



Resources for Funeral Ministry Teams

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FUNERAL MINISTRY TEAMS

Visiting the Home – Sensitivity

Preparation

- Have the basic information about the person who died and if possible their relationships (husband, wife, partner, son, daughter etc.)
- Be clear on the purpose of the visit – to express the sympathy of the parish community and help with preparation of the liturgy.
- Know your boundaries – no need to talk about the circumstances or to compare stories. It's not a competition for the saddest story or the most unusual death.
- You have no obligation to fix things.
- Spend some time in prayer before visit.

Arrival

- State your business at the door and wait to be invited in.
- 'I am here to express the sympathy of the parish community and to offer assistance as you prepare for the funeral of ...'.
- Offer practical information on the details of the church ceremonies and the possible prayer services in their home or at the funeral home
- Give them a framework for the ceremonies and offer options – nothing cast in concrete.
- Give them leaflets on music, suggestions for scripture readings/prayers and reference to helpful website – www.litmus.dublindiocese.ie
- Rituals put words on things for which we have difficulty finding words.
- Sprinkling water, burning incense, putting on a pall, placing Christian symbols on the coffin etc. when done with dignity speak more than words can
- Kick for touch when 'outside the box' suggestions are presented. Sometimes they can be incorporated later.
- Allow for tears and don't compare deaths – each one is unique and it also breaks the sense of confidentiality.
- Don't stay all night/day – give them space. You are a stranger no matter how welcome.
- Take away a list of relevant names for the liturgy to pass on to celebrant.
- If there is time, offer to drop back when the family members have had the opportunity to work liturgy.

Reflection

- Write down your thoughts and concerns after the visit.
- Share the information monthly/bi monthly with your support group.

Checklist:

Funeral teams should be aware of where the following items are to be found, either in the sacristy or elsewhere in the church: –

- Trolley
- Sprinkler
- Paschal Candle (symbol of the risen Christ)
- Cross
- Pall
- Thurible (*charcoal is burnt in this - when the charcoal is burnt sufficiently, then the incense is added in*)
- Book of the Gospels
- Bible
- Microphones
- Lights
- Lectionary
- Key to the organ
- Heating
- Christian symbols for the coffin
- Jugs
- Glasses
- Vestments
- The book - *Order of Christian Funerals*



Celebrating the Death of a member of the Roman Catholic Church

Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy

When a Christian dies it is customary to have a religious service to mark their passing designed in accordance with the tradition of a particular religious denomination. In the Roman Catholic liturgy there are often two public ceremonies at the Church:

1. The Reception of the Body at the Church
2. The Funeral Mass including the Final Commendation and Farewell

In addition the Order of Christian Funerals (Veritas 1991), which is a compendium of all the various rites at the time of death, offers texts in both Irish and English for a variety of situations and occasions:

- Prayers after Death
- Gathering in the Presence of the Body
- Vigil for the Deceased
- Transfer of the Body to the Church
- Reception of the Body before Funeral Mass
- Funeral Liturgy outside Mass
- Rite of Committal

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of funerals that have only one ceremony at the Church which is the celebration of Mass preceded directly by a short Reception of the Body. This template outlines the possibilities for both ceremonies and for the final committal in the cemetery or the crematorium.

1 The Rite of Reception of the Body at the Church in the Order of Christian Funerals

1. Greeting (4 choices or option of *ad lib* words from celebrant)
2. Sprinkling with Holy Water
3. Optional Placing of the Pall (White cloth placed over coffin as a reminder of Baptism)
4. Entrance Procession (Accompanied by music or prayers)
5. Optional Placing of Christian Symbols (Cross, Bible etc.)
6. Invitation to Prayer (2 choices)
7. Opening Prayer (2 choices)
8. Liturgy of the Word (Reading, Psalm, Gospel and Homily)
9. Prayer of Intercession (Litany, The Lord's Prayer and Concluding Prayer)
10. Optional recitation of a Decade of the Rosary

2. The Funeral Mass

In preparing the Funeral Mass there are many options for prayers, readings and music which can be chosen to suit the circumstances of the death, the person who has died and those who are seeking consolation from the ceremonies.

Order of the Funeral Mass:

1. Entrance Procession (Symbols carried forward, Cross, Bible etc.) and Opening Hymn
2. Greeting
3. Penitential Act
4. Opening Prayer
5. First Reading
6. Responsorial Psalm
7. Second Reading (optional)
8. Gospel Acclamation (omitted if not sung)
9. Gospel
10. Homily
11. General Intercessions
12. Presentation of Gifts (Bread and Wine)
13. Prayer over the Gifts
14. Preface (3 choices)
15. Eucharistic Prayer (many choices)
16. The Lord's Prayer
17. Prayer for Peace
18. Breaking of Bread (Lamb of God)
19. Communion Song (many choices)
20. Prayer after Communion
21. Simple Blessing

Order of the Final Commendation and Farewell:

1. Invitation to Prayer (2 choices)
2. Signs of Farewell (Water and Incense)
3. Song of Farewell (Music Setting)
4. Prayer of Commendation (2 choices)
5. Procession to the Place of Committal
(5 choices)



Useful Extracts from the Ritual Books

From the *General Introduction* to the ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS 1991

Christians celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. [#5]

The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. [#6]

When a member of Christ's body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one they love. [#8]

The assembly's participation can be assisted by the preparation of booklets that contain an outline of the rite, the texts and songs belonging to the people, and directions for posture, gesture and movement. [#11]

Since liturgical celebration involves the whole person, it requires attentiveness to all that affects the senses. The readings and prayers, psalms and songs should be proclaimed or sung with understanding, conviction and reverence. Music for the assembly should be truly expressive of the texts and at the same time simple and easily sung. The ritual gestures, processions and postures should express and foster an attitude of reverence and reflectiveness in those taking part in the funeral rites. The funeral rites should be celebrated in an atmosphere of simple beauty in a setting that encourages participation. Liturgical signs and symbols affirming Christian belief and hope in the paschal mystery are abundant in the celebration of the funeral rites, but their undue multiplication or repetition should be avoided. Care must be taken that the choice and use of signs and symbols are in accord with the culture of the people. [#21]

In the celebration of the liturgy of the word at the funeral liturgy, the biblical readings may not be replaced by non-biblical readings. But during prayer services with the family, non-biblical readings may be used in addition to readings from Scripture. [#23]

