



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF LOUISVILLE

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Priests  
FROM: Dr. Karen Shadle, *Director of Worship*  
SUBJECT: Use of Funeral Palls  
DATE: February 11, 2026

Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre of Louisville has recently received questions about the proper color of the pall used during funeral liturgies. The following guidance outlines the norms for the use and color of the funeral pall:

The *Order of Christian Funerals* (OCF) notes that, where it is customary, a pall may be placed over the coffin when it is brought into the church. “The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow. In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the dead” (OCF, n. 39).

In the Archdiocese of Louisville, the color options permitted for funeral vestments do not apply to the pall placed on the casket before the Entrance Procession. From this point forward, if a pall is used, it must be white. The pall serves as a reminder of the deceased’s baptismal garment, symbolizes their Christian dignity, and conveys that all people are equal before God (OCF, n. 38; cf. James 2:1-9). As a representation of the baptismal garment, the pall is unequivocally white (*Order of Baptism of Children*, n. 63).

**The use of black funeral palls, or palls of any other color, is incongruous to these norms, and therefore is not permitted during the Funeral Mass.**

For questions or clarifications concerning this information, please contact the Archbishop of Louisville or the Archdiocesan Director of Worship.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,  
Karen Shadle

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### Worship

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