



THE JESUIT PARISH of  
SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA  
*Come journey with us, from disciples to apostles*

### **What are Words of Remembrance at a Liturgy?**

To “speak in remembrance” means to give a brief reflection on the life of the deceased in the context of his or her life of faith. Such a reflection should revolve around God’s action in the life of the deceased, and how God’s blessings have enriched the world through that life.

These liturgical words of remembrance are more than just a "eulogy," which is usually reminiscing and toasting of the life accomplishments of the departed. Words of remembrance instead may include the faith, hope, and love dimension of the departed.

Words of Remembrance are given at the beginning of Mass. We find that giving them at that time provides an opportunity for the person delivering these words to engage more fully in the Mass and not to worry about delivering them at the end.

### **To Prepare**

- It is an emotional and difficult task to limit one’s words, as memories flow freely and easily. Therefore, prepare your remembrance in writing.
- If you have been asked to offer a remembrance but are unaccustomed to public speaking or are concerned that your emotions may hinder your ability to speak, do not hesitate to respectfully decline this task.
- Only one person should deliver the words of remembrance at the funeral Mass, but the reflection could well be a summation of remembrances gathered from family members and friends. Choose one trusted advisor who also knew the deceased and use this person as a “sounding board” when you prepare your remembrance.
- Pray that you will do honor to your loved one’s memory and that your words will be a witness to faith and a blessing to family and friends.
- Speak sincerely and respectfully, reflecting your experience of the deceased. It is useful to rehearse the words aloud to ensure that those assembled are given a clear, conscience message. It is helpful to time your remembrance.

### **Composing Your Remarks**

- The spoken words of remembrance should be **six to eight minutes** in length.
- It may be helpful to consider how the deceased most resembled Christ:
  - In his or her relationship with others and commitments made in faith
  - In his or her living a life of faith, caring, and nurturing
  - Highlight his or her virtues and qualities
- Good taste and good humor are appropriate.

### **What to Avoid**

- It is neither necessary nor desirable that the speaker attempt to give a life history of the deceased, or to repeat what is already contained in an obituary. The words of remembrance should be about the deceased person's human qualities including their life of faith and how these qualities can inspire those assembled. You may share common memories or stories of the person but it is not the place to speak of every person's memories or share story after story. Choose memories or stories that capture the virtue and character of the person.
- Avoid using "inside jokes" or forms of humor which may be misunderstood or sharing incidents not widely known, which may cause confusion or hurt.
- Unlike the homily, which is delivered by an ordained priest or deacon at the funeral Mass and pertains particularly to matters of faith and our common hope in the resurrection, "Words of Remembrance" are not a time to quote extensive scripture passages, to preach, instruct others in Christian living, or even to offer formal prayers.
- At no time is it acceptable to use crude or profane language, or to engage in actions that would not ordinarily take place during the sacred liturgy.