The presiding minister proclaims the readings only when there are no assisting ministers present. [#24]

A brief homily based on the readings... may also be given after the readings at the vigil service; but there is never to be a eulogy. The homilist should dwell on God's compassionate love and on the paschal mystery of the Lord... [#27]

Several models of intercessions are provided within the rites for adaptation to the circumstances. [#29]

Intervals of silence should be observed. [#34]

During the funeral liturgy and also during the vigil service, when celebrated in the church, the Easter candle may be placed beforehand near the position the coffin will occupy at the conclusion of the procession. According to local custom, other candles may also be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy as a sign of reverence and solemnity. [#35]

Blessed or holy water reminds the assembly of the saving waters of baptism. [#36]

Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honour to the body of the deceased, which through baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also used as a sign of the community's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God. [#37]

The pall is a sign of the Christian dignity of the person. The use of the pall also signifies that all are equal in the sight of God (see James 2:1-9) ... Only Christian symbols may rest on or near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, have no place in the funeral liturgy. [#38]

While the more common practice is to celebrate the 'Funeral Liturgy' [i.e. the Mass] on the day following the 'Reception of the Body at the Church', provision is also made for where it is the practice of receiving the body at the Church immediately before the celebration of the funeral liturgy – 'Reception of the Body before Funeral Mass'. [#44]



RECEPTION OF THE BODY – What the Ritual Book itself contains.

See pages 49 to 61 of the Order of Christian Funerals (OCF). Please read the introductory notes before turning to the text itself.

Reception of the Body immediately before Funeral Mass

See pages 81 – 87 of the OCF. This takes place at the beginning of the funeral Mass and the usual introductory rites for Mass, including the penitential rite, are omitted.

Spend time looking through the prayer options/adaptations presented to us in the ritual itself:

Prayers for the dead: pages 178 – 190 of the OCF.

There are forty of these: six general, one for a pope, two for a bishop, three for a priest, two for a deacon, two for a religious, one for someone who worked in the service of the Gospel, two for a baptized child, two for a young person, two for parents, three for a married couple, one for a wife, one for a husband, one for a deceased non-Catholic married to a Catholic, two for an elderly person, three for one who died after a long illness, one for someone who died suddenly, one for someone who died accidentally or violently, two for a person who died by suicide and two for several persons.

Prayers for the mourners: pages 190 – 193 of the OCF.

There are ten extra prayers given there: two general, five for a baptized child, two for a child who died before baptism and one for a stillborn child.

Choice of seven General Intercessions and litanies:

Pages 194 – 203 of the OCF.

These have options within them to suit the state of life of the deceased. There are two special sets of intercessions for a baptized child and one for a deceased child.

Paidreacha as Gaeilge:

Pages 231 – 256 of the OCF.

See also useful resources www.cumannnasagart.ie



Some extracts from *ORDO EXSEQUIARUM 1969*

- At the funeral of its children the Church confidently celebrates Christ's paschal mystery... In the soul they are to be cleansed and taken up into heaven with the saints and the elect; in body they await the blessed hope of Christ's coming and the resurrection of the dead. [#1]
- In such matters as family traditions, local customs, burial societies, Christians should willingly acknowledge whatever they perceive to be good and try to transform whatever seems alien to the Gospel. [#2]
- It is right to show respect for the bodies of the faithful departed, which in life were temples of the Holy Spirit. [#3]
- Death, of course, always has involved an element of separation, but Christians as Christ's members are one in Him and not even death can part them from each other. [#10]
- In any celebration for the deceased, whether a funeral or not, the rite attaches great importance to the readings from the word of God... The Church turns again and again especially to the prayer of the psalms as an expression of grief and a sure source of trust. [#11&12]
- In the celebration of a funeral all the members of the people of God must remember that to each one a role and an office is entrusted... as bearers of the tenderness of the Church and the comfort of the faith, they console those who believe without offending those who grieve. [#16&17]
- When there is no priest or deacon, it is recommended that in funerals according to the first model [i.e. Stations at the home, church, cemetery with two processions in between] laypersons carry out the stations at the home and cemetery; the same applies generally to all vigils for the dead. [#19]
- Apart from the marks of distinction arising from a person's liturgical function or holy orders and those honours due to civil authorities according to liturgical law, no special honours are to be paid in the celebration of a funeral to any private person or classes of persons. [#20]
- As a rule all texts are interchangeable, in order to achieve with the help of the community or the family, a closer reflection of the actual circumstances of each celebration. [#24.1]

Among the priest's responsibilities are: to impart catechesis on the meaning of Christian death;
to comfort the family of the deceased,
to sustain them amid the anguish of their grief,
to be as kind and helpful as possible, and, through the use of the resources provided and allowed in the ritual,
to prepare with them a funeral celebration that has meaning for them;
to fit the liturgy for the dead into the total setting of the liturgical life of the parish and his own pastoral ministry. [#25.2-4]

Reflection for Funeral Ministry Team Meeting prepared by Dr. Sandra Cullen

Recall a funeral liturgy you attended (either the reception of the Remains or the Funeral Mass)

- Where was the coffin placed?
- What was put on the coffin? When?
- Where was the coffin placed after the reception? When was this done?
- Did people process with the coffin or wait in the church?
- Where did the mourners sit?
- Could you hear/see what was happening?
- Who proclaimed / chose the readings?
- What were the readings?
- Music?
- What was carried in procession? When?
- Flowers/cards/book
- Homily
- Prayer of the Faithful – who was involved in these?
- How did the celebrant lead the liturgy?
- Was there a funeral team involved?
- How did the undertakers approach their task?
- How was the sympathy line handled?
- How were the family treated?
- Did anyone from the family speak before, during or after the ceremony?
- Was this a personal funeral?
- Was the liturgy appropriate?
- What was your impression of this funeral?

For small groups

Think of **your own** parish church as you reflect on these questions...

What does your parish do well in relation to funeral liturgies?

What one thing do you think your parish could do better?

The “Funeral Ministry Team” may well be the most important mission team in your church, how aware is the rest of your parish of the role of this team?

What suggestions do you want to bring back to your parish?

For personal reflection: What do I bring to this ministry?

Reflections and Experience of being a member of a Funeral Team - Church Of The Divine Word, Marley Grange

by Geraldine O'Keeffe

Our Funeral Team came together through invitation in my parish - Marley Grange. It followed on from a Bereavement Group that had been in existence for quite a number of years. At some point the life of that group came to an end and it was to be replaced by forming a Funeral Group that would take on certain tasks and roles for funerals within the community. This was a new Ministry for us.

