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Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Community Digest

A word from our CEO, Jerry Del Core

Did you know that Jesus was the first Catholic body prepared for burial when he was taken down from the cross? Yes, He was the first Catholic buried. The Catholic Church has been burying the dead since Jesus' resurrection. It is a corporal work of mercy.



Our ministry is caring for the dead, burying the dead. Every day, our team comes to work ready to serve families. Some families have immediate needs; others are planning for the future. **Our CFCS staff helps many families during their most difficult times.** The work is not easy. Families hurt and our staff is here to share their pain. This ministry can be physically and emotionally draining.

COVID-19 added to our staff's workload. **We are working with more families than we ever have... Families are hurting more than ever.** They lost a loved one too soon. The family may not have had a proper goodbye. Their Vigil, Funeral Mass and Graveside service may not have been exactly what they hoped for in a farewell.

Our team's job is to ease the pain, add dignity, help get families through the grief and in some ways, start to make sense of what happened.

Amid the pandemic, **our team has been forced to do almost everything differently...** for the right reasons. **We introduced virtual meetings, streaming vigils, outdoor funeral masses and much more.** Things we never imagined we would do; we are now doing daily. Our folks were challenged... And, they stepped up to meet every challenge. **We are proud of what they have accomplished and thank them for all that they do.**

Unfortunately, COVID-19 hit closer to home than we ever imagined. For all the families we help, we never imagine that something would happen to one of us. But it did.

On Sunday, January 31, 2021, our Lord took Joseph Balatbat. Joseph was one of our Family Service Advisors. He was one of those employees who worked very hard for his families and always had a smile on his face. **He loved his families. He loved our Ministry.**

I remember the day we sent Joseph home because he was not feeling well. **None of us ever imagined it would be the last time we would see him.** When we received word that Joseph had passed, it was surreal. Yes, we knew he was ill. Yes, we knew he was in the hospital. Yes, we knew that he was on a respirator. But, **we never once thought he would not return to us or his family.**

We will have a vigil. We will have a funeral mass. We will have a graveside service. But inside, we hurt.

After his service, we will come back to work.

This is one of God's training lessons. **Going through this loss will help us serve families better. We now know, first-hand, what families are feeling from COVID-19.** Knowing Joseph, he would want us to serve families better.

Right now, we feel cheated out of our goodbye. **We will all miss Joseph's infectious smile.** Our consolation comes in knowing that Joseph is in Heaven, seated at the right hand of God and watching over us.

Rest in Peace, my friend. We love you and miss you.



Ask a Funeral Director

Brian Noble, FDR3912

Manager of Funeral Services George L. Klumpp Chapel of the Flowers



How has COVID-19 changed your role as a Funeral Director?

Many things have changed about our lives since the Covid-19 pandemic started early last year. Front line workers have endured this ever-changing landscape since the start, some with no respite from the tragedies taking place in our own homes, churches and hospitals. The personal losses, both of freedoms and unfortunately, loved ones, has changed the way America and the world does business and how we lead our lives.

One aspect of the Coronavirus response that often gets overlooked is the effect that COVID-19 has had on the Funeral Industry, and specifically how Funeral Directors like me are navigating the difficult task of working with families through the pandemic. Death rates across America have skyrocketed, putting additional strains on coroner's offices, funeral homes, and cemeteries.

In the years prior to COVID-19, it was common for a funeral director to meet with families at the funeral home, or in some cases, at the family's residence to discuss funeral arrangements and plan services and burials. These meetings usually included many family members, and there was a connection between the Director and the family that sometimes led to long-lasting friendships. Visitations would be set up where any number of guests could come and pay their final respects and offer condolences to the family. Funeral services could be true celebrations with guest speakers, music, video memorials, uniformed escorts to the cemetery, and an overall feeling of closure of a loved one's life. **It gave families a way to personalize and memorialize their loved ones.**

Since COVID-19 surfaced, fear spread not only within our communities, but also within the funeral industry. How contagious is the virus? Are deceased individuals still contagious after death? Should everyone be cremated or directly buried to prevent the spread? These along with many other questions plagued the minds of Funeral Directors and families alike, including myself. During the first few months of the pandemic, services were suspended and, in some cases, even burials were postponed due to lack of answers to these questions.

We have had to quickly adapt to new business models and methods for working with families and serving a frustrated customer base. From limited in-person meetings to completely remote funeral arrangements conducted online, live-streaming funeral services to limited viewings and shortened burial services, the industry has had to follow a moving target regarding our approach to handling deceased individuals and their families. **This has significantly impacted that "personal touch" that families were so used to receiving in the past and that we were so used to delivering.** Today, families tend to describe the arrangement and viewing policies as "sterile" and they refer to funerals as intimate tributes instead of a well-planned, personalized celebration including family and friends.

