

# **CHRISTIAN FUNERAL RITES**

**A Manual for BEC and Zone  
Co-ordinators**

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*ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM O LORD,  
AND  
LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM*

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We give Thee thanks for all  
Thy benefits, O Almighty God,  
who lives and reignest world  
without end. Amen.

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May the souls of the faithful  
departed, through the mercy  
of God, rest in peace.

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Amen.

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## PURPOSE

This manual is a tool on Christian Funeral Rites for BEC/zone co-ordinators so that they can provide the appropriate liturgical, pastoral and theological guidance, advice and assistance to bereaved families in their communities.

It was created to guide BEC/zone co-ordinators on the practical aspects of the Funeral while at the same time explaining the theological and liturgical aspects of why we do what we do in Christian Funerals.

BEC/zone co-ordinators will also need to refer to the “Order of Christian Funerals” book.

## CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION

The hope of the resurrection. Christian hope faces the reality of death and the anguish of grief but trusts confidently that the power of sin and death has been vanquished by the Risen Lord.

## IMPORTANT NOTES TO GUIDE YOUR ROLE

### 1. WORSHIP GOD

To offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now returned to God.

### 2. PENITENTIAL

The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins.

### 3. HOPE

The Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living – proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection.

### 4. COMMUNION OF SAINTS

The rites express and affirm the Communion of Saints – communion or relationship between the Church on earth, the Souls in purgatory and the Saints in Heaven.

## STATIONS OF THE FUNERAL LITURGY



### HOME/PARLOUR

Vigil / Wake Prayers  
- Church Militant



### CHURCH

Requiem Mass  
- Church Suffering



### CREMATORIUM

Prayers conducted  
before cremation



### CEMETERY

Blessing of Grave  
- Church Triumphant



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***FOR DUST YOU ARE AND TO DUST YOU WILL RETURN***

Gen 18:27

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## IN THE EVENT OF DEATH

Family members of the deceased are reminded to:-

1. Inform their BEC/zone co-ordinator and/or the parish office/Parish Priest immediately when a Catholic is seriously ill or near death.
2. Make a police report and obtain a Burial Certificate (if the deceased passed away at home).
3. Complete the Death Register Checklist (Appendix I) and provide a copy of the Burial Permit to the parish office.
4. Make the necessary payments (Appendix II) as follows:
  - i) Church Charges - RM300.00
  - ii) Burial Plot - RM1,300.00
  - iii) Grave Digger - RM300.00Payment can either be made in cash to the parish office or by online transfer to the church account.

\* Kindly note the above charges are accurate at the time of printing. It may be subjected to changes without prior notice.
5. Notify the parish office of the undertaker's name and contact number for necessary arrangements at the cemetery.

*"If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member " (1 Cor 12:26)*

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The BEC/zone co-coordinator will make the following arrangements:

