



MASSEY BROS.

# *Honouring Life*

*Planning a Humanist or Civil funeral*

## Non - Religious Funeral Ceremonies

### Humanist funeral

Humanism is considered an overall perspective on life, as opposed to a religion. Although flexible in its interpretations some of the core principles of Humanism include altruism, integrity, honesty, truthfulness and responsibility.

Humanists believe that happiness in life is determined by the good in humanity rather than by religion or dogma.

If your loved one was a Humanist, your funeral director can recommend an accredited Humanist celebrant who will liaise with the family to create a fitting tribute that celebrates the life of your loved one.

This celebration may take place at a location of your choice, for example in a private space at your funeral director's premises, the crematorium or even at the graveside, and allows for family, friends and neighbours to gather to mark the passing of your loved one in a way that acknowledges the sadness and loss but also celebrates a life well lived.

A Humanist funeral may include reflections from family and friends, music and song, poetry and prose, as well as words of comfort and gratitude from the celebrant. In advance of the funeral the celebrant will meet with the family so that they can work together to plan a meaningful ceremony. This includes the family sharing information and stories about their loved one so that the ceremony can best reflect the life of the deceased.

The celebrant will lead the ceremony, inviting others to take part, as agreed with the family. While a Humanist celebrant is not able to say anything of a religious nature, some may, on occasion, allow a mourner to say a prayer if it is something that the family would like. Some families also choose to include a few moments of silence as part of the funeral ceremony to allow religious mourners the opportunity to say a silent prayer.

### Civil funeral

A Civil Funeral Ceremony is a dignified and formal semi or nonreligious ceremony to commemorate a loved one's life and parting. A civil funeral may include contributions from family and friends, hymns, music and songs, poetry and prose, as well as prayers and words of comfort. Civil Funerals offer flexibility to hold a non-religious ceremony which may include music, song, readings and prayers that are considered to be religious.

As with Humanist Funerals the service can take place at a location of your choice, for example in a private space, hotel or conference centre, at your funeral director's premises, the crematorium or even at the graveside, and allows for family, friends and neighbours to gather together to say their final goodbyes in a way unique to them.

The content of the funeral will be agreed in partnership with an accredited civil celebrant which your funeral director will be able to arrange for you to meet in advance of the funeral. The celebrant will lead the ceremony, inviting others to take part, as agreed with the family.

### Mixed tradition funerals

In an every-changing Ireland, it is becoming increasingly common for families to comprise members of all faiths and none. In this instance, your funeral director will work with you to create a funeral that combines the beliefs and wishes of the deceased with the beliefs of the family.

## The Committal

### Burial

Many families choose burial because they have a family plot in a local cemetery. In this instance you should inform your funeral director of the location of the grave so that they can ensure that there is adequate space available within it. If you require a new grave, your funeral director will contact your chosen cemetery to check availability and prices and will advise you accordingly before taking your instructions.

In either event, the funeral director will make the necessary arrangements to have the grave opened and prepared ready for the committal which typically occurs after a funeral ceremony. Some cemeteries, particularly in rural locations, carry on the tradition of allowing family members, friends and neighbours to open and prepare the grave.

If this is something that your family would like, please advise your funeral director and they will contact the cemetery to see if this is permitted.

Your funeral director is also able to provide a microphone and speakers for use by a priest, minister, humanist or civil celebrant at the graveside. They are also able to provide umbrellas for the chief mourners in the event of rain.

### Cremation

Cremation is an alternative to burial when someone dies. Burial has for a long time been the preferred choice for many in Ireland. However, cremation has become increasingly popular in recent years with as high as forty percent of people in major cities now choosing to be cremated. All Christian denominations and most other religions permit cremation. Nonetheless, there are some religions (for example, Orthodox Judaism and Islam) that do not.

If you wish to arrange a cremation you should contact your funeral director who will ensure that all statutory (or legal) requirements are met. Prior to the cremation, forms must be signed by a medical referee who must be satisfied that the attending doctor viewed the body before and after the death, completed the medical certificate and the necessary form stating that there is no reason why the body should not be cremated. The attending doctor is required to examine whether or not the death should be notified to the Coroner.

In addition, the executor or the nearest surviving relative of the deceased must complete and sign the Application of Cremation' [Form B].

The application of cremation must also be witnessed and signed by a third party stating that there is no known reason for the cremation not to go ahead, and that the crematorium has the full permission of the executor/nearest surviving relative to cremate the deceased. Please note that a partner or friend is not legally entitled to fill out this form.