Selecting the Funeral Team was done by invitation from some of the existing members of the Bereavement Group and perhaps the Parish Priest at the time. I remember a person coming to me and asking me would I consider being part of such a group. I just said yes, as my idea of parish and community life had taken on a different meaning for me around that time. I feel it was due to the fact that I was seeking to understand what my faith in God really meant to me now as an adult. Also I had experienced death on a more personal level. Both my parents had died within five years of each other. It had left a gap in my life and a great sadness.

I felt that being part of this new ministry would help me to understand more fully the meaning of life and death. It might ease my own fears around dying and encourage me to live my life to the full.

I had heard that phrase often from John's Gospel, 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10). This concept of living life to the full was something I wanted to come to grips with. I didn't want to live my life thinking about dying, I wanted to embrace life and all the joys and sorrows that are part of our human existence. I felt by making a commitment to join this group that it would help to do just that. That might seem ironic but it made sense to me in that if I could accept that death was part of my journey as a human being then I could get on with the business of living and participating more fully in the life of the Church and the community to which I belonged.

Pastoral Reflections:

September 2003 – First meeting.

The first meeting was arranged and we met in the parish house with two of the priests. We just sat around the table and introduced ourselves. I did not know some of the people at the meeting. There were seven to start with and then we got two more new members, again this was done by invitation. If I recall, I don't feel any person there had experience of being involved at parish level with funerals. It was a good place to start; we were all beginners so to speak, although many of us had personal experience around loss and death. We all felt and knew that we would need training and guidance until we felt more comfortable with the whole concept of this ministry. Concerns were raised as to how the community would receive us. Our parish priest at the time allayed our fears around that. He assured us that through our Baptism we are called to be disciples of God and therefore we have our role to play in the liturgical and ritual life of the Church.

Ministry is “the public activity of a baptised follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit’s charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to proclaim, serve, and realise the kingdom of God”

From the various meetings we had with the priests in the parish I think we began to see that as baptised Christians we were being called to help build up this ministry in our community. But we still had some reservations and concerns as to how the community would perceive our participation and presence at funerals. From attending these meetings we became aware that we had to present this Ministry of Consolation in a very positive way into our parish. The next step forward was to organise a training program, in order that we would have the skills and knowledge to become effective as a Funeral Team in our community.

Our first **input** of Training around the rites and rituals took place at our Parish Centre, Marley Grange.

Workshop February 2004

Content:

- Input
- Rites and Rituals from the moment of death to the moment of burial
- Practical suggestions for parishes
- Issues for funeral teams
- Resources

I will just share on some of **these points briefly**, in particular, the ones that are relevant to **funeral teams**.

- Since Vatican II, over 40 years ago we have been influenced by a theology of ministry...
- “It’s my church too”... It’s my church too as men and women, as laity and priests, as all kinds of groups.
- It is all ROOTED in our Baptism

Rites and Rituals from the moment of death to the moment of burial:

How a Funeral Team can help and participate in these Rites and Rituals

- The needs of the priest – how can the funeral team assist him when he learns that someone had died in the community? [e.g. does anyone from the team know the person/the family? Has the person been ill for a short or long time? Other information that the team might be aware of that they can pass onto the priest].
- Permission and approval of the family – has the priest checked with the family about a member from the team calling on his behalf or with him?
- Preparation of the Liturgy – a funeral team would visit the homes of the bereaved with the priest to assist with the arrangements, pending the family’s approval.

Removal

- The removal takes place from the hospital, home or funeral home the evening before the Funeral Mass or on the day of the Funeral.
- The **funeral team** could lead prayers in the home or the funeral home if the priest is unavailable
- Respect, humility and sensitivity are the order of the day here.
- When it comes to the final goodbyes and the closing of the coffin, the prayer leader can ask people to step outside in order to give the family privacy to say their farewell.

Reception of the Body Into the Church

- The funeral team can gather at the entrance to the church with the priest. [*a side-procession to the Altar – mirroring Baptism again*]. Baptism begins at the door of the church to welcome the new member that has been brought or comes to be baptised. A Christian funeral also starts at the entrance to the church. After the opening prayer and blessing of the coffin the members of the funeral team/servers/priest can then process into the main body of the church.

Some other roles that funeral members can do

- Act as acolytes.
- Put the symbols on the coffin or help family members to do it.
- Symbols of the person's life can be brought in this procession by the family and placed on a table – (this is something a funeral team could mention to the family when they visit to help make the funeral arrangements)
- Do a reading.
- Show family to their seats.

Funeral Mass

As I said if any of the funeral team knows the deceased, they could pass this information to the priest – for his homily

- When the family leave the church, the funeral team could be there, in the background, to lend support if necessary.

Then we had a **practical session** – this session took the group from the door right through the procession to the Altar and as far as the opening prayer

Purpose of this session – it will be extremely useful when such a group is set up and running in a parish and also when such a group in the absence of a priest, presides over a reception themselves.



The next session May 2004 – where do we go from here?

It is hoped that we would do an entire enactment from the reception/removal of the body into the church, to the moment of leaving the church after the funeral Mass the next day. The removal is a very traumatic time for the family because they are now moving to the wider community – It is a PUBLIC ACTION. A funeral home or the person's home is a much more private place.

Resources

- (a) Volume III of the Lectionary
- (b) Order of Christian Funerals (Irish Edition).

This was a very worthwhile workshop for us as a team starting into a new Ministry of Consolation. It also was a bit overwhelming taking it all in. But I think the general consensus was that it gave us a greater appreciation and understanding of our role as a Funeral Team in our parish.

I took the opportunity to participate in this training session as I felt the role-playing could teach me how to preside at the Reception of the Body into the Church, if this situation arose within our community. I have a list here of further training that our Funeral Team did.

Issues for Funeral Teams:

- Commitment/ongoing Training
- Confidentiality
- Continuity
- Empathy
- Ethos
- Humanity
- Humility
- Respect
- Sensitivity
- Sincerity

Resources for Funeral Teams:

Order of Christian Funerals (Irish Edition)

A Celebration of Life: When a loved one dies (Redemptorist Publications)

Celebrating a Catholic Funeral (The National Centre for Liturgy)

www.liturgyireland.ie

My Personal Reflections on being part of this ministry since 2003.

