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## Funeral

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## Guest Writers' Corner

### Funeral

In grade school my class sang at them for free  
pretending we understood the Latin we sang.  
Later I served at them, these times for a stipend,  
still pretending I understood the Latin I said  
as I enjoyed the free limo ride to the cemetery.

They were always the same back then.  
Priest, casket, people, wrapped in black,  
smells of beeswax and incense filled the air.  
The symbols spoke loudly in their silence,  
stern sermons were dark and serious business.

It was all about loss, regret, retribution.  
Not all was bad. Words of one stirring  
sermon roused my guilt, caused me to sit up  
head to the confessional the next Saturday.  
Those harsh words may have changed my life.

Today all is different. It's about comfort, assurance.  
The deceased is praised, honored. Heaven awaits.  
All is done with less ritual and more warmth  
as friends and family contribute with  
prayers, songs, flowers, and memories.

Now, it seems, each is different from the rest.  
Families select the songs, scriptures, hoping  
to hear words that will say what they would say  
about the person who now can no longer hear.  
It's better when all know when to sit, stand and kneel.

When my time comes to be the center of attraction  
I hope I plan it well but for now I am unsure  
how to manage it all. Should it be about comfort  
or maybe all about my good points? Better, it should be  
about my last shot to deliver messages I hadn't in life.

Perhaps I'll have my children read passages that  
I think they need as guidance in my absence,  
my grandsons read prayers they need to know  
while I'm still pretending to know what's best  
and enjoy my last free limo ride to the cemetery.

### *Paul A. Rothermich*



Paul, father of Sarah Campagna, lives in Toledo, Ohio



Sarah with dad and mom, Clara