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How Do We Speak About the Deceased at the Funeral Liturgy?

Dear Sister, Brother in Christ,

Please accept the sympathy of our whole community of faith at St. Luke Parish. We regret your loss and assure you of our prayers for the living as well as for the dead who are now entirely in God's mercy. Illness, accidents, death, and the grieving they cause in those who remain, are often a burden. In order to help you cope a bit more easily, we offer you the following guidelines.

A eulogy is a [speech](#) or writing in [praise](#) of a person or thing. The word is derived from the Greek word εὐλογία (eulogia), meaning praise (εὖ meaning good or well and λογος meaning word, phrase, speech, etc). The term "eulogy" may refer to a [funeral oration](#) given in tribute to a person or people who have recently [died](#).^{[1][2]} Eulogies may be given as part of funeral services in some denominations but not in the Roman Catholic Church. Eulogies can also praise a living person or people who are still alive, which normally takes place on special occasions like [birthdays](#) etc. Eulogies should not be confused with [elegies](#), which are [poems](#) written in tribute to the dead; nor with [obituaries](#), which are published [biographies](#) recounting the lives of those who have recently died; nor with [obsequies](#), which refer generally to the [rituals](#) surrounding funerals.^{[3][4]} Catholic priests are prohibited by the rubrics of the Mass from presenting a eulogy for the deceased in place of a [homily](#) during a funeral [Mass](#).^[5] (Taken from Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eulogy>) So how do we speak about the deceased at our Funeral Liturgy?

We give thanks to God for his blessings rather than praise the dead in a eulogy.

1. In order to be clear about what is most worshipful toward the Lord and respectful of the one who has died, we avoid all the above indications relating to the worldly traditions of eulogizing the deceased. Instead, we focus on the signs of God's grace in the life and in the words and actions of the deceased. We evoke a few examples to give thanks to God for his grace in this person's life by which God has blessed us.
2. In order to be most considerate of the immediate family and those feeling most heavily the burden of grief, we remind them that the things they need to say to the deceased for whatever reasons would be best said during prayer moments at the wake or at the place where the body or ashes are laid to rest.
3. It is sufficient and more beautiful at the Funeral Liturgy to be content to give thanks to God and to give a few examples of ways in which we know as we look back that God was with the deceased and blessed us, even through their shortcomings, because the love of God brings life out of death and forgiveness, mercy, reconciliation, justice, love, and peace even out of our sins when we put our faith and trust in God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

We your Parish Staff love people and want to help you if we can. Don't hesitate to call on us. May you find comfort in Jesus our Lord; for He is faithful, kind, and merciful. May you always remain in the Father's love and blessing.

December 5th, 2008

Fr. Gilles A. Surprenant, Pastor