

# Glossary of Commonly used Terms and Words

**Columbarium** - Latin, literally, dovecote, from columba dove; 1: a structure of vaults lined with recesses for cinerary urns; 2: a recess in a columbarium

**Communion of Saints** - A community that extends beyond time and space, including all those who are part of the Christian family whether living or dead.

**Eulogy** - A reflection given in memory of the deceased. Though common practice may suggest otherwise, the eulogy should not replace the homily of a funeral liturgy and is most properly reserved for the Vigil.

**Final Commendation** - The community's final farewell as it entrusts the deceased into the embrace of God. The song of farewell calls on the communion of saints and the company of angels to accompany the soul into the presence of God.

**Funeral Liturgy** - The Funeral Liturgy is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased. There are two forms of the Funeral Liturgy: the Funeral Mass and the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass

**Funeral Rites** - The Order of Christian Funerals (1987) is the current and normative rite. According to the OCF, there are three rites that correspond to the three principal ritual moments in the funeral of Christians. They are: 1. Vigil for the Deceased, 2. Funeral Liturgy, 3. Rite of Committal.

**Necrology** - A list of the recently dead, or of dead all having one common thread; i.e., the necrology that St. Therese publishes the first of every month naming all those who have died during that month for the entire history of the parish.

**Ossuary** - Late Latin ossuarium, from Latin, neuter of ossuarius of bones; a depository for the bones of the dead.

**Pall** - A white cloth placed over the coffin as a reminder of the baptismal garment and the equality of all in the eyes of God. See the OCF for any limitations on using a pall.

**Paschal Candle** - The Paschal Candle is blessed at the beginning of the Easter Vigil and is the first light that leads the faithful into the darkened church. The Paschal Candle remains lit for all of Easter, through Ascension Thursday to Pentecost. This candle is lit each time a new member is brought into the church and each time a member of the church is commended to God at their passing.

**Pyx** - Small container for holding consecrated hosts. Ministers use a pyx to bring Communion to those who are homebound or ill.

**Rite of Committal** - The Rite of Committal is the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of its deceased members. There are two forms to this rite:

1. ***Rite of Committal*** – used when the final commendation is celebrated as part of the conclusion of the funeral liturgy.
2. ***Rite of Committal with Final Commendation*** – used when the final commendation does not take place during the funeral liturgy or when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal rite.

**Viaticum** - The name for the Eucharist when it is given to someone near death. It means "food for the journey."

**Vigil** - The Vigil for the deceased (commonly called the Wake service) is a liturgy of the word or the liturgy of the hours celebrated after death and before the funeral Liturgy. The Vigil for the Deceased is the normative rite in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy, or if there is no funeral liturgy, before the rite of committal. It should not be omitted or replaced by devotional prayers. Devotional prayers may be offered in addition to the celebration of the Vigil for the Deceased either at the time of the Vigil itself, or at another time.