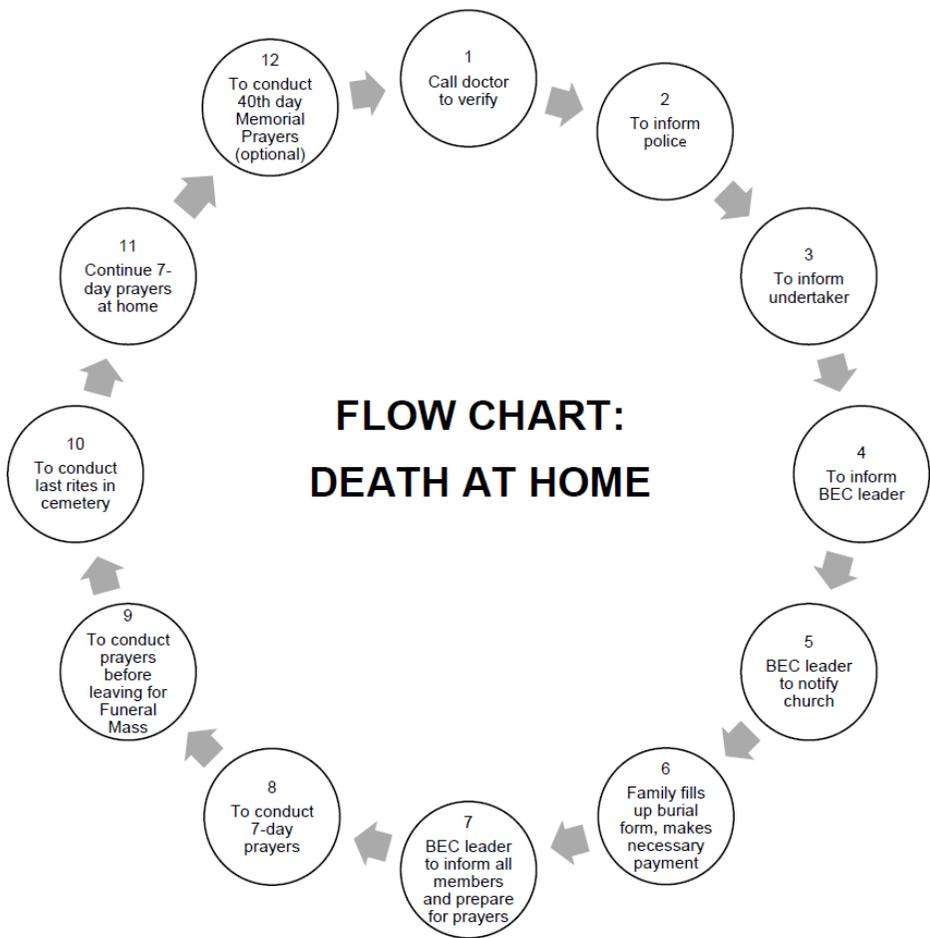
- a) Inform the parish office/Parish Priest about the deceased (see item 1)
- b) Liaise with the parish clerk for audio-visual system and other requirements
- c) Arrange at BEC/zone level for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (EOM) and Altar Servers
- d) Arrange at BEC/zone level for Liturgical requirements such as commentator, proclaimer, etc.

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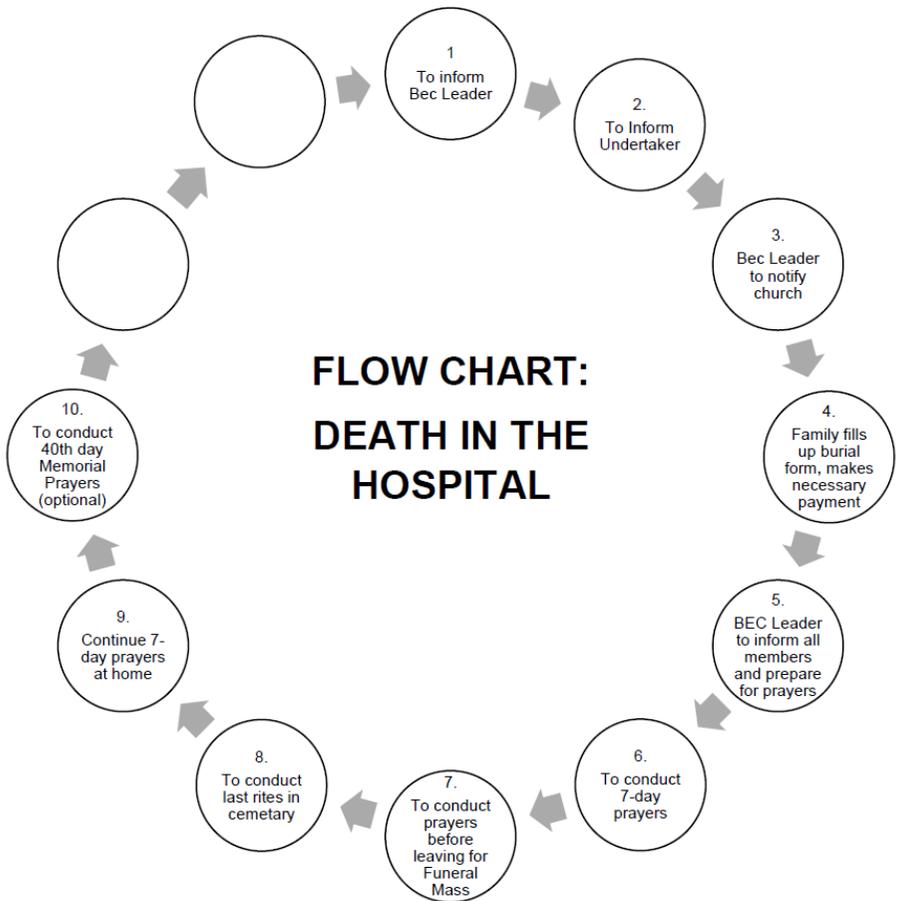
The parish office will:

