

DIOCESE OF SANDHURST GUIDELINES FOR SPEAKING IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE DECEASED

The Order of Christian Funerals states that *“A member or a friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased.”* OCF#170

The Order recommends that these words be spoken after the Communion Prayer and before the Final Commendation. In the Diocese of Sandhurst the preference is for the words to be spoken at the beginning of the rite, after the greeting by the Presider and before the placing of the Baptismal symbols.

Some points to be considered regarding the words of remembrance:

- Clear and consistent practice must be established in parishes. A sheet with a suggested approach would be helpful for families needing to prepare for a funeral.
- The words of remembrance are a valid part of the funeral rites and cannot be omitted unless the family chooses to leave them out.
- There should only be one person speak at the funeral rather than a series of people.
- The words should recall the good life of the deceased, and suggest how the person could be best remembered with inspiration. They should remember that, as Christians, we anticipate our meeting in the next life and our future resurrection together.
- The words should deal compassionately of the deceased’s life
- The words must be appropriate to the context of a worship space and its gathered community. Inappropriate language and content should be avoided.
- The words should be a reasonable length. 5 – 7 Minutes in total
- The reflection should be written out, practiced in front of others and if possible given to the Presider ahead of time.
- The funeral is not the only place where words of remembrance may be spoken. It is more suitable that words are spoken at the Vigil, Committal Service and/or the Wake, where anecdotes, personal stories, poems, songs or Power Point presentations may be responded to more readily.
- The Homily is never to be a eulogy. The homilist should dwell on God’s compassionate love and on the Paschal mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. OCF#27
- The words of remembrance cannot replace the homily, nor should they immediately follow it.

These guidelines re-iterate what has been on the Diocesan website for sometime. Please refer to www.sand.catholic.org.au for the policy regarding funerals