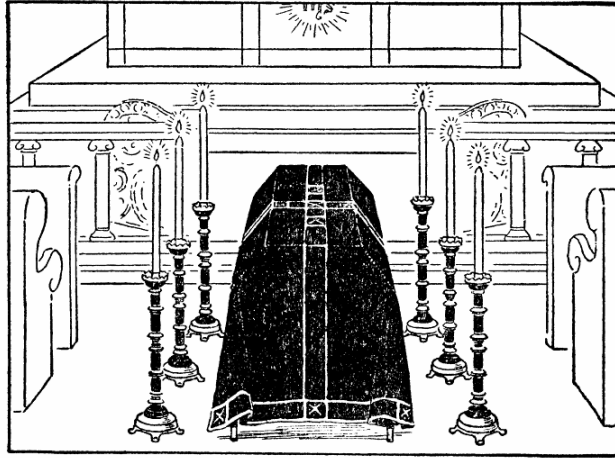


What were/are the ritual requirements, signs and symbols of the pre-Second Vatican Council Traditional Latin Catholic Funeral (Requiem) Mass



In traditional Catholic funeral masses, four or six candles, often made of unbleached beeswax, are placed around the casket, symbolizing the light of Christ and the eternal life of the deceased.

Symbolism:

- **Light of Christ:** The candles represent the light of Christ, which guides the deceased on their journey to eternal life.
- **Eternal Life:** The candles symbolize the hope of eternal life and the belief that death is not an end, but simply a transition from this life to the next.
- **Remembrance:** The candles serve as a visual reminder of the deceased's presence and the enduring love and support of the community for them, their family, and their friends.

Candle Placement:

- **Around the Casket:** The candles are traditionally placed around the casket, often on candlesticks, to create a sacred and reverent atmosphere.
- **Number of Candles:** While four or six candles are common, some traditions may use more or less depending on the specific church or local custom.
- **Catafalque:** In some cases, the casket may be placed on a catafalque (a raised platform) and the candles placed around it. (With the advent of the funeral industry's use of the casket's wheeled trolley for movement, the catafalque has eventually fallen into disuse.)

Other Catholic Funeral Traditions:

- **Paschal Candle:** The Paschal candle (also known as the Easter candle) is lit during the funeral mass as a symbol of Christ's resurrection and the hope of eternal life.
- **Prayers and Liturgy:** The funeral mass includes prayers, readings, and hymns that reflect the Catholic faith and the hope of eternal life.
- **Incense:** Incense is used during the funeral mass as a symbol of prayer and purification.
- **Votive Candles:** Memorial votive candles are often present near the front or back of the church, and parishioners and guests are encouraged to light them in remembrance.

Specifics and Practices Reserved for the Traditional Latin Rite:

In the traditional Latin Rite (the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite), the coffin on the catafalque is surrounded by six candles, and the coffin is covered in a black pall, not white. Likewise, the priest celebrant wears a black liturgical outer garment known as a chasuble.

What are the ritual requirements, signs and symbols of the post-Second Vatican Council Novus Ordo Roman Catholic Funeral Mass



Symbolism:

- **Light of Christ:** The Pascal (Easter) candle is placed near (more commonly in front of the casket; between it and the altar) to represent the light of Christ, which guides the deceased on their journey to eternal life.
- **Eternal Life:** The Pascal candle symbolizes the hope of eternal life and the belief that death is not an end, but simply a transition from this life to the next.
- **Remembrance:** The Pascal candle serves as a visual reminder of God's presence with the deceased's and His enduring love and support of the community for them, their family, their friends, and the parish church's community.

Other Catholic Funeral Traditions:

- **Paschal Candle:** The Paschal candle (also known as the Easter candle) is lit during the funeral mass as a symbol of Christ's resurrection and the hope of eternal life.
- **Prayers and Liturgy:** The funeral mass includes prayers, readings, and hymns that reflect the Catholic faith and the hope of eternal life.
- **Incense:** Incense is used during the funeral mass as a symbol of prayer and purification.
- **Votive Candles:** Memorial votive candles are often present near the front or back of the church, and parishioners and guests are encouraged to light them in perpetual remembrance.

Specifics and Practices Reserved for the Traditional Latin Rite:

In the present-day Novus Ordo (the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite), the coffin is:

- At the entrance doors of the church's worship space before the start of the funeral Mass liturgy, is sprinkled with Holy Water; a reminder of the baptismal waters in which the decedent (and us) was once washed clean and became a part of the Body of Christ.
- The casket is then covered in a white pall; again, a reminder of the white baptismal garment we one wore following our reception of the Sacrament of Baptism.
- A blessed crucifix is then placed on the casket pall (over the head of the decedent) as a reminder that the gift of our eternal life was obtained by the Passion of Our Lord Jesus. (For a member of the Catholic clergy, the Book of the Gospels is used/placed instead.)
- Likewise, the priest celebrant wears a white liturgical outer garment known as a chasuble, reminiscent of Easter Day and the Season of Easter, which follows.