- i) Allocate a burial plot for the deceased. The burial plot shall be according to the serial order from the lower portion of the cemetery.
  - ii) Liaise with the grave digger for the plot to be dug.
  - iii) Collect the above payments.
  - iv) Contact the Parish Maintenance team who will coordinate with relevant undertakers to ensure that items required at the burial site are made available by the respective undertaker engaged by the family of the deceased.
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*All members of the BEC/zone concerned are to render undivided support, guidance and assistance to the family of the deceased to ensure that all arrangements for the funeral takes place in a well-coordinated manner.*



A digital copy in A4 can be obtained from BECCOT.



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*The custom of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur is to observe the Seven-Day memorial prayers*

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## SEVEN MEMORIAL PRAYER SERVICES AT HOME

1. Offer to help with the 7-day prayers if the family is not familiar with it.
2. If the family is familiar with the 7-day prayers, be prepared to support in any way, such as designate BEC members to lead, do the reading, mysteries and decades of the rosary, and intentions where needed.
3. Loan your zone's copies of the "Seven Memorial Prayer Services at Home" books (Appendix III) to the bereaved family.
4. Advise the family of the option to have online prayers, or a hybrid of physical and online prayers if family members of the deceased are outstation or overseas and there is an on-going pandemic situation where people don't feel safe meeting up face-to-face. Zoom has better and consistent sound and video-quality but Google Meet can include more people. Zoom has the free version but is restricted to only 40 minutes. Google Meet can be free.

5. It helps if the version of 7-day prayers projected online is the same as that of the prayer book used in our parish or provided by the undertakers. Whichever version of the prayer books the family decides to use, the same prayers should be projected online for virtual prayer participants.



**EVERYONE IS CALLED ...  
TO CARE FOR THE DYING, TO PRAY  
FOR THE DEAD, TO COMFORT  
THOSE  
WHO MOURN.**

**MINISTRY OF ACCOMPANIMENT  
SPIRITUAL WORK OF MERCY –  
PRAYING FOR THE DEAD**

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***“We have loved them in life. Let us not  
abandon them in death until we have  
conducted them by our prayers into the House  
of God.”***

**St. Ambrose**

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## PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL

1. Show zone funeral Mass book titled “Order of Christian Funerals” to the family of the deceased AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. Kindly refer to Appendix IV for the image of this funeral Mass book.
2. Check with the bereaved family whether they have anyone from their relatives or Zone members who are willing to assist to animate the funeral mass i.e. 1 Proclaimer/reader and 1 Commentator. Advise them that it would be more meaningful if a family member or relative volunteers as a proclaimer/reader where possible.
3. The proclaimer will proclaim the first reading. The commentator will recite the prayer of the faithful and the Gospel Acclamation. In the absence of a cantor, the commentator will also recite the responsorial psalm. If possible, the commentator will also notify when to stand, kneel or to sit. If no animators are available, kindly notify the parish office.

*All animators (commentator, proclaimer, cantor) for the Mass, the person leading the service before the cortège leaves for Church as well as the person leading the Rites of Committal at the cemetery are to be **practicing Catholics**.*

4. Remind the proclaimer to practise before the Mass and to speak up when proclaiming. If he/she asks, to help him/her to practice and give appropriate feedback. Advise the proclaimer that his/her mask can be removed at the ambo before proclaiming. After the first reading, he/she is to put on their mask before leaving the ambo.
5. Kindly notify the parish office as early as possible whether the family has managed to find anyone from among their relatives or Zone members who are available to assist in animating (commentator, proclaimer, cantor, etc.) the funeral mass.

