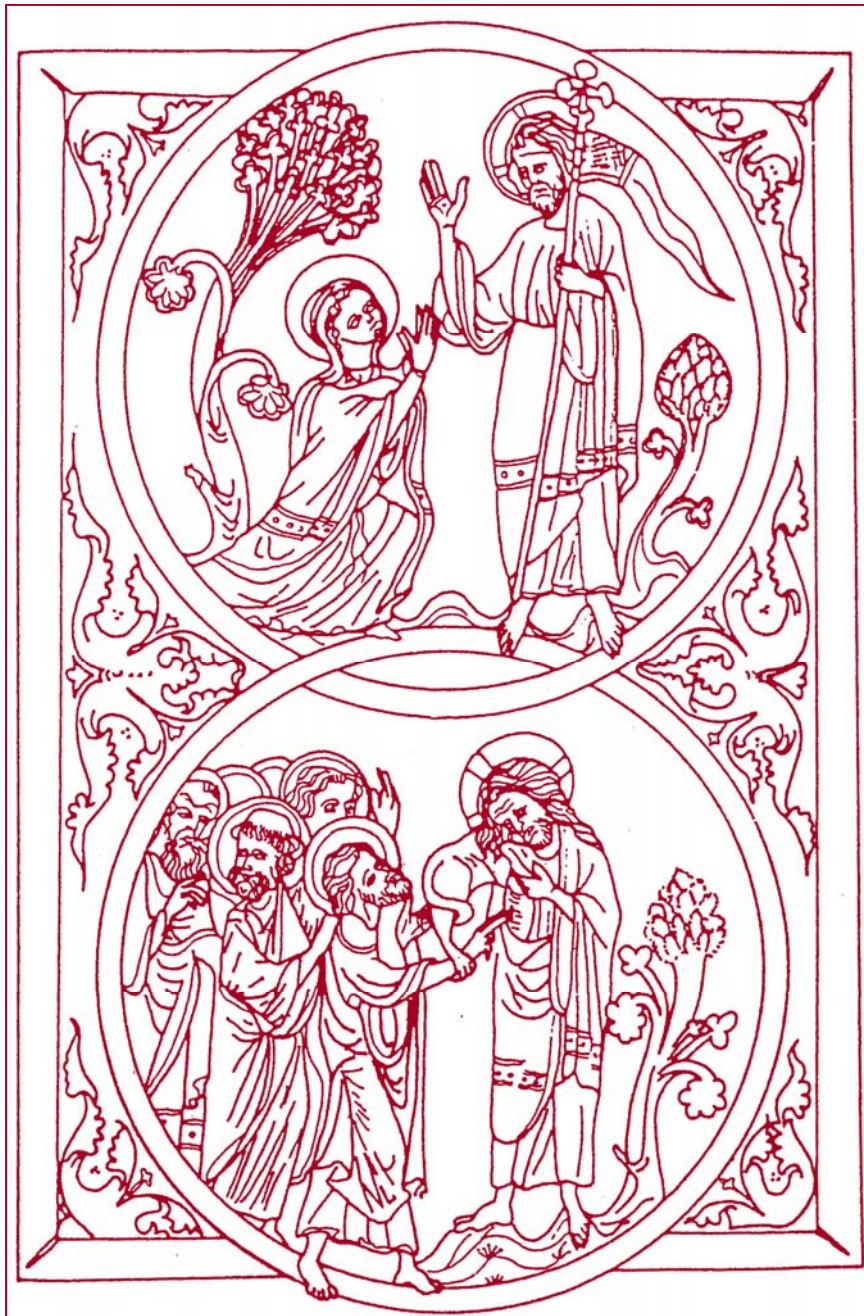




# St. Joan of Arc

CATHOLIC CHURCH

**12735 West 58th Avenue  
Arvada, Colorado 80002  
(303) 420-1232 • (303) 420-0126 Fax**



*You  
descended  
to the grave,  
Immortal One,  
yet you  
crushed  
Hell's power  
and rose  
a conqueror,  
O Christ, God!  
You spoke  
a word of light  
to the  
myrrh-bearing  
women,  
"Rejoice!"  
and upon  
the apostles,  
"Peace!"  
and to the fallen  
you bring  
resurrection!*

ORTHODOX CHANT



# St. Joan of Arc

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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(303) 420-1232 • (303) 420-0126 Fax  
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Website: [www.saintjoancatholic.org](http://www.saintjoancatholic.org)