Aside from the obvious legal requirements involved with cremation there are also several practical implications that should be discussed with your funeral director in advance of the funeral



## Length/Type of Service:

If the main funeral service happens prior to arriving at the crematorium, as with most funerals, then usually the time afforded at the crematorium is curtailed to twenty minutes. This is commonly referred to as a Committal Service, providing the celebrant with enough time to perform the concluding Funeral Rites.

In the case of a religious funeral this is often a good opportunity to play some secular music that may not have been permitted in the earlier religious service or Funeral Mass. All music should be discussed with the celebrant in advance.

There are however some funerals that do not require a prior Service/Mass before arriving at the crematorium. This is commonly known as a Full Service and may last up to an hour. Your Funeral Director will advise you on the amount of time you will require and what times are available. Additional time can be purchased from the crematorium subject to availability. Please note some crematoriums have restrictions on the time of day Full Services can take place due to congestion concerns and crowd control. In most cases, Full Services are only permitted early morning or mid afternoon.

## Music/Digital Media/ Live Streaming:

All crematoriums provide options to play pre-recorded music. However, this must be organised with the funeral director or celebrant in advance as some require the music to be sourced and downloaded independently. Live music can also be organised through your funeral director if you so wish.

Advances in technology have resulted in some crematoriums offering live streaming and options to display videos or photograph slideshows but again not all crematoriums offer this service and if required must be given prior notice.

## Urns and Disposal Options

There are different types of urns that are recommended depending on what your intentions are with your loved ones cremated remains. If you are unsure or undecided your funeral director will discuss all the options open to you at the time of your arrangements.

If a permanent resting place for the cremated remains has not been decided prior to the cremation a temporary polyurn will be provided by the crematorium until a final decision is made.

Equally, there is no obligation for you to collect your loved ones cremated remains until you are ready. Your Funeral Director can collect them from the crematorium, usually two working after the funeral, and keep them safe in their care until further instruction.

## Planning a Funeral when family live all over the world

If there are family members or close friends living overseas who need to travel back to Ireland to attend the funeral of your loved ones, your funeral director will be able to schedule the funeral accordingly and advise you whether or not this will impact on your decisions relating to embalming your loved one's remains.

If some family members are unable to travel back to Ireland to attend the funeral, depending on the type of funeral and venues used, it may be possible to live-stream funeral online or record the funeral so that others might watch it at another time.

## Planning an Environmentally Friendly Funeral

Many people express a desire to ensure that their care for the environment should continue after their passing. There are a host of things that can be incorporated into a funeral to ensure that it is as environmentally friendly as possible.

These include:

- ▼ Choosing a coffin that is produced using a sustainably sourced material that is fully biodegradable.
- ▼ Choosing a natural burial ground.
- ▼ Choosing not to embalm your loved one's remains.
- ▼ Asking mourners to make a donation to charity in lieu of flowers.
- ▼ Printing Mass Booklets/Orders of Service on recycled paper.
- ▼ If providing hospitality, asking the caterers/venue to refrain from using single-use plastic.

If you would like to honour the life of your loved one with an environmentally friendly funeral, you should ensure that the funeral director is aware of this and can demonstrate to you how the arrangements put in place will make the least possible impact on the environment.

## Types of Music available for Funerals

Choosing music for a funeral can help create a personalised service and pay tribute to a loved one's life. Our highly skilled funeral arrangers will give you all the support and advice needed to fulfill your necessary funeral music arrangements. Whether it's sourcing funeral music or assembling a choir, we work with some of the best soloists and musicians in the industry, capable of performing all types of music. Whether you require a string quartet, tenor, soprano, violinist, gospel choir, harpist or jazz band we can help you every step of the way.

There are often different types of music that are appropriate for different types of Funerals. Religious Funerals generally require Religious Hymns or sacred music to be played during the service/mass. However, once the service has ended and with the permission of the priest/minister leading the Mass/Service there may be the opportunity to play a secular song as the deceased is leaving the Church. If a funeral takes place in a non-religious venue almost any piece of music can be played as long as copyright restrictions do not apply. However, it is advisable to speak to whomever is leading the ceremony before finalising the music. Many crematoria have a full digital music library available to choose from. If you've got a particular song or piece of music in mind that you'd like to discuss in more detail please let your Funeral Director know in advance of the funeral as some music may need to be sourced independently. Examples of appropriate music and poems for Civil or Non-Religious funeral can be found in Appendix 1 and 2 on the following page.