*The proclaimer can remove his/her mask at the ambo before proclaiming. After the first reading, he/she is to put on his/her mask before leaving the ambo.*

*The cantor/choir need/s to be masked while cantoring/singing.*

6. Ask the family of the deceased to select the first reading, corresponding responsorial psalm and hymns for the Mass. The recommended readings and responsorial psalm are on pages 53-57 or pages 105-118 (alternatives) in the “Order of Christian Funerals”. For prayer of the faithful, it is recommended to choose 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in the book to be read.
7. When selecting hymns for Mass – at least the opening, communion and closing hymns – please refer to the “Order of Christian Funerals book” (Pages 139 to 180).
8. Hymns: ‘As the Deer’ is NOT an opening hymn but is suitable as the Communion or Thanksgiving hymn. Kindly advise the family if they choose this for the opening hymn.
9. Where requested, assist the family to look for a cantor from among their relatives, BEC or zone members to sing the responsorial psalm at the funeral Mass. If this person is not familiar with the responsorial psalm, to request for the music score or audio recording from the cantor head. If you are not able to find a cantor, the commentator can assist to recite the psalm. This person is required to wear a mask while cantoring or reciting.

10. Inform the parish office of the first reading, corresponding responsorial psalm and hymns chosen by the bereaved family.
11. Father will select the Gospel reading.
12. There is a corresponding Gospel Acclamation to the selected Gospel reading. Take note that there are Acclamations during the 'Lenten Season' and outside the 'Lenten Season'. Assist the family to select accordingly.
13. Kindly note that for weekdays, volunteers for audio-visual, choir, cantor and musician/s can be difficult to arrange as most of them are students or working adults.
14. The audio-visual/choir volunteers may not be able to project prayers and hymns nor provide musical/song accompaniment during Mass if the funeral is on a weekday. For funerals held on weekdays or Saturdays, audio-visual projection and musical/song accompaniment depends on volunteer availability.
15. If the choir is not available, ask BEC/zone members who are familiar with the hymns and are attending the funeral Mass to help sing in the choir. Kindly ensure that all are wearing masks.

16. If more than 50 people are expected to attend the Mass, ask the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (EOM) and Altar Servers in your BEC/zone if they can serve during Mass. Altar servers may not be available on weekdays as most of them are students, therefore the Sacristan will assist. For weekdays/Saturdays, volunteers are subject to availability. Kindly notify parish office in advance.
17. Advise the family to find a family member, relative, Communion minister or BEC/zone member who lives nearby and can lead the *Service at Home or Funeral Parlour* before the cortège leaves for church.
18. Ask the family to look for someone to lead the Rites of Committal at the cemetery. This can be a Communion minister, BEC/zone Co-ordinator/member, a family member or relative who will be going to the cemetery.
19. Advise the family that they can thank those who served at Mass individually. This can be done after Mass ends and before moving to the cemetery if time permits.

*All animators (commentator, proclaimer, cantor) for the Mass, the person leading the service before the cortège leaves for Church as well as the person leading the Rites of Committal at the cemetery are to be **practicing Catholics.***



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***For any questions from the bereaved family that a leader feels uncomfortable or cannot answer and advise on, please contact our Parish Priests for help***

*For example – Eulogy, cremation, COVID deaths, unbaptised infants, etc.*

***Remember, Christian Funeral Rites are founded on theology and liturgy and not on community/society's norms and customs.***

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## BEFORE CORTÈGE LEAVES HOME OR THE FUNERAL PARLOUR

1. Ensure that someone will lead the *Service at Home or Funeral Parlour* just before the cortège leaves for Church.
2. This can be a family member, relative, Communion minister or BEC/zone member who lives nearby and can go to the home or funeral parlour about an hour and a half to two hours before Mass starts.
3. Please refer to the section on *Service at Home or Funeral Parlour*, pages 34 - 43 in the "Order of Christian Funerals".