In our first year of existence we were asked to look after the November Liturgy of Remembrance. We spent time in the preparation of this Service of Remembrance and we now plan and present it each year. It is a time when we come together as a community to pray and remember our loved ones and those who have died during the year. We have, I feel, worked well as a group together, that is not to say that by times we have had our differences within the group, well that is how I have experienced it anyway. But our focus was always on the practice of good ministry as a funeral team, leaving our own individual agendas aside.

Difficulties: Initially meeting on a regular basis helps to address any differences or difficulties that may have come to light. Just be mindful not to place too much emphasis on this especially in the early days of forming your team. You will need to look at what skills and training would be required in order that you may feel comfortable and confident in this Ministry of Consolation, in your parish/community.

Stage 1

- Forming – gathering the people
- Testing – is this for me, do I have a sense that I would like to be part of this ministry?
- Some people may feel initially or more definitely that the ministry is not for them. I believe that a good way to measure that is to give yourself a reasonable amount of time to make a decision around leaving the group/ministry.

After the first year

- We were commissioned and validated as the Funeral Team at the Sunday Mass.
- Since then we have made good progress and we have been involved with all of the funerals in our community.
- We have visited the homes of the bereaved with or without a priest.
- We have led the prayers at the Funeral Home and in the person's house.
- We have assisted at the Reception of the Body in the Church.
- We have helped the families concerned to choose the readings and have most times read on behalf of the family at the evening liturgy.
- We have accompanied the priest to the graveside and led some of the prayers there.
- I have gone with the priest to the Crematorium and led the prayers.
- We have prepared and compiled our own Funeral Book so the person who is bereaved can have the book to choose the readings and Prayer of the Faithful.
- I believe as a Funeral Team that we have been very effective and committed over the last number of years to this ministry. In the future Funeral Teams may be called upon to face other challenges and might be asked to participate at a different level. I would hope that we would be able with training to accommodate these challenges in the Church of today.
- We attend workshops each year in The Irish Hospice Foundation, Nassau Street. There is a yearly allowance made to us to attend workshops and any course that we feel would benefit us in our ministry.
- We have our own book "Order of Christian Funerals" and our own sprinkler to bring to the funeral home, if we are leading the prayers. In addition we have, the Bible, the Cross and our Stoles that we wear for the funerals in our parish/community.



Prayer Resources for Funeral Ministry Teams

Opening Prayer

Gathering Song **Quietly Peacefully (Dvorak adapt. Lori True) ©**

All sing: Quietly peacefully may they rest in you
Quietly peacefully lead them back to you
Quietly peacefully may they rest in you
Quietly peacefully bring them home to you

God has come to carry you to your dwelling place
Do not fear, Christ bids you come; meet God face to face.

Quietly peacefully ...

Lay your burdens, calm your fears; you are not alone.
Loving arms welcome you safely to God's home.

Quietly peacefully ...

Opening Prayer **Let us pray,**

All say: God of tenderness and peace,
Be with us today as we gather to reflect on our calling to be
ministers of comfort and support in our communities.
Fill us with hope in your power to heal and to save.
Look kindly on those who mourn at this time and all those we lift
up to you in remembrance.
Give us peace today and always.
We ask this in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reading **John 20:11**

Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord away,' she replied, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him.' 'Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!'

Song **Jesus Remember Me (Taizé) ©**
All sing: Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom
Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom

Reflection **(Debbie Burton-Peddle) ©**
A loved one is a treasure of the heart and losing a loved one is like losing a piece of yourself, but the love that this person brought you did not leave, for the essence of the soul lingers. It cannot escape your heart, for it has been there forever. Cling to the memories and let them find their way to heal you. The love and laughter, the joy in the togetherness you shared, will make you strong. You come to realise that your time together, no matter how long, was meant to be and you were blessed to have such a precious gift of love in your life. Keep your heart beating with the loving memories and trust in your faith to guide you through. Know that though life moves on the beauty of love stays behind to embrace you. Your loved one has left you that to hold in your heart forever.

Song **There is a Place (Liam Lawton)**

Quiet Time

Reflection **Blessings – (John O’Donohue) ©**
When you lose someone you love,
Your life becomes strange,
The ground beneath you becomes fragile,
Your thoughts make your eyes unsure;
And some dead echo drags your voice down
Where words have no confidence
Your heart has grown heavy with loss;
And though this loss has wounded others too,
No one knows what has been taken from you
When the silence of absence deepens.
Flickers of guilt kindle regret
For all that was left unsaid or undone.
There are days when you wake up happy;
Again inside the fullness of life,
Until the moment breaks
And you are thrown back
Onto the black tide of loss.
Days when you have your heart back,
You are able to function well
Until in the middle of work or encounter,

Suddenly with no warning,
You are ambushed by grief.
It becomes hard to trust yourself.
All you can depend on now is that
Sorrow will remain faithful to itself.
More than you, it knows its way
And will find the right time
To pull and pull the rope of grief
Until that coiled hill of tears
Has reduced to its last drop.
Gradually, you will learn acquaintance
With the invisible form of your departed;
And when the work of grief is done,
The wound of loss will heal
And you will have learned
To wean your eyes
From that gap in the air
And be able to enter the hearth
In your soul where your loved one
Has awaited your return All the time.

Concluding Prayer Let us pray

All say: God of love and mercy,
By the mystery of the cross, you have made us strong;
By the sacrament of the resurrection
you have sealed us as your own.
Look kindly on all those we remember today
And count them among your saints in heaven.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Song

All sing:

Take Me Home (David Haas) ©

Take me home, to your dwelling place, in your sweet embrace,
Ready to hold me, in your arms, take me home,
To your loving eyes, with you alone I'll rise
Singing forever, in your arms, take me home.

With you all pain is left behind,
no sorrow or death on that day.
O my God, how I've longed to know your love,
come wipe my tears, and take my fears away. **R.**

Closing Prayer

Opening Song

All sing:

Ag Críost an Síol (Sean Ó Riada) ©

Ag Críost an síol, ag Críost an fómhar,
In iothlainn Dé go dtugtar sinn.
Ag Críost an mhuir, ag Críost an t-iasc,
I líonta Dé go gcastar sinn
Ó fhás go haois, is ó aois go bás,
Do dhá láimh, a Chríost, anall tharainn.
Ó bhás go críoch, ní críoch ach athfhás,
I bParthas na nGrást go rabhaimid.

