

# MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS

On the Occassion of a Death  
of an Augustinian Recollect Religious

2021 Edition



**Province of St. Ezekiel Moreno**

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## MESSAGE

“... the brothers are to regard the moment of death [...] as reaching the beginning of that which is eternally new.” (*Add. Code 275*)

For the first time, the Province has finally come up with this *Manual of Instructions* as its guide in taking the necessary steps in the case of a friar’s demise. We are grateful to the Team under the aegis of the Commission on History, Culture, and Heritage-Recoletos (CoHCH-R) for initiating the crafting of this guidebook, as well to the brothers who gave their helpful suggestions.

This Manual spells out clearly the roles of the proper authorities and relevant offices, gives due respect to the legal requirements of a foreign country or territory where perchance the death of a religious would occur, and, in a subtle way, challenges everyone to reflect one more time on the Christian meaning of life and death.

More particularly on that third yet subtle way, I would like to point out further that the call is for all of us to always “prepare to cross the threshold of time to enter eternity” (Pope John Paul II, *Address to the Pontifical Academy for Life*, February 27, 1999). That also means, in line with our common life, to be an edifying part of each one’s journey to our Father’s house. A Croatian author makes a profound take on it saying: “The phenomenon of death in consecrated life is perceived in three ritual events: baptism, religious consecration and physical death. These three moments make the so-called 3D (three deaths) transformation which is not only in these three events but through asceticism it is extended to the whole existence of the consecrated person. [...] Considering the relation between asceticism and eschaton [in religious life], a convent could be named a heavenly embassy and consecrated people, heavenly ambassadors.”

Let us continue to read between the lines of this Manual, and we will get to re-discover the treasures of who we really are as religious i.e., as “the tangible seals which the Trinity impresses upon history so that people can sense with longing the attraction of divine beauty” (*Vita consecrata* 20). And finally, we, as consecrated persons, “point to a future with the hope of the Resurrection, ready to follow the example of Christ, who came among us that we ‘might have life and have it to the full’ (Jn 10:10)” (*Starting afresh from Christ*, 9).

May the souls of all the faithful departed, especially our confreres who have gone ahead of us, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



## FOREWORD

*“Because Christ defeated death, he owns it and commands it to serve his greater purpose of redemption.”* Christine Chappell

When we see a loved one suffering and in the point of death, most of us would want suffering and death gone. But in reality, it is our loved ones who leave not death and suffering. Unless we see a deeper logic in the tragic event, it seems that the reaper would have the last laugh. But it should not be so. There is a far greater way to see death.

When St. Paul wrote “O death where is your victory, O death where is your sting” he must have seen death in a perspective not seen by many during his time. In Christ he saw death not as a destroyer of life but as a means to reach eternal life.

Alexander MacLaren, a nineteenth-century minister, wrote “Death is Christ’s minister, mighty and beautiful, though his face be dark.” This statement is very comforting for us who believed in Christ. Since he has defeated death, he has now control of it. Death is now in the control of Christ whose interest is only our wellbeing and salvation. Death then, for those who follow Christ, is not something to be feared but an event we have to prepare and to welcome when the right time comes. No wonder St. Francis of Assisi would label death as “sister.”

For Christ’s faithful follower, when death comes it is Christ who calls. In Jn. 14:3-4, Jesus says, “When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.” In this perspective death has become an invitation for glory, for eternal life and for union with Christ, not an end to life and punishment.

For this, death should be approached with respect and awe. This manual is written with the purpose of approaching the death of a religious and its surrounding circumstances in very respectful manner. Its aim is to instruct those in authority how to move and act upon the death of their confrere. The instructions are to assure that the protocols be followed, traditions and practices be respected, the good memory of the dead religious be cherished, and his death will move those living to think of eternal life.

By no means are we making light of the evil that death brings. It is a foreign entity not part of the original plan of the Father during creation. Thanks be to Christ who has conquered death and has risen! We can now see death not as a horrible reaper but as a ministering angel leading us to eternal bliss with Christ.