*“One thing only  
do I ask of you,  
that you  
remember me at  
the altar of the  
Lord wherever  
you may be.”*

*St Monica to her  
son, St Augustine  
on her impending  
death.*

## FUNERAL MASS PROPER

1. The BEC co-ordinator or family member helping out with arrangements needs to arrive at church at least 20-30 minutes before Mass starts.
2. Remind the family that only immediate family members are allowed at the foyer or entrance of the Church at the start of the Mass. Other relatives and guests are to be seated inside the Church.
3. The proclaimer and person leading committal (prayers) at the cemetery are to be at Church 15 minutes before Mass starts for a briefing on the flow to ensure there are no hiccups during Mass. This will be done by an experienced church volunteer.
4. The Proclaimer is to ensure that there is a distance of 5-6 inches (one hand span) from their mouth to the microphone so that they are clear and loud enough.
5. The audio-visual volunteers or Sacristan will turn on the lectern and commentator microphones before Mass starts.
6. If audio-visual projection is not available, our parish has copies of the “Order of Christian Funerals” books to be

distributed and those attending the Mass can share these copies. The commentator is to announce after Mass ends that “all books are to be placed on the table at the back of the church.”

7. If audio-visual volunteers and choir members are available, they will be at Church at least 15 minutes before Mass starts.
8. BEC members or relatives of the bereaved family who are helping to sing in the choir to be at Church at least 20 or 30 minutes before Mass starts.
9. Remind the commentator to announce before Holy Communion, “Only practising Catholics who are in a state of Grace may come forward to receive communion. Non-Catholics, please remain seated.”
10. Remind the commentator to announce after the dismissal, “Please keep social distancing while paying your last respects to the deceased and family members. After having paid your respects, please proceed immediately to your cars to avoid crowding in the Church foyer.”

11. Ensure there is someone to lead the prayers at the cemetery. This can be a Communion minister, BEC/zone Co-ordinator/member, a family member or relative who is going to the cemetery.



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### *The Eulogy*

*Although family members would often like to share their memorable experiences of the deceased with guests and well-wishers, it must be stressed that the eulogy is NOT part of the liturgy of the Funeral Mass.*

*The Funeral Mass has clearly defined purposes, namely to worship God, plead for God's mercy on behalf of the deceased, console the living with the hope of the resurrection and fulfil our duty to pray for the dead as part of the communion of saints. Nothing should distract our attention from these purposes.*

*It is recommended that eulogies and other sharing with regards to the life of the deceased, if any, be done at the first station - the home or funeral parlour.*



## rites of committal

1. The priest will accompany the cortège to the Kajang Catholic cemetery for the blessing of the grave unless he has another prior engagement. As for the other cemeteries, columbaria or crematoria, the BEC/Zone coordinator needs to arrange for a person to accompany the cortège.
2. Holy water is used during the committal/service at the cemetery. Get this from the Sacristan at Church. The holy water dispenser is to be returned to Church immediately after the committal service at the cemetery.
3. If Trinity or Eden are the undertakers, they can also lead prayers at the cemetery as they are experienced in this. Arrange with them beforehand. Otherwise a Communion minister, BEC/zone co-ordinator/member, family member or relative can do so.
4. The *Rites of Committal at the Grave or Tomb* can be found either in the undertaker's prayer books or from the Zone funeral mass book "Order of Christian Funerals" (Pages 94 to 97).

# Appendix I – Death Register Checklist



## CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY, KAJANG DEATH REGISTER CHECKLIST

|                           |   |                 |   |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Deceased Name             | :   |                 |   |
| Gender                    | : <b>Male</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Female</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   |                 |   |
| Date of Birth             | :   | Age             | : |
| Address                   | :   |                 |   |
| Cause of Death            | :   | Date of Demised | : |
| Contact Person            | :   | Contact No      | : |
| Zone/Bec Coordinator Name | :   | Zone/ Bec       | : |
| Contact No                | :   |                 |   |
| Funeral Date              | :   | Time            | : |
| Burial Date               | :   |                 |   |
| Place of Burial           | :   |                 |   |
| Cremate                   | :   | Reburial        | : |
| Liturgy                   | : <b>Mass</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  |                 |   |
| Language                  | : <b>ENG</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>TAMIL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>MANDARIN</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>BM</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |                 |   |
| Celebrant                 | :   |                 |   |

