

POLICY 2.10.3 Funeral for an Unborn or Non-Baptized Child

NOTE: The Funeral Rites for Children can be used and adapted for the funeral liturgy of a stillborn child or for a child who dies before baptism. (See page 251 Order of Christian Funerals.) Optional prayers can be found in the section Prayers for the Mourners, page 398, and more specifically for non-baptized and for a still-born child on pages 402-403 of Order of Christian Funerals. Take time to read and familiarize yourself with the directives on pages 268-269 of the ritual. You will find suggestions for the Liturgy of the Word on pages 340-344 of the ritual.

En français, voir le ‘Missel Des Défunts’ publié par Desclée-Mame et approuvé par la Fédération Internationale pour le Français dans la Liturgie, la section pour les funérailles d’enfants, page 49ff. Ici-bas, vous trouverez les directives #36-41 de la page 10 du Missel.

#36 La mort d’un enfant est une épreuve particulièrement douloureuse pour les parents et c’est dans une attention toute spéciale à cette douleur qu’il faudra célébrer les funérailles.

#37 Pour un enfant de plus de 7 ans (âge de raison), on trouvera dans le rituel des adultes les prières propres aux cas particuliers : jeunes, maladie, handicapé, accident. Utilisées avec souplesse, ces prières doivent permettre aux situations pastorales. On pourra éventuellement utiliser les prières propres aux petits enfants.

#38 Pour un petit enfant (n’ayant pas atteint l’âge de raison, RR 80) une série de formulaires particuliers est proposée.

#39 S’il a été baptisé, notre foi est qu’il est déjà parvenu au bonheur auprès de Dieu puisque, par le baptême, il est devenu enfant de Dieu. C’est donc pour ses parents et tous ses proches que l’on prie afin que, dans leur douleur, ils soient consolés par la foi.

#40 S’il est mort avant son baptême, alors que ses parents voulaient qu’il soit baptisé, leur intention étant normalement manifestée par la demande adressée à la paroisse, les funérailles chrétiennes lui seront accordée. De toute façon, on se conformera aux décisions de l’Ordinaire du lieu. Les funérailles seront célébrées suivant ces décisions soit au domicile même, soit selon les habitudes locales en vigueur pour les autres obsèques.

#41 Dans l’un et l’autre cas, on emploiera les textes propres indiqués pour ce genre d’obsèques.

La liturgie pour les funérailles des enfants approuvé par la CECC et la Commission Nationale de Liturgie devrait être utilisée et adaptée selon les circonstances.

These are the funeral liturgies approved by the CCCB and the National Office for Liturgy.

Invocation to Christ (#143)

Let us turn to our Lord with confidence:

Lord Jesus, Son of the living God, you came into the world to live our human sufferings and joys, have mercy on us. **R/. Have mercy on us.**

Christ Jesus, your death on the cross opened for us the way to eternal life, have mercy on us. **R/. Have mercy on us.**

Lord Jesus you are risen from the dead so that we may have life in you, have mercy on us. **R/. Have mercy on us.**

(When Eucharist is celebrated, the penitential rite of the funeral ritual may be used.)

Opening prayer (see also prayers in Order of Christian Funerals, page 274-275)

For a baptized child

- #144 Lord, you see the anguish of the parents of N. their child:
support them in their sorrow;
and since N., on whom the waters of baptism have flowed has preceded us in your kingdom in heaven, grant us one day to know with him/her the joys of everlasting life.
Grant this through Christ...
- #145 Lord our God,
you see the sadness we experience today
at the death of this child:
lead us who are in sorrow to believe in faith and in truth
that he/she is now safely in your arms.
- #146 Lord God, listen to our prayer:
we believe that N. has already found a place in your kingdom;
grant us in your goodness, that one day
we shall all be together with you in heaven.
we make our prayer through Christ Jesus,
who lives and reigns...

OR

God our Father,
from the moment of conception you call us to share in your
bountiful love and life.
We would have wanted N. to stay with us for a longer time
and it is difficult for us to accept that he/she is no longer with us.
We believe that the waters of baptism have made this child your adopted son/daughter,
and in faith we believe that he/she is safely in your care.
Grant that one day we will be reunited with our loved one to share in the life that never ends.
Grant this through Jesus ...

For an only child

- #147 Lord Jesus Christ,
as you died on the cross, your beloved mother stood there near you as she witness the life and spirit of her only Son leave him.
Remember the sorrow that enveloped her heart.
With Mary your mother, we pray,
come heal and comfort the heart of these parents who mourn the death of their child.
You who live and reign....

For a still-born child

#148 Lord, death has taken this child from us at his/her birth.
You alone will know this child who is now fully alive in your presence.
Even before he/she was born, from the womb, they were loved.
You who loved this child from its conception, we now pray;
receive him/her in your loving arms to live with you in heaven.
Grant this through Christ...

For a child who died before baptism

#149 God of tenderness and mercy,
we pray for the parents of this child
and for their friends;
they weep for this child that has been taken in death:
may your gracious love bring them comfort and consolation.
We ask this through Jesus your Son...

#150 Lord, we pray by the intercession of the Virgin Mary:
she stood at the foot of the Cross when He died for us.
May she be with us also today as we mourn
the death of this child
to support us with the example of her faith,
may she guide us to you.
Through Jesus Christ...

#151 Lord, you love us and know the longing of our hearts.
You know the faith of these parents.
We turn to you in prayer on behalf of the parents who today weep at the death of their child.
May they entrust him to you who are our loving Father.
We pray in the name of Jesus your Son...

Liturgy of the Word

We follow the general directions given for the funeral of adults. Reading choices in the lectionary for funeral liturgies, readings for the funeral of children.

Eucharistic Liturgy

Prayer over the gifts

For a baptized child

#153 Lord, sanctify the gifts we present to you:
listen to the prayers of the parents who turn to you in their sorrow
and who entrust to you the child you had given them.