

APPENDIX G: POLICY FOR FUNERALS OF CLERGY REMOVED FROM MINISTRY
AND LAICIZED, ACCORDING TO THE NORMS OF THE DALLAS
CHARTER

REVISED 11-12-15

Acknowledging the difficult experience that has occurred in the life of the Church as the Body of Christ, the following policy has been developed at the request of the Archbishop of Seattle. Through the consultative efforts of the Presbyteral Council and the Archdiocesan Review Board, we wish to express the need to focus on God's healing love and mercy. Through these efforts, we express our prayerful support to the victims of clergy sexual abuse. At the same time in sympathy to the families of laicized priests and deacons, in particular, parents and siblings, there is also a desire to provide pastoral assistance to them at the time of death. It is with compassion for those who have been hurt, and with prayerful desire for God's mercy on those removed from ministry and laicized that this policy has been implemented for the benefit of the people of God of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

As Christian faithful, we gather at the time of death to affirm our hope in the Lord's promise of resurrection. Through baptism, the Christian person has been marked for eternal life (*Ordo Exsequiarum*, 10), and so, the body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, is honored with Christian burial. As the Christian community gathers, it does so trusting in the mercy of God.

This can be a difficult time for victims and their families. The Archdiocese, through the Pastoral Outreach Coordinator, will make a reasonable effort to contact them and offer pastoral support.

This is also a difficult time for the former priest or deacon's family members who may have very uneven knowledge of the former priest or deacon's history. While family members are entitled to make decisions regarding any private service(s), in regard to any and all public Catholic services or liturgy, as well as worship aids, the following policies must be followed:

1. If the family of a deceased priest who has been laicized requests a Catholic liturgy, the pastor or priest who is notified by the family is to contact the Archbishop's Office.
 - a. The Office of the Archbishop will provide guidance to the pastor or priest in the planning of the funeral liturgy. Arrangements are to be finalized and approved by the Archbishop's Office for Liturgy.
 - b. The Funeral Rites may not be held in any parish to which the deceased laicized priest or deacon had been assigned or in which he was in residence during his years of ministry. The Archbishop's Office will assist the pastor contacted and the family in determining an appropriate location for the Mass of Christian Burial.
2. The Office of the Archbishop will assign a presider and/or homilist. The Archbishop will neither preside nor preach. There will be no concelebrants. If the decedent has specified a

presider and/or homilist in his Last Will and Testament, such testimonials will be honored to the degree it is possible or deemed appropriate. As instructed by *Order of Christian Funerals (OCF)*, the music selected is to reflect a simple beauty and reverence (*OCF*, 21). As in the case of all Funeral Masses, care is to be taken that the tone of all aspects of the Mass be one of celebrating the Paschal Mystery and trusting in God's mercy and forgiveness.

3. In keeping with the *OCF*, the homilist is asked to "dwell on God's compassionate love and on the Paschal Mystery of the Lord" in the homily (*OCF*, 27). The *OCF* further reminds us that the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased, while at the same time, bringing consolation to the sorrowful through the Eucharist and the Word of God (*OCF*, 4). The homilist must keep in mind the responsibility of bringing comfort to the sorrowing while being sensitive to victims who must carry the burden of their experience. Therefore, as is required in the *OCF*, "there is never to be a eulogy (*OCF*, 27). There may be no "remarks of remembrance" (which the *OCF* normally allows) or other reflections or speeches.
4. The deceased may not be vested in vestments or clerical attire.
5. Obituaries, worship aids, and Mass cards may not have a picture of the deceased in clerical attire. If an obituary makes reference to the decedent's service as a priest, it must also say he was removed and laicized in accord with the Dallas Charter.
6. If a vigil is held the spirit of all of the above policies must be followed.
7. If a reception is held in a parish hall all pictures and speakers must be in the spirit of all the above policies.
8. If the burial is in an Archdiocesan or parish cemetery, the grave may not be in the priests section. Where ever the burial is, the grave marker may not make reference to "Priest", "Father" or "Reverend."
9. The Archbishop reserves the right to make the final decisions regarding all Catholic funeral arrangements. If the above policies are not followed, a Catholic funeral will not be permitted.

Adapted with permission from the Archdiocese of Detroit.