## Appendix 1

### Modern Music for Civil and Non-Religious Funerals

Popular funeral songs:

- ▼ My Way – Frank Sinatra
- ▼ Angels – Robbie Williams
- ▼ The Best – Tina Turner
- ▼ Wind Beneath My Wings – Bette Midler
- ▼ Always Look on the Bright Side of Life – Eric Idle (Monty Python's 'Life of Brian')
- ▼ Time to Say Goodbye – Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli
- ▼ You'll Never Walk Alone – Gerry and the Pacemakers

### Classical Music:

- ▼ Canon in D – Paachelbel
- ▼ Nimrod from Enigma Variations – Elgar
- ▼ The Four Seasons – Vivaldi
- ▼ Ave Maria – Schubert
- ▼ Pie Jesu – Fauré
- ▼ Adagio – Albinoni
- ▼ Air on a G String – Bach

### Popular songs for a mother's funeral include:

- ▼ In the Arms of an Angel - Sarah McLachlan
- ▼ You're My Best Friend – Queen
- ▼ Supermarket flowers – Ed Sheeran
- ▼ Goodbye's the Saddest Word – Celine Dion
- ▼ Mama – Il Divo
- ▼ Don't Forget to Remember Me – Carrie Underwood

## Popular songs for a father's funeral include:

- ▼ You Raise Me Up – Josh Groban
- ▼ Dance with My Father – Luther Vandross
- ▼ The Living years – Mike & The Mechanics
- ▼ My Father's Eyes – Eric Clapton
- ▼ Sometimes You Can't Make It on Your Own – U2

## Examples of happy and uplifting songs to play at a funeral include:

- ▼ Three Little Birds – Bob Marley and the Wailers
- ▼ Somewhere Over the Rainbow - Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
- ▼ What a Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong
- ▼ Spirit in the Sky – Norman Greenbaum
- ▼ See You Again – Wiz Khalifa

## Appendix 2

### Poems for Civil or Non-Religious Funerals

Our role is to help families create a funeral ceremony that honours the life of their loved one in a way that fully reflects and respects their wishes and beliefs. Civil or non-religious funerals can be held in any location, with or without the assistance of a civil celebrant.

They may follow any format and can contain poems, songs, music or a reading from a favourite book. Family members and friends are free to take part in whatever way the family would like.

We have put together a collection of poems suitable for civil or non-religious funerals. Poetry, in particular, is often used to reflect thoughts and emotions and can be a meaningful way for a family member or friend to take part in the ceremony.

Please see the following pages.

Farewell My Friends  
(Rabindranath Tagore)

Farewell My Friends, It was beautiful  
As long as it lasted, The journey of my life.  
I have no regrets, Whatsoever said  
The pain I'll leave behind. Those dear hearts  
Who love and care...  
And the strings pulling, At the heart and soul...  
The strong arms That held me up  
When my own strength Let me down.  
At the turning of my life I came across  
Good friends, Friends who stood by me  
Even when time raced me by.  
Farewell, farewell My friends  
I smile and Bid you goodbye.  
No, shed no tears For I need them not  
All I need is your smile.  
If you feel sad Do think of me  
For that's what I'll like  
When you live in the hearts  
Of those you love Remember then  
You never die

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Afterglow  
(Helen Lowrie Marshall)

I'd like the memory of me  
To be a happy one.  
I'd like to leave an afterglow  
Of smiles when day is done.  
I'd like to leave an echo  
Whispering softly down the ways,  
Of happy times and laughing times  
And bright and sunny days.  
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,  
To dry before the sun  
Of happy memories that I leave  
When life is done.

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep  
(Mary Elizabeth Frye)

Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there, I do not sleep,  
I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the Diamond glints on snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.  
I am the gentle Autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night  
Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die

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(S)He is gone  
(David Harkin)

You can shed tears that (s)he is gone  
Or you can smile because (s)he has lived.  
You can close your eyes and pray that  
(s)he will come back  
Or you can open your eyes and see all that  
(s)he has left.  
Your heart can be empty because you  
can't see (her) him  
Or you can be full of the love that you  
shared.  
You can turn your back on tomorrow and  
live yesterday  
Or you can be happy for tomorrow  
because of yesterday.  
You can remember him and only that  
(s)he is gone  
Or you can cherish (her) his memory and  
let it live on.  
You can cry and close your mind,  
Be empty and turn your back  
Or you can do what he would want:  
Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.



## The Lake Isle of Innisfree

W. B. Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and  
wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive  
for the honey-bee;  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.  
And I shall have some peace there, for  
peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to  
where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon  
a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.  
I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds  
by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the  
pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

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## The Day You Left

(Anon)

With tears we saw you suffer,  
As we watched you fade away,  
Our hearts were almost broken,  
As you fought so hard to stay.  
We knew you had to leave us,  
But you never went alone,  
For part of us went with you  
The day you left your home.