# INSTRUCTIONS RELATIVE TO THE PASSING AWAY OF AN AUGUSTINIAN RECOLLECT FRIAR

## **Upon Death and Preparation of the Body**

The Prior Provincial shall be properly notified by the Local Prior regarding the death of a religious.

In situation where the death of the religious occurs in the convent, the Local Prior will contact a medical doctor to certify the death of the religious. Documents in relation to the death of a religious will be signed by the Local Prior.

The Local Prior accompanied by another religious inspect the room of the deceased religious for items prone for decomposition like food, trash, used medicines, plants, etc.; and dispose them accordingly. Electronic gadgets are to be switched off.

The Local Prior and another religious must secure the following items in preparation for the proper religious vesting of the deceased religious: religious habit, belt, and stole for a deceased religious who is a priest.

Local Prior temporarily keeps the personal items of the deceased religious brought from the hospital like wrist watch, wallet, cell phone, jewelry, rosary etc. These items will be turned over to the religious assigned by the Prior Provincial to segregate the belongings of the deceased religious.

Upon the completion of the inspection and gathering of necessary items for the proper religious vesting, the Local Prior and another religious of the community seal the room of the deceased religious until such time when a religious assigned by the Prior Provincial segregates the items inside.

In no way will the room be opened except when there is a grave reason to do so and with the knowledge and in the presence of the Local Prior and the religious who accompanied him in sealing the room.



The Provincial Secretary will write an obituary, which also contains announcement regarding arrangements for viewing and burial, to be disseminated throughout the Province and to the whole Augustinian Recollect family.

The Local Prior or any religious of the community has to accompany the body of the deceased religious to the funeral home to make sure the body is treated with respect and prepared well.

It is incumbent upon the Local Prior to assign, preferably, the Local Procurator to oversee the preparations and the expenses in relation to the wake and burial of the dead religious.

### **Preparation for the Wake**

Upon the arrival of the casket containing the deceased religious from the funeral home to the convent or oratory or any place of public viewing, the Local Prior or any religious assigned, together with the whole community if possible, meets the casket containing the deceased religious so as to perform the initial rites and prayers of the dead found in the Rite of Christian Burial.

As preparation for public viewing, the Local Prior or any religious assigned has to inspect the deceased religious to see to it that everything is in proper order.

In case the family, relatives or close associates of the deceased religious will ask for an item as remembrance, claim that an item is promised to be given to them or asked for the return of a borrowed item; the Local Prior will have to explain the rules and circumstances regarding the items in the deceased religious' room and in no way will make any commitment which will obliged the community to give the said items.

### **Burial**

All deceased religious shall be buried in the lot properly specified by the Prior Provincial. Explicit permission should be obtained for exemption to this norm. At present there are three memorial lots allotted for this purpose, namely: Himlayang Pilipino in Quezon City, Bacolod Memorial Park in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental; and Queen City Memorial Gardens in Cebu City, Cebu.

Full body burial is the norm. Cremation is not allowed except for a very grave and extraordinary reason, flowing the provisions set by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, namely, one that is not inconsistent with the Christian Doctrine and principles, and complying with the following conditions, such as, for economic reasons and for reasons of health protocols.

## **After the Burial**

A religious will be assigned by the Prior Provincial to segregate the personal belongings of the deceased religious.

The Local Prior of the said religious will be given a copy of the special appointment so the latter may be excused temporarily from the community's activities and duties so as to attend to the segregation of the personal belongings of the deceased religious.

A copy of the same appointment paper will be forwarded to the Local Prior of the deceased religious' community so that the assigned religious will be given the necessary accommodation and assistance in performing his special task.

The religious assigned to segregate should have prudence in his conversations regarding the contents of the deceased religious' room. He has to treat this responsibility with utmost care and confidentiality for the sake of the memory of the dead religious.