Dear Friends in Christ,

The death of a loved one truly takes us to the limits of our faith. Know that the community of St. Joan of Arc is with you during this time of grief and sadness. Since death is certain, the real question is, "How shall we live?" There may be many days when we say, "Now what? I need some answers." "How should I live?" "How can I feel whole?" "Why am I tired all the time?" "How can I feel like a real person again?" "Why am I so irritable and unreasonable?" "Why did God let this happen?" These questions may feel too painful to answer today. These are among the first spiritual questions we encounter in the death of a loved one and we must not hide or escape from them. They are valuable to us, and we need to follow their urgings.

We may be asking these questions and feeling our loss as if they were new and unique. But throughout time many people have asked them, too. They found answers we can learn from. They tell us to get engaged with life, take time for reflection, learn to live one day at a time, ask for help, learn to enjoy life where we can and try to make a contribution to living more fully. We grieve and cry, we play, we love and we celebrate the miracle of life each day, not because there is no grieving, but because life is precious and time is limited.

If we have been asking that God spare us from this pain and situation, perhaps we should try a different question: Will God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit lead us through our pain to a greater understanding of life? We have no answers to the pain involved with grief. But we hope that the information in this booklet can be a powerful tool in coping with loss.

With my deepest love and compassion,

Fr. Joseph Cao

Fr. Joseph Cao  
Pastor

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*This booklet is an attempt to provide guidelines and suggestions built on the experience, strength and hope of individuals who have sustained the loss of a loved one. Many individuals have suggested a **checklist to help them identify and plan for the various tasks that are confronted in the first weeks following a death.** It is our hope that this booklet will be of help to you during this time.*

## **FIRST THINGS FIRST**

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- To contact a member of the clergy, call St. Joan of Arc Parish Office, 303-420-1232.
- Contact family members, close friends and acquaintances.
- Notify your employer of the death.
- If children are in school, call and notify the school of the death.
- Call your attorney, who can assist you with various legal problems and concerns.
- Have a friend or neighbor answer phone calls for you.
- Parishioners of St. Joan of Arc Parish may qualify for a no-charge S.O.S. reception in the church's facilities, upon early notification. A goodwill offering is greatly appreciated.

## **BEFORE CONTACTING THE MORTUARY**

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It will save you time and phone calls if the following information is available. It is wise to take a trusted friend along, if you do not already have a funeral plan.

Name of deceased (full name – include nickname or other names the deceased may have used):

Date of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Social Security Number:

Usual Occupation:

Deceased Father's Name:

Deceased Mother's Maiden Name:

If veteran, provide proof of service:

List of relatives and relationship:

List of church and/or professional organizations, clubs and other organizations in which membership was held:

If you wish, indicate memorial to be designated in obituary in memory of the deceased:

List of available pallbearers:

Do you want a funeral or memorial service?

Where do you want to hold the service?

What can you comfortably afford?

Do you want burial or cremation?      Burial      Cremation

Will there be a viewing or visitation?      Viewing      Visitation

Will there be a rosary?

Do you want an open casket?      Yes      No

Do you want to write an obituary?      Yes      No

What music will comfort you?

- Contact insurance company to ascertain benefits. Also inquire as to what documents you will need to send to them.
- Contact your local Social Security Office, if you are eligible for benefits. Inquire as to what documents you will need to bring with you. (This should be done very soon after the funeral.)
- If you do not have an attorney, contact the deceased's bank regarding existing checking and savings accounts, safety deposit boxes and other accounts, if applicable.
- Think about who you want to watch your house during the funeral.
- You will need multiple original copies of the death certificate to file with insurance companies, bank and the state (i.e., social Security Administration).
- We believe life, death and the resurrection is the sacramental mystery we celebrate in the funeral rites. The focus is on Baptism. We are baptized into the life, death and the resurrection of Jesus. Faith in this mystery motivates people arranging the funeral of a loved one.

### ***ANOINTING OF THE SICK***

Except in the case of sudden death, a family should not wait until a loved one has died to call the priest. Anointing of the Sick is sacramental pastoral care available to anyone who is seriously ill, whether or not death is imminent. This includes those seriously ill from alcoholism or mental illness. Anointing of the Sick can only be given to the living, but a priest's presence, even after death, can be of help to the family. If a loved one dies, call both a mortuary and a priest.