Reflection

The Tree of Life and Death (Macrina Wiederkehr) ©

Slowly she celebrated the sacrament of Letting Go.
First she surrendered her Green, then the Orange, Yellow and Red.
Finally she let go of her Brown shedding her last leaf she stood empty
and silent, stripped bare. Leaning against the winter sky she began
her vigil of trust.
And Jesus said:

And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the
fields; they neither have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not
even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these.

Shedding her last leaf she watched its journey to the ground. She
stood in silence wearing the colour of emptiness, her branches
wondering: How do you give shade with so much gone?
And Jesus said:

Do not be anxious or overly concerned.

And then, the sacrament of waiting began.
The sunrise and sunset watched with tenderness, clothing her with
silhouettes they kept her hope alive.
They helped her understand that her vulnerability, her dependence
and need, her emptiness, her readiness to receive were giving her a
new kind of beauty.

Every morning and every evening they stood in silence and
celebrated together the sacrament of waiting.

Reading

John 20:25-29

Thomas, called the Twin who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and My God!'

Litany of Remembrance

Let us remember those who have lived and loved, those who have left us a blessed heritage.

Let us remember **the light filled ones** who enkindled our spirits with their influence and the spark of their beliefs.

We remember them.

Let us remember **the risk takers**, who faced their fears and took action, who sought justice even though they had to pay a price for it. **We remember them.**

Let us remember **the vulnerable ones** who allowed us to care for them, allowed us to be with them in their time of need.

We remember them.

Let us remember **the faith-filled ones** who led us by word and example into a deeper relationship with God.

We remember them.

Let us remember **the brave ones**, who walked through their struggles with hope, who taught us how to trust.

We remember them.

Let us remember **the great lovers of life**, whose humour and enthusiasm lifted our spirits and brought us joy.

We remember them.

Let us remember **the nurturers**, who gave us birth physically or spiritually, who gave us support by their caring presence.

We remember them.

Song**Dona Eis Pacem (Owen Lynch)****All sing:**

Dona eis pacem, dona eis pacem, dona eis pacem, pacem Domini

Reflection**Ready for the Journey (Rabindranath Tagore)©**

I have got my leave. Bid me farewell, my friends.
I bow to you all and take my departure.
Here I give back the keys of the door.
And I give up all claim to my clothes and books.
I only ask for the last kind words from you.
We were family and friends for long.
And I have received more than I could give.
Now that day has dawned,
and the lamp that lit my dark corner has gone out.
A summons has come, and I am ready for the journey.
Farewell to you, until we meet again.

Concluding Prayer Let us pray,

Let us now ask God to strengthen and bless our brothers and sisters as they take another step in their new pastoral service in their parish.

That those who exercise the ministry of accompaniment may grow to a greater love of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. R
Lord hear our prayer

That they may lighten the burdens of others and assist them in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord. R

That the Holy Spirit may strengthen their hearts and enlighten their minds let us pray to the Lord. R

That through their endeavours their parish may grow in faith, hope, and love, let us pray to the Lord. R



Blessing

Celtic Blessing, Today is my gift to you ©

May the God of gentleness be with you,
caressing you with sunlight and rain and wind.
May his tenderness shine through you to warm
all those who are hurt and lonely.
may the blessing of Gentleness be upon you.
May the God of Strength be with you,
holding you in strong-fingered hands
and may you be a sacrament of His strength
to those whose hands you hold.

May the blessing of Strength be upon you.
May the God of Peace be with you,
taking away your fears and doubts and
may the mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and
anxious.

May the blessing of Peace be upon you.
The guarding of the God of life be on you,
the guarding of the Loving Christ be on you,
the guarding of the Holy Spirit be on you to aid
And uphold you each day and night of your lives.

Song

All sing:

May the Road Rise to Meet You (Lori True) ©

May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be at your back.
May the sunshine warm up on your face,
May the rain fall softly on your fields,
And until we meet again
May you keep safe in the gentle loving arms of God.



Prayer Moments - Funeral Ministry Teams

- Sign of the Cross** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
- Greeting** May the God of hope give you the fullness of peace, and may the Lord of life be always with you. **And with your spirit.**
- Reading** **Philippians 3:20**
Our true home is in heaven, and Jesus Christ whose return we long for will come from heaven to save us.
- Opening Song**
All sing: **Christ In Me Arise (Trevor Thomson) ©**
Christ in me arise and dispel all the darkness.
Christ in me arise with your power and your strength.
Christ in me pour out your blessing and healing.
Christ in me arise and I will rise with you.
- Opening Prayer**
All say: **An Saltar ©**
Tá mé ag filleadh arís ort,
I come back to you again
Is a Rí gheal ná daor sinn;
and, bright King, do not condemn us;
Tabhair dom deoch as tobar na daonnacht',
give me a drink from the well of your humanity
Nó braon den uisce úd do shil as do thaobh deas,
or a drop of water that flowed from your right side,
A dhéanfadh sinn a ghlanadh, a ghealadh is a shaoradh,
which will be enough to clean us and wash us and free us,
Is go rachaidh ár n-anam go Flaithis i d'fhéachaint.
and may our souls rise up to Heaven in your sight.
- Song**
All sing: **I Am The Bread Of Life (Suzanne Toolan) ©**
I am the bread of life You who come to me shall not hunger
You who believe in me shall not thirst No one can come to
me Unless the father beckons And I will raise you up(3) on
the last day.

I am the resurrection, I am the life
If you believe in me
Even though you die
You shall live forever.
And I will raise you up (3) on the last day.

Intercessions

Leader

God the almighty Father,
raised his Son Jesus Christ from the dead; with confidence
we ask him to save all his people, living and dead.

1. For our relatives and friends who have gone before us,
and await the kingdom, that they may have the reward of
their goodness,
Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
2. For those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising
again, that they may see God face to face.
Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
3. For those whose faith is known to you alone, that they
will have light, happiness and peace.
Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
4. For all who mourn the loss of their loved ones, that they
will find comfort in their sadness, certainty in their doubt,
and courage in their loneliness.
Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**
5. For ourselves, who have assembled here to worship in
faith, that we may be reunited one day with all whom we
love, when every tear will be wiped away.
Lord, in your mercy. **R. Hear our prayer.**

Leader

God, our shelter and our strength,
you listen in love to the cry of your people: hear the prayers
we offer for our departed brothers and sisters. Cleanse them
of their sins and grant them the fullness of redemption. We
ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song

Take Me Home (David Haas)

Sign of the Cross In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Greeting May the Father of mercies, the God of all consolation, be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Introduction As we gather we acknowledge the grief that we all feel when someone we love dies and open our hearts to the hope that the Christian message offers us. In peace we entrust those who have died to God's mercy.