## The Road Not Taken

(Robert Frost)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler; long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair  
And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

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## Funeral Blues

(W.H. Auden)

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.  
Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
Scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead.  
Put crepe bows round the white necks of  
the public doves,  
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.  
He was my North, my South, my East and West,  
My working week and my Sunday rest,  
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.  
The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

## The Parting Glass

(Irish Traditional Song)

Oh all the time that e'er I spent,  
I spent it in good company;  
And any harm that e'er I've done,  
I trust it was to none but me;  
May those I've loved through all the years  
Have memories now they'll e'er recall;  
So fill me to the parting glass,  
Goodnight, and joy be with you all.  
Oh all the comrades that e'er I had,  
Are sorry for my going away;  
And all the loved ones that e'er I had  
Would wish me one more day to stay.  
But since it falls unto my lot  
That I should leave and you should not,  
I'll gently rise and I'll softly call  
Goodnight, and joy be with you all.  
Of all good times that e'er we shared,  
I leave to you fond memory;  
And for all the friendship that e'er we had  
I ask you to remember me;  
And when you sit and stories tell,  
I'll be with you and help recall;  
So fill to me the parting glass,  
God bless, and joy be with you all.

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## I am Free

(by Robert M Burcham)

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,  
I'm following the path God laid for me.  
I took his hand when I heard his call,  
I turned my back and left it all.  
I could not stay another day,  
To laugh, to love, to work, to play.  
Tasks left undone must stay that way,  
I've found that peace at the close of the day.  
If my parting has left a void,  
Then fill it with remembered joy.  
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,  
Ah yes, these things I too will miss.  
Be not burdened with times of sorrow,  
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.  
My Life's been full, I savoured much,  
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch,  
Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,  
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.  
Lift up your heart and share with me,  
God wanted me now,  
He set me free.

## We Remember Them

(Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer)

At the rising sun and at its going down;  
We remember them.  
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter;  
We remember them.  
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring;  
We remember them.  
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer;  
We remember them.  
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn;  
We remember them.  
At the beginning of the year and when it ends;  
We remember them.  
As long as we live, they too will live,  
for they are now a part of us as  
We remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength;  
We remember them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart;  
We remember them.  
When we have decisions that are difficult to make;  
We remember them.  
When we have joy we crave to share;  
We remember them.  
When we have achievements that are based on theirs;  
We remember them.  
For as long as we live, they too will live,  
for they are now a part of us as,  
We remember them

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## Promises

(by David Chadwick Rites of Passage)

You promised me you'd always be there.  
You sat there, in that chair and promised me.  
Large as life, ebullient, robust;  
they were the words that sealed your promise  
You stood by the shore  
As we laughed and squealed with delight as  
you picked up rocks and tossed them with ease  
Splashing us with expectations of your invincibility.  
You were invincible. weren't you Daddy?  
Or was it just a trick of time  
That made me believe that you could live forever?

## Understanding Bereavement and Grief

Grief is the natural process of reaction and adjustment to loss and change. It is quite simply a coming to terms with something you have lost. It is not an illness, nor is it something that needs to be fixed. It is a normal part of life and living and can be an emotionally intense process.

There is no right way to grieve, everyone's grief is different; some people like to share their grief and talk about it whilst others are more private and prefer to channel their grief into activities. Even for the most normal of bereavements it can take up to two years before people reach a point where they can adapt.

Grief is not something that we can take up or put down as we choose. It has its own rhythm which will demand our attention from time to time. It is important to remember that there will be good days and bad days and most people need to be able to spend time dealing with their loss, time away from doing other things which is all part of the natural process of coping with loss. There are many parts to grief you may not have expected. You may have physical symptoms, for example, feeling tired or unable to eat. You may struggle with questions about the meaning of life, your faith and your beliefs about what happens after death.

### Remember:

- ▼ Grief is a process and it takes time.
- ▼ Everyone's grief is different.
- ▼ There is no right way to grieve.
- ▼ Strong emotions and thoughts are part of grief.

There are different levels of bereavement care which people can avail of in coming to terms with their loss. The majority of people will only need general support and information. Here are more tips for dealing with your grief:

- ▼ Seek out accurate information about grief and loss.
- ▼ Be patient and gentle with yourself as you grieve.
- ▼ Recognise the extent of your loss.
- ▼ Allow yourself to cope and to grieve in a way that suits you.
- ▼ Try to sleep well, eat well, and take gentle exercise.
- ▼ Try not to make major or rash decisions while you grieve.
- ▼ Accept emotional and practical support from friends and family.
- ▼ Talk to your GP if you feel you need further support.









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