

Presenting the Dead to God

Name: _____

.....

This chapter taught us about the Catholic Church’s practice of offering sacrifices for the dead. The Church offers a specific funeral Mass for a baptized Christian who has recently died. Through the funeral rites’ readings, prayers, and liturgical actions, the Church “commends the dead to God’s merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins.”¹

Like every Mass, a funeral Mass has a Liturgy of the Word. The readings assigned to funeral Masses “tell of God’s designs for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own.”²

This chapter’s Proclamation statement from the Book of Wisdom (page 253 in the Student Text) is taken from one of the readings often read at funeral Masses.

How does this passage from the Book of Wisdom inspire you to persevere in faith to the end of your life?

In a funeral Mass, the Church uses symbols like those used at Baptism to remind us that in Baptism, we enter new eternal life with Christ and receive grace that frees us from all sin and strengthens us to remain faithful to God until death.

¹ International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Order of Christian Funerals* (Totowa, N.J.: Catholic Book Publishing, 2019), General Introduction, no. 6.

² Ibid., no. 22.

Write the letter of each symbol used in the funeral Mass to the left of the description you think best matches what it represents.

A. Paschal candle (*a large candle lit from the Easter fire to symbolize Christ, the Light of the World*)

_____ A reminder of the white garment the deceased received at his Baptism. It is a sign of the person's dignity as a Christian.

B. Holy water

_____ A sign of the assembly's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God. It is also a sign of honor to the deceased's body.

C. Incense

_____ A reminder that the Christian is marked with the Sign of the Cross at Baptism and, through grace, shares in Jesus' suffering on the Cross and the victory of his Resurrection.

D. A pall (*a white garment placed over the coffin*)

_____ A reminder of the saving waters of Baptism, when the deceased person became a member of God's family, the Church.

E. The Book of the Gospels or a Bible

_____ A sign of Christ's eternal presence to his people as the Light of the World, his Resurrection at Easter, and our participation in his victory over death.

F. A crucifix

_____ A sign that Christians live by the Word of God and that faithfulness to God's Word leads us to eternal life.