Song **Quietly, Peacefully (Dvorak/Lori True) ©**
All sing: Quietly, peacefully, may they rest in you
Quietly, peacefully, bring them home to you.

Reading **I Thess 4:13-14**
We want you to be quite certain about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who died in Jesus: God will bring them with him.

Song **God Is (LaRue/ Stevens) ©**
When all you see is here and now
When everything is crumbling, falling to the ground
This is just a moment, this is not forever
I know it seems impossible when all your hope is gone

But God is, God is,
Greater than the fear your facing
Greater than the storm that's raging
God is, God is,
With you when you cry, so cry out His name
'Cause God is greater than the pain

He knows the trials His children face
He knows the tears that fall that we all have to taste
But don't you dare let go now, don't let the candle blow out
His love is strong, so just hold on cause He is with you
through it all

But God is, God is ...

Reflection

Grief (John O'Donohue) ©

Though the silent weeping of your heart lessens, you get on, more or less, with your life; a place is kept within you for the one who is gone. No other will ever be given the key to that door. As the years go on you may not remember the departed every day with your conscious mind. Yet below your surface mind, some part of you is always in their presence. From their side, our friends in the unseen world are always secretly embracing us in their new and bright belongings. Though we may forget them, they can never forget us; their secret embrace unknowingly shelters and minds us.

The bright moment in grief is when the sore absence gradually changes into a well of presence. You become aware of the subtle companionship of the departed one. You know that when you are in trouble, you can turn to this presence beside you and draw on it for encouragement and blessing.

The departed is now no longer restricted to any one place and can be with you any place you are.

It is good to know the blessings of this presence.

Instrumental

Concluding Prayer

All say:

Let us pray,

God of mercy,

Look kindly on all those we remember here this evening.

Give them the fullness of your peace and joy.

We give thanks for the gift of their lives,

whether long or short,

now caught up in your eternal love.

We make our prayer in the name of Jesus who is our risen

Lord now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

May you see God's light on the path ahead
when the road you walk is dark.

May you always hear,
even in your hour of sorrow,
the gentle singing of the lark.

When times are hard may hardness
never turn your heart to stone.

May you always remember
when the shadows fall—
you do not walk alone.



Gathering for Funeral Ministry Team

We remember...We believe...We serve

Opening Song Jesus Remember Me (Taizé)

All sing: Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom
Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom

*(A short procession of people carrying a lectionary, a candle, a white cloth,
a bowl of water and a flower takes place during this song)*

Opening Procession

I carry the Word of God so that I can share its wisdom with those I
meet in funeral ministry
I carry a candle to represent the light of hope that I bring in the
name of the Risen Christ
I carry a white cloth to recall innocence and goodness to which
we are all invited
I carry a bowl of water to remind me of our baptism in the waters
of new life
I carry a flower to keep in mind the beauty of all God's created life
especially those to whom I minister

Opening Prayer

All say: Loving God
We come here to reflect on our role as members of our
parish funeral team.
Draw near to us as we draw near to you
Speak to us
 Through words of scripture,
 Through our prayers
 Through our music
 Through all that we share,
So that believing in the Gospel and trusting in Christ,
We may offer the comfort, peace, and strength you long to
give us and find hope in this life and in the life to come.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



We Remember

Litany of Remembrance One

Let us remember those who have lived and loved, those who have left us a blessed heritage.

Let us remember **the light filled ones** who enkindled our spirits with their influence and the spark of their beliefs.

We remember them

Let us remember **the risk takers**, who faced their fears and took action, who sought justice even though they had to pay a price for it.

We remember them

Let us remember **the vulnerable ones** who allowed us to care for them, allowed us to be with them in their time of need.

We remember them

Let us remember **the faith-filled ones** who led us by word and example into a deeper relationship with God.

We remember them

Let us remember **the brave ones**, who walked through their struggles with hope, who taught us how to trust.

We remember them

Let us remember **the great lovers of life**, whose humour and enthusiasm lifted our spirits and brought us joy.

We remember them

Let us remember **the nurturers**, who gave us birth physically or spiritually, who gave us support by their caring presence.

We remember them

Song

Think Of Me (Andrew Lloyd Webber) ©

Think of me, think of me fondly when we've said goodbye.

Remember me ev'ry so often promise me, you'll try.

On that day, that not so distant day,

when you are far away from me

If you ever find a moment, spare a thought for me.

We Believe

Reading **I Thessalonians 4: 13-14**

We want you to be quite certain, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him.

Song **Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled (David Haas) ©**

All sing: Do not let your hearts be troubled,
have faith in God and faith in me
I will go forth to prepare a place for you
and I'll come back to take you with me
that where I am you may also be.

We serve

Reading **John 13:2-5**

They were at supper ... and Jesus got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

Song **The Servant Song (Richard Gillard) ©**

All sing: Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you,
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
we are travellers on the road,
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

Reflection **God in an Apron (Macrina Wiederkehr) ©**

Supper was special that night.
There was both a heaviness and a holiness
hanging in the air.
We couldn't explain the mood.
It was sacred, yet sorrowful.
Gathered around that table, eating that solemn, holy meal
seemed to us the most important meal we had ever sat down
to eat.
And then suddenly the One-Who-Loved startled us all.
He got up from the table and put on an apron.
Can you imagine how we felt?

We Remember

Candle of Remembrance and Compassion (2)

We now light a candle to remember our loved ones -
from this candle we hold in our hearts all those have died.

We hold in our hearts all those who grieve the loss of loved ones, friends,
colleagues.

We hold in our hearts all those whose lives have been torn by grief.

We invoke the spirit of compassion.

In mystery we are born, in mystery we live and in mystery we die.

If we remember and are remembered, life endures, meaning
reigns and hope deserves.

Reading: **John 11:17-26**

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.' Jesus wept and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him.'

Song **Soon And Very Soon (Andrae Crouch) ©**

Soon and very soon,
We are going to see the King,
Soon and very soon,
We are going to see the King.
Soon and very soon,
We are going to see the King,
Hallelujah, hallelujah,
We are going to see the King.

