



ST. JOSEPH'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH

## **"Words of Remembrance" Guidelines**

If you wish to have someone offer personal remarks about your loved one, you may consider doing this at the Calling Hours at the Funeral Home or at a Reception following the Funeral Mass.

If you decide to have a time of remembrance during the Mass, the following parish guidelines are to be observed and shared with the person offering the Words of Remembrance:

- Takes place at the beginning of the Mass, immediately following the procession and the priest's introduction
- Limited to one person who speaks briefly, no longer than 3 minutes (3 minutes is about 350-400 words or one double spaced typed page).
- Focused on the treasured memories of your deceased love one in a context of faith, values and spirituality of the deceased.
- The person chosen to speak at the Catholic Mass would preferably be Catholic. If not, we ask that they be familiar with and respectful of Catholic traditions, aware of the Scripture chosen by the family, and focused on the faith of the person being remembered.
- The person offering the Words of Remembrance needs to confer with the family and next of kin about the content as well as the pastoral staff contact at St. Joseph's Church who is coordinating the funeral with the family.
- Words of Remembrance must be scripted and should be rehearsed at home, preferably with a close family member of the deceased. The person asked to speak should feel confident that they can speak without excessive emotion which could make it hard for people to understand the words.

- This Words of Remembrance are spoken from the ambo (the lectern on the left side of the altar as you are facing the altar) and approached from the left side of the sanctuary by the handrail. You will be called by name.
- Be aware that if you are going directly to the cemetery, your arrival time at the cemetery is scheduled based on the start time of the Mass. Words of Remembrance are the most significant time variable in potentially arriving late to the cemetery which can impact your arrangements there.
- To summarize: How are Words of Remembrance at a Catholic Mass different from a eulogy prepared for other settings?
  - A eulogy is typically biographical and may be lengthy, highlighting the person's achievements professionally and in their personal life – Words of Remembrance focus on the spirituality and values of the deceased person
  - A eulogy delivered outside the context of Mass may include more colorful language and stories – Words of Remembrance are delivered in the context of the solemn reverence of the Mass and presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist
  - A eulogy shared with close family members or friends may include “inside” stories and jokes – Words of Remembrance spoken at Mass should take into account that those attending may not have known the deceased as intimately or in different contexts (work, Church, community organizations)
  - A eulogy may be broad in scope; Words of Remembrance at Mass are faith-based.

*If these guidelines for Words of Remembrance feel restrictive, your family may want to reconsider a eulogy delivered at another time (at the funeral home, at a reception following the burial, etc.). Our parish guidelines are developed in conformity to Diocese of Rochester guidelines and with the blessing of our pastor, Father Jim Schwartz.*