be arranged with the funeral home. Any visiting priest celebrating a funeral Mass at St. Mary's will be asked to follow our policies.**

It is important to note that the practice of eulogies at Catholic funerals is optional in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, the official ritual by the Church. Thus, the policy by our diocese is that eulogies during the funeral Mass is left up to the discretion of the Pastor. A eulogy is an elongated narration of the human achievements and qualities of the deceased person. Certainly, homilies should have a personal quality, and the homilist must connect the readings to the life and death of the deceased. The primary emphasis is always, however, on the readings and the symbols of the funeral rite, and most of all, on the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the Paschal mystery that anchors our hope that your loved one is in heaven. The purpose of the funeral Mass is not to celebrate the life of the deceased but to offer worship to God for Christ's victory over death, to comfort the mourners with prayers, and to pray for the soul of the deceased. Too often, comments, stories, and jokes included in eulogies are inappropriate for church. Sometimes remarks can be said that are offensive and obtuse, and even though good intentioned, eulogies can be misinterpreted due to each person's level of comfort and sensitivity, especially those who are grieving. Relatives or friends who wish to speak of the deceased's character and accomplishments can do so at the Vigil (wake) service at the funeral home or at the luncheon.

Our current policy allows us to be considerate as we partner with our funeral homes. Some of the cemeteries have strict burial times that are arranged in advance with the funeral director. Eulogies can significantly delay the process upon arrival at the cemetery, and in some cases, disrupt the schedule entirely of other burials at the cemetery.

We thank you for your understanding as we reiterate our current policy. Our prayer is that our funeral liturgies at St. Mary of Gostyn are meant to provide comfort and healing by Christ and His Church, through the death and Resurrection of Jesus as we pray for your loved one. We do our best to make sure our liturgies are prayerful and reverent as we worship together and seek first the kingdom of heaven. On behalf of the staff and parishioners of St. Mary's, may the peace and consolation of Jesus be yours.

Sincerely in Christ,



Fr. Shaun Cieslik