No more crying there,
We are going to see the King,
No more crying there,
We are going to see the King.
No more crying there,
We are going to see the King,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
We are going to see the King.

We Believe

Reflection **Grief (John O'Donohue) ©**

Though the silent weeping of your heart lessens, you get on, more or less, with your life; a place is kept within you for the one who is gone. No other will ever be given the key to that door. As the years go on you may not remember the departed every day with your conscious mind. Yet below your surface mind, some part of you is always in their presence.

From their side, our friends in the unseen world are always secretly embracing us in their new and bright belongings. Though we may forget them, they can never forget us; their secret embrace unknowingly shelters and minds us.

The bright moment in grief is when the sore absence gradually changes into a well of presence. You become aware of the subtle companionship of the departed one. You know that when you are in trouble, you can turn to this presence beside you and draw on it for encouragement and blessing.

The departed is now no longer restricted to any one place and can be with you any place you are. It is good to know the blessings of this presence.

We Serve

Song **The Servant Song (Richard Gillard) ©**

All sing: I will hold the Christ-light for you,
in the night-time of your fear,
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,
when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
'til we've seen this journey through.

Reflection Tenderness encircled us
as He bowed before us.
He knelt and said,
"I choose to wash your feet
because I love you."



We Remember

Litany of Remembrance Three

In the rising of the sun and its going down,

Response: We remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,

Response: We remember them.

In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring.

Response: We remember them.

In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer,

Response: We remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn.

Response: We remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends,

Response: We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,

Response: We remember them.

When we are lost and sick of heart,

Response: We remember them.

When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share,

Response: We remember them.

We Believe

Reflection

The Tree of Life and Death (Macrina Wiederkehr) ©

Song

All sing:

Ag Críost an Síol (Seán Ó Riada) ©

Ag Críost and síol

Christ's is the seed,

Ag Críost an fómhar

Christ's is the harvest,

In iothlainn Dé

to the barn of Christ

Go dtugtar sinn.

may we be brought.

Ag Críost an mhuir

Christ's is the sea,

Ag Críost an t-iasc,

Christ's is the fish,

I lionta Dé,

in the nets of Christ

Go gcastar sinn.

may we be caught.

Ó fhás go haois,

From the growth to age,

Ó aois go bás,

from age to death,

Do dhá lámh, a Chríost,

your two arms, O Christ,

Anall tharainn.

around about us.

Ó bhás go críoch,

From death to the end,

Ní críoch ach athfhás,

not end but re-growth,

I bParthas na nGrás

in the heaven of graces

Go rabhaimid.

may we be.

We Serve

Reflection

Then He handed me the towel
and said,
"As I have done,
so you must do."
Learn to bow.
Learn to kneel.

Song

All sing: When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony.
Born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.



Will you let me be your servant,
let me be as Christ to you,
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant too.

Closing Prayer

Song

Jesus King of Angels (Fernando Ortega) ©

Concluding Prayer

All say: May the Lord support us all the day long 'til the shades lengthen and
the evening comes and the busy world is hushed and the fever of
life is done.
Then in his mercy may He grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest and
peace at the last. Amen. (*Blessed John Henry Newman*)

Song

All sing:

Night Has Fallen (Malawi) ©

Night has fallen...	God our maker guard our sleeping
Darkness now has come...	God our maker guard our sleeping
We are with you, Lord...	God our maker guard our sleeping
You have kept us, Lord...	God our maker guard our sleeping
See your children, Lord...	God our maker guard our sleeping
Keep us in your love...	God our maker guard our sleeping
Now we go to rest...	God our maker guard our sleeping.

Funeral Ministry Gathering

Opening Prayer

Song **Quietly, Peacefully (Dvorak/Lori True) ©**
All sing: Quietly, peacefully, may they rest in you
Quietly, peacefully, bring them home to you.

Prayer **Let us pray,**
All pray: God of consolation and hope,
Shine your light into our hearts this evening.
 Encourage us in our ministry of service
 Inspire us with the right words in the right place
 Show us the path of truth and freedom
We ask this through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Reading **John 11:17-20**
On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house.

Refrain **Take The Stone Away (Marty Haugen) ©**
All sing: Take the stone away, come out, come out.
(Gently) Take the stone away, come out. (2)

Poem **For Grief (John O' Donohue) ©**
It becomes hard to trust yourself
All you can depend on now is that
Sorrow will remain faithful to itself.



Reading ctd. John 11:21-27
Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you'. 'Your brother,' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life, If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'
'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

All sing: Take the stone away, come out, come out.
(Louder) Take the stone away, come out. (2)

Poem ctd.

More than you, it knows its way
And will find the right time
To pull and pull the rope of grief
Until that coiled hill of tears
Has reduced to its last drop.

Reading ctd. John 11:33-38

Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said 'Lord, come and see' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' Still sighing Jesus reached the tomb; it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.'

All sing: Take the stone away, come out, come out.
(Louder) Take the stone away, come out. (2)

Reading ctd. John 11:43-44

Jesus cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Poem ctd.

Gradually, you will learn acquaintance
With the invisible form of your departed;
And when the work of grief is done,
The wound of loss will heal
And you will have learned
To wean your eyes
From that gap in the air
And to be able to enter the hearth
In your soul where your loved one
Has awaited your return
All the time.

Song

All sing:

Quietly, Peacefully (Dvorak/Lori True) ©

Quietly, peacefully, may they rest in you
Quietly, peacefully, bring them home to you.

CELEBRATING A CATHOLIC FUNERAL – Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy

Lord for those who believe in your love death is not the end

The death of a Christian is not the end of life, but rather a transformation in an onward journey towards eternal life with God. We believe that this call to eternal life begins for all Christians in the waters of baptism. Nevertheless for those family and friends who are bereaved there is sadness in parting, and death when it comes, even when it has been expected, such as after a long illness, always leaves a sense of loss and shock. The Catholic Church has over many centuries developed a rich tradition in its liturgy for funerals. This liturgy seeks to balance the need to console those who are mourning with the hope in the person of Christ who is ‘our life and our resurrection’. The Catholic funeral rites commend the deceased to the mercy of God, and as we give thanks to God for the life of a Christian we pray that God may forgive whatever sins the deceased may have committed through human weakness.

By a series of services the Order of Christian Funerals – the book we use at funerals – provides a means by which the local church community may support the personal grief of a family, from the time of the death of a loved one to the final committal at the graveside, by a series of services. Some of these prayers are celebrated in the intimacy of the home, while others are intended as public worship in a church. The funeral rites thus present a balance between sharing with the personal grief of the family and the celebration of the public liturgy of the Church.