Our staff has had to make an assortment of changes to accommodate the increase in caseloads and handling of the deceased. In cities across America, family members are restricted from being with their loved ones when they pass due to a positive COVID test. **Arrangement conferences are modified to limit the number of family members who can come into the funeral home to plan the funeral.** Families have been put in the difficult position of deciding who can attend viewings or services due to social distancing. Our staff is being placed in the uncomfortable position of advising families of the limitations placed on funeral services at a time when the family is already dealing with

losing a loved one. Many feel slighted at the thought of not being able to have a traditional funeral service or Mass.

Funeral directors are being pushed into uncomfortable roles, relaying the changes in services, and in some instances, being unable to meet a family's desires in memorializing their loved ones. **We are having to re-write how the industry will move forward through the remainder of the pandemic and beyond.** Will we ever go back to normal operation? That remains to be seen, but **there is no doubt that our team of funeral directors and the entire funeral industry will continue to adapt, keeping families first and offering memorial solutions that give everyone the respect and final disposition they desire and deserve.**

Start the Conversation

Marc Vallier, Director of Sales

Most people I know are planners: Planning where and when to bring their children into the world, what to eat, what to wear, what movie to see, what car to buy, what gift to give for birthdays. Everything is all carefully thought out. **Life, when you think about it, is a great collection of making plans and then caring them out.**

However, **one plan that is often neglected is what to do when someone passes away.** Most people, adults and their children alike, will delicately tiptoe around the topic, making sure to keep it off limits. This can be true even after a terminal diagnosis has entered the picture, and there is a real likelihood of imminent death. Even then, many will **still fear broaching the topic of what should be done during the last phase of life** because they want to keep the time as positive and meaningful as they can. Adult children will also often say nothing to their parents out of concern that a parent may think their children expect (or even want) them to die soon.



It does not have to be this way and for good reasons it should not be. For one thing, **End-Of-Life planning is often already on people's minds** whether they're elderly, terminally diagnosed or perfectly healthy; **it's just that they themselves are afraid to bring it up** because they're afraid of how their children might react. So it takes **bravery on someone's part to get this conversation started.**

If you want to **talk to your spouse, children or parents about End-Of-Life wishes, but you're not quite sure what is the best way to begin, let our Family Service Advisors help you start the conversation.** We know that the best time to have these conversations is before an emergency or crisis arises. We've guided thousands of family members through these difficult discussions. **We want you to be aware of the resources available to help you have this important dialogue with your family including a free Personal Planning Guide.** During your appointment either in person, over the phone or virtually, our Family Service Advisor will guide you through the pages of the Personal Planning Guide. You keep all the information. We share information about the Catholic Funeral Rites, including cremation. You may take a guided tour of our cemetery, and this can be done in person or virtually.

We want to be your partner in starting this important conversation, one in which your wishes and the wishes of your loved ones can be made known. The passing of loved ones will always have an impact upon the surviving families. But for those who have planned ahead the transition and the letting go can be made much easier and less stressful.

Contact us today to Start the Conversation, call 916-452-4831, [click here](#) or email info@cfcssacramento.org to set up an appointment.



Upcoming Events

Stay up to date on all of our events by clicking [here](#).

Caring for the Caregiver

Roundtable Discussion Webinar, Feb. 25th at 2 pm

Join our panel of experts



from, **Eskaton, Bristol Hospice, LiveWell at Home and Msgr. James Murphy**, on **Thursday, Feb. 25th at 2 pm** from the comfort of your home and hear how to care for yourself as a caregiver.

Register for webinar by [clicking here](#):



Starbucks e-gift card will be sent to email on file after webinar on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021.
Questions please reach out to Nicole Zamora at nzamora@cfcssacramento.org



Cemetery Restoration Saturday, March 20

Join us on Saturday, March 20, 2021 at
Holy Cross Cemetery in Colusa and St. Joseph Cemetery in Sacramento
for a restoration and clean up day.

Register to volunteer by [clicking here](#). Lunch Provided.

Visit our website for up to date COVID-19 information



**CATHOLIC FUNERAL
& CEMETERY SERVICES**
OF THE DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

Mission Statement

Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services is a full service provider of End-Of-Life care for the Catholic Community in the Diocese of Sacramento. We accompany families as they affectionately honor their loved ones in harmony with the Catholic Rites of Christian Burial. We cooperate with Parishes from Vigil to Mass and the Committal, bringing to all the consolation and mercy of Jesus.



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