



CHURCH OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

607 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12206-1918

July 2022

«FH»

«Address»

«City», «State» «Zip»

Dear «Salu»,

Greetings from Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and the Shrine of Our Lady of the Americas, where Fr. Francis O'Connor is the Chaplain. I'm writing to you, the funeral homes of Albany, as we have many funerals at our parish, and we have recently updated a couple things regarding funerals here, especially as we have been exiting the pandemic. It is a great privilege to serve people at what is often a sad, emotional, and sometimes a raw and painful moment for a family. My prayers and admiration are with you, who work so regularly alongside death.

As a Catholic Christian, of course, I don't believe in death! Or, at least, I don't believe it is the end. But since death is an ever-present reality, and since we owe it to our deceased brothers and sisters to accompany them with prayer into life after death, we want to help families to pray the funeral rites the best we can. To that end, we have put together this updated guide to funerals at our churches.

Church of the Blessed Sacrament **607 Central Avenue**

- Funeral Mass Times: Monday-Saturday at 9:00 and 10:30, with the exception of the 9:00 on Fridays during the school year. Saturdays can be busy here; you're welcome to ask, but I wouldn't put all my eggs in that basket. We are sometimes available for afternoon funerals, but they are exceptional and require a conversation about availability and scheduling.
- Flowers: Oftentimes flowers are sent as gifts to the family, and we have a lot of places to put them in our large sanctuary. There is space in front of the candles on either side of the altar, but as a rule, please do not put any arrangements on the altar, or directly in front of the center of the altar. There is also space in front of the pulpit and on the tables on either side next to the columns. We also have a number of other tall stands and small tables in the sacristy that can be used.

- Music and Readings: Not all music is appropriate at a Catholic funeral Mass and not just anything can be read. Our team meets with the family and friends of the deceased before every funeral to talk about music and readings.
- Mass: The preference for us is to have the deceased and the family arrive about 10-15 minutes before the scheduled funeral Mass time, and to use the front door of the church, on Central Ave. Parking everyone on Central Ave. makes for efficiency at the end of Mass, when proceeding to the cemetery, because everyone is already lined up and can pull into traffic easily. Parking cones are available in the entrance to the lower level (Food Pantry & Boutique entrance). Parking in the lot behind the church is available, especially for those who need the ramp into the church. But participants in the procession to the cemetery should park on Central Avenue.

Pallbearers will be needed at the Central Ave. entrance because of the stairs. The family may gather in the entrance of the Church and the priest and ministers will join the gathered people there to begin the Mass. (If there is a flag on the casket, it should be removed here.) At that time, the holy water and the white pall will be used on the casket or coffin of the deceased. Please allow the family to help place the pall, and then fold up the end facing the priest who will “finish” placing the pall by pulling it over the end of the casket. The immediate family sits in the first few rows on the right. They may be seated before the procession, or, if they prefer, may walk in with the casket and pallbearers. At the end of the procession, the pallbearers generally sit on the left.

- Cremation: In the case of cremation, it is the Church’s preference to offer the funeral rites before the person is cremated, with the burial alone postponed to a later date (*Order of Christian Funerals*, Appendix 2: Cremation; No. 413 & 418). However, this is often not the case. We have tables available for the cremated remains. We prefer processions take place at the beginning and at the end of the Mass with the cremated remains. Also, please be sure that at the end of Mass there is somewhere to go. I’ve noticed that often at the end of a funeral Mass with cremated remains, people sort of mill around. But with our busy schedule, it is best to process out just as if there was a body so that the church may be prepared for the next event.
- Live Stream: Depending on the availability of the videographer, Blessed Sacrament has the capacity to live stream a funeral Mass to the public or to a private group of individuals. The decision to do so is the decision of the family of the deceased. There is a charge of \$125 for the videographer and his equipment. Let us know if the family is requesting this and we will check the availability of our videographer.

- Wakes: It is our preference to arrive for the “vigil” or “wake” prayers before the beginning of the wake by about 15 minutes. We do this so as not to interrupt the visitation line. We do not host wakes at our parish church except in exceptional circumstances. You’re welcome to ask, but due to our schedule here, we will almost never be able to accommodate a wake.
- Fee Schedule: Please note that the Church considers the funeral rites as one event in multiple parts: 1. Vigil/Wake, 2. Mass, and 3. Burial. Therefore there is only one fee, and it costs no less to do only part. If we are involved, we want to do it all. Also, in accord with Canon 1181 (Church Law), even for the destitute we want to offer the complete funeral rites, even if they cannot pay or even if there is no one else who would be attending. (There are some very specific circumstances described in Canons 1184-1185 that deny funeral rites to some people, but I doubt they would ever come into play for us.)
 - Funeral - \$125 Checks: “Blessed Sacrament Church”
 - Organist - \$200 Checks: “Mr. Ed Savoy”

Optional

- Live stream - \$125 Checks: “Mr. Dave Strazzeri”

Please bring the payments and the death record to the church office at the time of the Funeral Mass. The office door is located on the side of the rectory just to the east of the church, along the sidewalk. Our parish secretary is Barbara Collen.

Oftentimes families also like to give a monetary donation to the priest, deacon, or other presider, and while any gift is certainly welcome, it is not necessary and should not be encouraged. The priests of our parish already receive full salaries and are not entitled to anything else. Retired or other “guest” priests not of our parish are also compensated by us, and though a gift would be warmly received, it is neither expected nor necessary.

The Shrine of Our Lady of the Americas Central and Lake Aves

For funerals at Our Lady of the Americas, please call Blessed Sacrament to arrange.

- Funeral Mass Times: The normal times for funerals at the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Americas is Monday through Saturday in the morning. We prefer that you check with Father O’Connor, 518-588-2531 or Blessed Sacrament 518-482-3375 before setting the day or the time for the funeral to check for availability.
- Flowers: Please call 518-482-3375 prior to delivery to make sure the church is open to receive deliveries.

- Parking: Parking on Central Avenue is sparse. There is a metered public parking lot just two lots west of the church on the north side of Central Avenue.
- Music: The shrine's organist is Mrs. Debbie Klose, but she is not often available for weekday funerals. Mr. Ed Savoy or another organist may be assigned to the funeral. The fee is \$200, with checks made out to the organist.
- Mass: The funeral procession enters through the center door on Central Avenue. Please note the notes about Mass above, at Blessed Sacrament, all apply here as well above with regard to the Mass.
- Live stream: Live stream of a funeral Mass may be available. We cannot guarantee the availability of livestream but we will make every effort to accommodate any requests. Please check when calling to determine availability.
- Fee Schedule:
 - Funeral - \$75 Checks: "Shrine of our Lady of the Americas"
 - Organist - \$200 Checks: to the organist by name

 - Optional
 - Live Stream - \$25 Include in the check to the Shrine

Again, as above, a reduction of the funeral fee can be arranged.

Thank you for your kind attention to these matters! I pleased to continue working with you all, in our work of prayer with families for their deceased brothers and sisters.

Peace,

Rev. Daniel Quinn
Pastor
Church of the Blessed Sacrament &
Shrine of our Lady of the Americas

Rev. Frank O'Connor, Chaplain
Rev. Kyle Gorenski, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Mr. Gerald Ladouceur, Deacon