



From the Desk of Father Peter

Faith in Action—How Are We Burying the Dead?

More of us are facing these tasks as our family members age and die. This is something most of us do not want to think about. Some of us are helped by parents who are



thoughtful and organized, while others must deal with unexpected deaths or chaos left behind by loved ones. Even people who keep fairly good records can leave challenges for their survivors. I have encountered many of these experiences in my many years as a priest and more profoundly here at our beloved St. John's Church. Here are my personal reflections that can help us prepare for the unexpected. Share your idea or two with me and also talk about it in your family as you read this article; it will be really helpful to me and for all.

While we may no longer have to physically bury our dead, we are called to show respect for the body even though deceased. As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of the human person and in the resurrection of the body, "caring for the body grows out of reverence and concern for the person whom the church now recommends to the care of God," according to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

So not only are we called to comply with the guidelines of the Catholic Church for burying our dead, we are expected to help the dying receive God's grace during the last minutes of life. We should

also support those who have suffered the loss to help them bear their pain a little easier. Consider these end-of-life situations, and decide which activity helps in a given moment.

- *Visit patients in hospice and arrange for them to receive the Sacrament of the Sick or the Eucharist, if appropriate. Call your parish priest or let a church member call for a priest. Where possible, plan one's funeral ahead of death, with the selection of songs and Biblical passages for the readings, as clergy of our diocese are encouraged to do.*
- *• If death occurs, contact a funeral home concerning burial or cremation arrangements; the parish will work through the funeral home. The church recommends that cremation be interred in a dignified manner and not kept in the home.*
- *• Contact the Social Security Administration and any other government agencies or benefit program that may be making payments to the deceased.*
- *Family should make sure the deceased has a plot or burial place in which to rest in peace.*
- *Attend wakes, funerals, and funeral dinners when possible to offer support to the bereaved family.*
- *Take care of young children of families suffering from or anticipating a loss.*
- *Continue to visit the bereaved after the funeral flurry is over. Be present to offer help, bring a meal, or just be available to listen.*
- *Help widows or widowers handle the details of practical life that their loved one used to handle such as records of a business or personal assets.*

We need to share our wishes with family members for them to know what we want when God calls us home.



God bless you.

Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu