

January 14, 2019

To Those Considering a Funeral in the Chapel of Saint Michael's College:

I am sorry you have experienced the death of a member of your family. Regardless of the circumstances and age of the deceased, the loss of a relative is a painful occurrence. It can test our faith and cause much sadness in the form of grief and separation. Our faith in the resurrection gives us hope that all our loved ones that have gone before us will rest in eternity at the banquet table with the risen Christ.

If you are considering making a request to have the funeral for your deceased loved one celebrated in our Chapel at Saint Michael's College, I ask that you carefully read the contents of this letter. We do have specific guidelines in celebrating the funeral liturgy from the Diocese of Burlington which we follow and it is important that you know and understand what they are before you make such a request. You can access the guidelines on our webpage under Edmundite Campus Ministry at <https://www.smcvt.edu/student-life/campus-ministry/>

Assuming your request meets the criteria as outlined in our guidelines for the funeral to be held in the College Chapel rather than the local parish of the deceased, it is important that you understand that by making the request you have asked us to celebrate the funeral according to the liturgical norms of the Roman Catholic Church as expressed in the liturgical guidelines issued by the Diocese of Burlington. The guidelines uphold the integrity of our Catholic liturgy and are designed to celebrate the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ in an appropriate manner as we do each and every day. Please read both the guidelines and attachments on our Edmundite Campus Ministry webpage and understand that we will not make exceptions to these guidelines. If you want something different from what is described in the guidelines for the funeral celebration of your loved one, kindly seek another venue for the celebration.

To make a request to have a funeral celebration in our Chapel, please email me at bcummings@smcvt.edu stating the reasons why you want the funeral to be held in our campus Chapel rather than the local parish of the deceased and also state that you have read and agree to abide by the liturgical guidelines governing funerals. Once your written request is received, we will respond to you as soon as possible. When approval is given, we can then begin the planning process of selecting scripture readings and liturgical hymns as outlined in our Catholic rituals.

We are often asked by grieving families to deviate from what we sincerely believe to be the proper way of expressing our faith in the context of a funeral liturgy. I ask you to respect our faith position and please do not put us in a position to compromise what we believe by asking us to ignore the Church's instructions regarding the celebration of funerals. Thank you in advance for your understanding and may your deceased loved one, and all the faithful departed, rest in the peace of our risen Lord.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian J. Cummings, S.S.E.
Director of Edmundite Campus Ministry