# Appendix II – Funeral Charges



## CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY KAJANG

11, Jalan Gereja, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.  
Tel : 03-8733 1154, 03-8751 0704 | Email: holyfamily@archkl.org

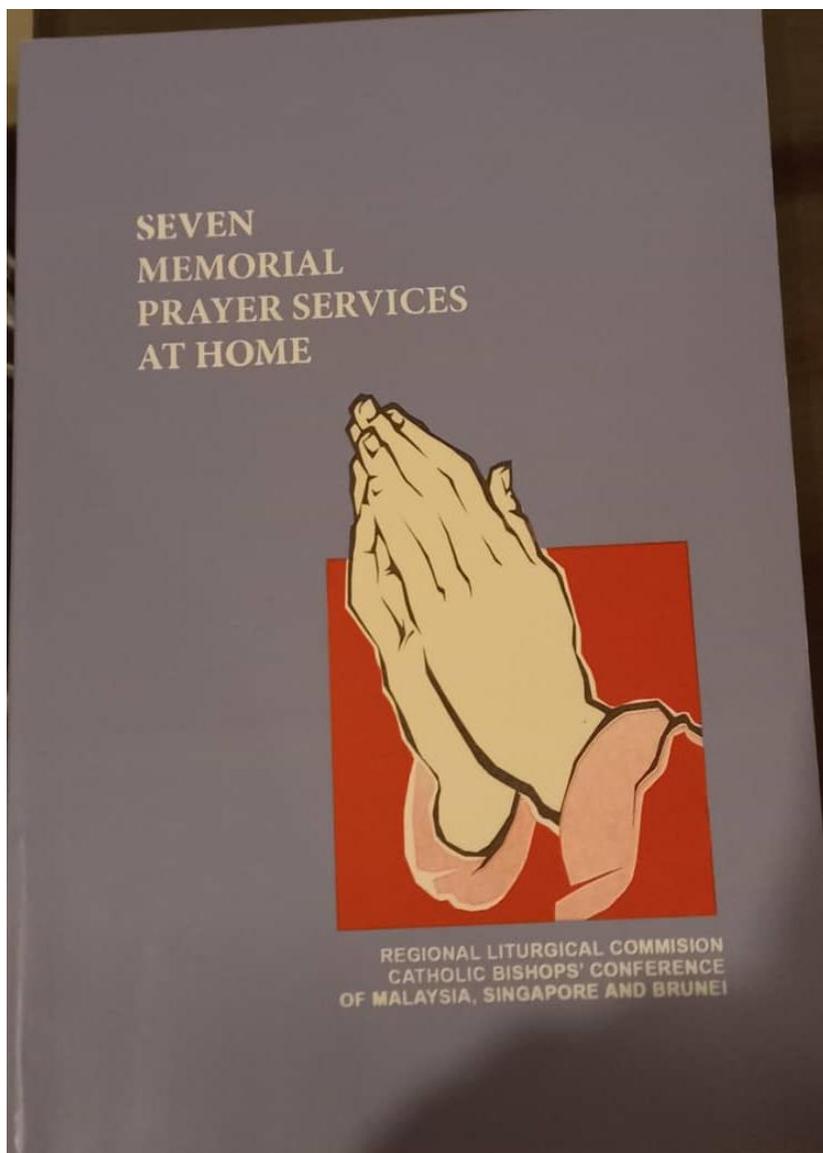
### Funeral Charges

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| New Plot              | RM 1300.00 |
| Digging of Grave      | RM 300.00  |
| Mass and Church Usage | RM 300.00  |
| Total                 | RM 1900.00 |

**Note:**

The above prices are subjected to changes without prior notification.

Appendix III – **Seven Memorial Prayer Services at Home**



Appendix IV – Order of Christian Funerals



**ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS**

Episcopal Regional Liturgy Commission  
Catholic Bishops' Conference  
Of  
Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei

## Appendix V – **40<sup>th</sup> Day /100<sup>th</sup> Day / Anniversary Prayers**

This is a different handout that BECCOT will share separately.

## NOTES



