



Filipino Liturgical and Cultural Practices Around End-of-Life

- Time of illness or life-threatening condition

Liturgical Rite:

1. Anointing of the Sick

Traditions:

1. Prayers
2. Bringing Holy Communion to the sick

- Time of waiting or prolonged dying (Tradition – Prayers)

Traditions:

1. Prayers - The Holy Rosary, The Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Litany of the Saints are 3 of the most appropriate prayers.

- Time of death

Traditions:

1. Calling the family to be present around the deathbed when the person is close to dying with each family member having a chance to make peace with the person, reminisce good times with the dying person, and to thank the dying person for the good times spent together so he can die happy and can rest in peace.
2. Commendation Prayer - upon dying.
3. A 24-hour wake is held either at home or at the funeral parlour with the casket for a few days. People drop in or keep vigil overnight to show condolence to the family. Guests give monetary gifts, flowers, food, prayers to the family. They act as extended families sharing the loss and sorrows of the immediate family. This becomes a social event with food, music, jokes, and sharing many stories of the deceased. This is a beautiful tradition which tremendously help the grieving family forget their sorrows witnessing the love and support of the community.
4. A 9-day (novena) prayers is held to pray for the repose of the soul, always followed with refreshments, and a chance for the family and friends to reminisce their good times with the deceased.
5. On the 9th day is a big celebration of food to thank the family and friends who joined in the 9-days of prayers.

6. On the 40th Day is another big prayer day followed by a sumptuous refreshment. This is likened to Christ's ascension after 40 days. It is now believed that the soul is home in heaven and the family do not expect the "ghost" of the deceased to visit them anymore.
7. The next celebration is on the 1-year death anniversary called "Babang Luksa." (end of mourning). The old tradition was that when someone dies, the immediate members of the family, especially the women, wear only black colored clothing for one year. On the 1st death anniversary, the wearing of the black clothing is ended.

- Funeral Mass or Service

Liturgical Rite:

1. Mass for the Dead including covering of the casket with white pall, incensing and sprinkling of holy water.

Traditions:

1. Breaking the rosary held by deceased person in coffin so death in family will not continue.
2. Family of deceased should not escort guests leaving the wake/funeral
3. Children being passed over or under the casket.

- Burial or Interment

Liturgical Rite:

1. Gravesite Rite of Burial.

Traditions:

1. All immediate family – wear black for one year as a sign of grieving; others opt for black and white for part of the year. This way, the family gets respect and treated with gentleness knowing that they are still grieving for a loss of a loved one.

- Visiting the grave or mausoleum

Liturgical Rite:

1. Order for visiting a cemetery.

Traditions:

1. Prayers every visit.
2. Visiting the grave on November 1st each year and prayers.