### ***SERVICES***

Only one service is necessary. The Mass of Christian Burial is the primary service. The Mass is typically in the morning. An evening Mass of Christian Burial is an acceptable option, particularly if this would be more convenient for the family. In this case, the interment services would be held the following morning.

In person, plan the schedule of services with the priest or his representative. This personal contact can be very helpful and can help clear times for services at the parish. No Masses of Christian Burial are permitted on Sundays, Holy Days or during the Easter Triduum, which is Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday.

Masses will only be held in a Catholic Church. No Masses are held in funeral chapels, except at the Archdiocese of Denver Mortuary.

### ***SECONDARY SERVICES***

Wake Service, Rosary or Scripture Rosary.

The presiding minister may be a priest, deacon or a layperson. If more than one such secondary service is desired, the priest is to be responsible for only one. The family may choose to have no secondary services or to hold one privately without the assistance of the priest. The Church, mortuary or an individual's home are all acceptable places for the Wake Service, Rosary, etc., regardless of who presides.

### **VIEWING THE BODY**

This practice is highly encouraged as it helps remove doubts that the loved one has truly died. If death occurs at home or in the hospital, it is good to call the family together at the scene of the death or pray before the body is removed. As important as this is, it should not become the focal point of the farewell rites. It is recommended that the body be viewed at the mortuary and that the casket be open at the Wake Service, if two services are held. At the time of the Mass of Christian Burial the casket is to be sealed and not reopened during or after the Mass. The Mass of Christian Burial (often call Mass of the Resurrection) is a time to say goodbye to the deceased loved one until we meet again. Opening the casket after the Mass usually causes renewed grief for the family, destroying the healing effect of the services intended to uplift and console.

### **WHEN YOU VISIT THE MORTUARY**

Be prepared to appoint six pallbearers. It is not necessary to buy new clothes for the deceased. In choosing a casket, be financially realistic and remember we are Christians and believe in simplicity and resurrection. Atonement cannot be made with money spent on lavish and extravagant services and expenditures.

### **IF THERE IS A WILL**

If there is a will, or if there is any question concerning proper and legal distribution of the estate, call a lawyer. Make an inventory of the deceased's possessions, marking them each off as they are distributed. Disorderly distribution may cause confusion and hard feelings later. If there is any complaint or contest, let a lawyer handle it. If there is a debt or large estate, a lawyer must be contacted. Don't let death divide your family.

## **PLANNING THE MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL**

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### **OPENING RITES**

The priest normally receives the coffin and the family at the entrance of the church, sprinkling the coffin as a reminder of the importance of Baptism. Encourage family members to help the funeral director to spread the pall over the coffin.

### **HOMILY**

The Homily is to be a reflection on Christian life, death and the resurrection, never a "eulogy" on the life of the deceased. A homily, although it contains personal elements regarding the deceased, must be based on the selected readings and with an emphasis on the importance of death and the promise through Christ of eternal life. A relative or friend at the end of Mass may give some personal thoughts on the deceased. It is also fitting to give notes about the deceased to the priest and/or homilist of the burial Mass.

### **COMMUNION**

It is encouraged that family members receive Communion at the Mass. Eulogies follow the Communion. If the family does request a eulogy as part of the liturgy, it should take place after Communion, never during the time for the homily. Urge the person giving the eulogy to be brief. A good eulogy can be a powerful source of healing and comfort, especially if the homilist did not know the deceased. Try to limit the eulogy to one. However, please have someone who is reasonably composed to do this. A choked-up and loud-crying reader does not help in this situation.

### **FLAGS**

No flags are to be placed over the coffin during the liturgy, but they may be restored to their place at the church entrance.

### **BALLOONS**

The use of balloons in the sanctuary of the church during the Wake Service or funeral Mass is strictly forbidden at St. Joan of Arc Parish.

## **MUSIC**

Let your wishes regarding music and musicians be made known to the presider. The parish has musicians available for the funeral. Please refrain from choosing secular popular music; rather, focus on Christian-Resurrection hymns. Congregational singing is recommended. If musicians are asked to sing, you are responsible for arranging payment for their services. Appropriate liturgical music is essential to the rite. Recorded music is not allowed during the Mass.