The Local Prior of the house may assign hired personnel or any house hold help to assist the appointed religious in the segregation of the personal belongings of the deceased religious. The number of personnel will be determined by the religious assigned to segregate the items.

Before segregation, the room will be opened and inspected by both the Local Prior and the religious assigned to segregate by the Prior Provincial.

Once opened and inspected, the key of the room will now be turned over by the Local Prior to the religious assigned to segregate the items, and in no way will anybody be allowed to enter the room without the acknowledged permit from the religious assigned or the Local Prior.

## **Instructions for Segregation and Classification of Belongings**

Items with historic, monetary and artistic significance and value are to be turned over to the museum. Items should always be properly labeled.

Personal records and documents like photographs, letters, journals, diaries, sermons, write up, etc are to be forwarded to the Provincial Archives. These documents are to be sealed properly and in no way will these documents be opened at least within the next fifty (50) years.

Depending on the classification, books found in the room of the deceased religious are to be given to the community, school or theology library. The community is to decide on the matter upon consultation with a hired librarian. Books borrowed by the dead religious and are properly marked should be returned to their respective libraries.

Other items like money, technology, jewelry and other special items with value are to be turned over to the prior for proper disposal.



Personal items like clothing, collections and souvenirs item, classified as of lesser significant value, are to be disposed by the community. These items could be given to the family, charitable institutions, and those in need.

If there are sensitive items and documents found, the religious assigned to segregate has to inform the Local Prior about the said discovery. Should the Local Prior decide, upon consultation with the Local Council and the religious assigned to segregate, to keep the memory of the deceased religious intact, the proper disposal of the discovered items and documents would require the approval of the Prior Provincial. Should the Prior Provincial turn down the request, these items and documents are to be forwarded to the Provincial Archives for safe keeping. The principles of the “secret archives” should be properly followed relative to these sensitive materials.

Once segregation is done and the items are properly distributed, the room should be properly cleaned and sanitized. It would be better if all the items of the deceased religious are disposed properly and taken out of the room.

The test of a perfect execution of the post burial cleaning is when the room is totally free of any memory of the deceased religious and is ready for occupancy.

## Appendix: Const 3. art. 4

### THE DECEASED BROTHERS

93 Across the barriers of death, and in configuration with Christ who died and rose again, the communion of love, begun by the brothers on earth, will reach its fullness in heaven, where all will be one in Christ.<sup>55</sup>

The Spirit of piety is to keep the memory of the deceased brothers alive among the religious. Masses and prayers of expiation are to be offered for them.<sup>56</sup>

94 *When a brother dies, whether novice or professed, the community to which he belongs will celebrate the funeral Mass and another Mass on the first anniversary of his death.*

*All the priest of the Order are to offer a Mass on the dath of each religious. This also applies to those who have died and had previously been elevated to the episcopate or some other dignity outside the Order.*

*When a postulant or aspirant dies, a Mass is to be celebrated for him. The same should be done for the father or mother of a religious, in the house in which the religious lives.*

*On the death of the Roman Pontiff, a Mass is to be celebrated in each of the houses of the Order. On the death of a major superior, a Mass is also to be celebrated in the houses within his jurisdiction.*

95 *Each year three general anniversaries of the dead will be celebrated in all houses of the Orde:<sup>57</sup>the first for all the deceased brothers and sisters of the Order, with proper Mass and Office, the second, for the deceased relatives of the religious and for the people dearest to them; the third, for deceased benefactors. On these last two anniversaries, one Mass is to be celebrated, and either Evening or Morning Prayer for the dead.*

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<sup>55</sup>Cf. Ga mn3, 28; S. 326. 8 10 PL. 39, 161.

<sup>56</sup>Cf. Conf. 9, 13, 36-37 PL 32, 778, S. 172, 2 PL 38, 936; De civ. Dei1, 13 PL 41, 27.

<sup>57</sup>De cura pro mortuis 4, 6 PI 40, 596.



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