## **READINGS AND READERS**

A selection from each the Old Testament, New Testament and Gospels may be made by the family. Secular readings are discouraged during the Liturgy of the Word. Readers should be persons who are able to read well in public. Encourage family members and friends to witness to their faith. They may also, ideally, help select and read the Scriptures for the liturgy.

## **RITE OF COMMITMENT AT THE CEMETERY**

It may be celebrated with a Priest or Deacon in the chapel of the cemetery or at the gravesite for prayers and farewell. Weather—rain, snow, cold, heat and humidity—is an obvious and important factor.

## **CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS**

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### **CASKET PALL**

This is placed over the casket to recall the white garment of Baptism.

### **FLOWERS**

Flowers are life symbols and witness to the Easter mystery of Resurrection.

### **HOLY WATER**

Holy water always recalls Baptism and the salvation it promises.

### **INCENSE**

Incense is a symbol of prayer, and its sweetness rising to the Kingdom of Heaven. "May our prayer rise like incense before you, O Lord."

### **VESTMENTS**

The color of vestments should express Christian hope enlightened by the Paschal Mystery. The color should not be offensive to human sorrow. In the United States, white, violet or black vestments may be worn at funeral services and at other services and Masses for the dead. (Introduction to the Rite of Funerals, #22).

### **PASCHAL (EASTER) CANDLE**

This stands central in the Sanctuary as a symbol of the risen Christ and Eternal Life.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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### **CREMATION**

Cremation is permitted; however, traditional burial is still preferred. The current Code of Canon Law, 1176 #3, states, "The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burial be retained; but it does not forbid cremation, unless it is chosen for reasons which are contrary to Christian teaching."

The cremation instructions call attention to the care taken of the cremated remains. They should be treated with the same respect we give to the body of the deceased. The remains are to be placed in a worthy vessel which then is carried and transported with the same respect and attention given to a casket carrying a body.

Their final disposition is equally important, say the instructions: "The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium [a cemetery vault designed for urns containing ashes of the

dead]. The practice of scattering cremated remains on the sea, from the air, or on the ground, or keeping cremated remains in the home of a relative or friend of the deceased are not the reverent disposition that the Church requires." The instructions also state that, if at all possible, the place of entombment should be marked with a plaque or stone memorializing the deceased.

All arrangements for interment, entombment or storing of the cremains must be made with the cemetery, which has its own set of appropriate regulations. If you should choose a non-Catholic cemetery, it is recommended that a priest officiate at a graveside service. A non-Catholic may be buried in a Catholic cemetery, and the minister of his or her faith may lead the service there.

### **INFANT DEATH**

A Mass of Resurrection may accompany burials, or a simpler Catholic prayer service may be arranged, if the family so desires. A Mass is not required.

### **SUICIDE**

A Christian Burial Mass and all appropriate ceremonies of the Church are allowed for the victim of a suicide. Suicide is one of the most difficult deaths to mourn. In mourning the suicide of a loved one, people sometimes experience a sense of betrayal. An individual may feel not only abandoned, but also rejected. Although the prohibition against the Christian burial of suicide victims has been lifted, sometimes the social stigma remains.

### **NON-CATHOLICS**

Persons who are not Catholic may, with pastoral discretion, have a Mass of Christian Burial. If the family prefers a mortuary service, the priest may act as minister of co-minister. This service would be a Scripture service with prayers and music.

### **OUT-OF-TOWN BURIAL**

Out-of-town burial arrangements are ordinarily made through the local mortuary. Please consult them before making arrangements.

### **GRIEVING**

Suppressing all the pain of loss and suffering keeps the suffering from gradually giving way to growth, healing and wisdom. To live life well, death must be respected and valued. Funeral liturgies remind the living of what death and resurrection are all about. Death rarely allows for fancy departures and tidy farewells. It comes between people randomly, sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly. Individuals who have sustained a loss have said that it takes a long time to recover from the shock, grief, despair and detachment, which they have experienced. They have also said that talking with people, seeking a support group or counseling can be most helpful. Contact us here at St. Joan of Arc Parish, 303-420-1232, if you would like to have a visit from a Stephen Minister. (A Stephen Minister is a trained layperson that can help with the grieving process.) Another resource is the Hospice of Peace at the Archdiocese of Denver, 303-388-4435.

### **ACCOMPANISTS / VOCALISTS**

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For an accompanist and/or a vocalist, please contact Mrs. Andrea Weber, 303-420-1232, Ext. 104.