The ties of friendship and affection do not unravel with death

In Ireland there is a strong tradition of ‘the wake’ which presents an occasion when friends of the bereaved family can extend consolation and sympathy. This time offers an opportunity when personal reminiscences of the deceased can be shared on a more intimate level, and the interests and associations that the deceased shared in his or her life with others can be recalled. During this time it is important that the priest who will preside at the funeral meets with the family and prepares with them the liturgy of the Funeral Mass.

The Vigil for the deceased is envisaged as the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. The Vigil is centered on a liturgy of the Word. This will include prayers and may also provide an opportunity for a member of the family to speak in remembrance of the deceased.

The Reception of the Body in the Church signifies the transition from the expression of the personal grief of the family in the home to the public expression of the local parish community in the liturgy. It is also the first step of returning to God the person that has been loved.

This service of reception often takes place on the eve of the Funeral Mass, thus providing the possibility for mourners to be present with the family at this time who will be unable to be with them at the Funeral Mass.

In baptism they died in Christ

The prayers and symbols used at this reception recall the dignity of each Christian given to them by their baptism. The coffin is sprinkled with Holy Water as a remembrance that in the waters of baptism Christians receive the pledge of eternal life. The coffin is covered with a funeral pall to recall that on the day of their baptism a Christian is wrapped in a white robe as a child of God. The coffin is placed before the Paschal candle, symbolizing Christ's undying presence, and his victory over death by his resurrection. Other Christian symbols such as a Cross or the Book of Gospels may also be placed on the coffin at this time. These symbols are clear signs of dignity of the baptized Christian.

The family may also wish to carry them other emblems, which reflect the deceased's interests or personality. These should be treated with respect on the understanding that they do not conflict with the Christian symbols that are used in the ceremony. A place should be provided for them either near the coffin or the family, but they should not displace the Christian symbols representing the baptismal calling of the deceased. In many parishes in Ireland the use of the pall has become the norm and this should be respected. Reasons of social distinction do not justify its omission.

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord

The Funeral Mass is the central liturgical celebration for the deceased. The prayers of this Mass commend the deceased to the mercy of God and offer consolation and hope to the bereaved. As the Mass is the central act of the Church's liturgy it is an act of worship of God by the Church, therefore the text of the Roman Missal should be used.

The Word of the Lord

A variety of suitable readings are offered from both the Old and New Testaments for the Funeral Mass. It is essential that these readings should be read clearly and with sensitivity. A member of the family or family friend may undertake these readings, however, particularly if they are not regular readers at Mass, if required, a parish reader should be available to undertake this ministry. The readings are taken from the sacred scriptures and may not be replaced by secular readings. Reflections taken from Christian literature may be used if required at a later stage in the Funeral Mass. However, some poems are better kept to the less formal stages of the funeral rites, either in the home or at the graveside.

The homily is given by the priest and should be prepared in consultation with the family of the deceased. The homily is based on the scriptures and the life of the departed in that he or she tried to live out the virtues of being a Christian. The homilist by his words is also especially called to seek to bring comfort and consolation to those bereaved. It is not to be a eulogy, which as a form of an address focuses on the deceased and the achievements of the deceased.

The prayer of the faithful, general intercessions, call upon God to bring comfort to those who mourn and to show mercy to the deceased. Members of the family or friends of the deceased may also wish to participate in these prayers. If the families compose them, clear guidelines on the format should be given.

Lord, receive the gifts we offer to win peace and rest ...

The gifts to be presented for the Eucharist are traditionally the bread and wine. It is recommended that members of the family of the deceased bring these to the altar. It is not appropriate at this stage of the Mass to bring up symbols of the deceased's past life. To do so is a confusion of the presentation of the bread and wine, which become the Eucharist for us. Furthermore 'gifts' are 'given' not merely a 'symbol' or gesture and they are taken back at the end of the Mass. If it is desired that suitable symbols associated with the interests or work of the deceased be part of the funeral rites then they should be carried into the church with the reception of the remains.

The life and death of each of us has an influence on others

There are occasions when a member of the family may choose to speak to the mourners. When and how this is done can vary according to local custom, and the local practice of a diocese or parish should be respected. The funeral rites offer a variety of stages from home to church to graveside. Some personal sentiments are more appropriately spoken in the intimacy of the family home or funeral home. Other words in the form of an oration would be better suited to the traditional location of the graveside.

The reception of the remains also provides an opportunity for a member of the family to offer a few words of remembrance of the deceased and acknowledgement to those who have supported the grief of the family. It should be borne in mind that the Funeral Mass is primarily an act of praise of God; it would therefore go against the spirit of the liturgy if it is perceived that a person's social status can directly influence the celebration of the liturgy. Nor would it be appropriate to use the opportunity to insert into the celebration of the liturgy contradictory sentiments that reflect a merely secular approach to the mystery of death. If it is the local custom that a member of the family generally does speak during the funeral rites in the church then certain conventions should be respected. Only one family member should speak. It should be undertaken with the agreement of the celebrant and the prepared text should be discussed with the celebrant at a suitable time before the morning of the funeral. A separate microphone should be used, rather than the ambo which is reserved for the Word of God. The Funeral Mass in the Church is neither the appropriate occasion nor the place to insert a speech or eulogy. If there is a lack of clarity as to what is admissible, each diocese will have guidelines, which will attempt to offer a balance, which will respect the reverence due to the celebration of the Eucharist, and also be sensitive to the feelings of those who mourn.

Sing with all the saints in glory

Music offers the community a way of expressing convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. Music has the capacity to uplift those who are mourning and strengthens the assembly in faith and love and create a spirit of hope. Music chosen for the Funeral Mass should primarily be in praise and thanksgiving to God. Non-liturgical music should not normally be used during the Funeral Mass; if for a particular reason it is, then it should be chosen with great care and should not contradict religious sentiments. The use of taped music during the celebration of Mass is to be strongly discouraged as it is an intrusion into the celebration of a living worshipping community. As with other aspects of the funeral rites what may be considered fitting in the intimacy of a home may come across as banal in the context of the public liturgy of the Church.

***for we believe that Jesus died and rose again
and that it will be the same for those who have died with Jesus***

The very centre of the Christian funeral rites is the death and resurrection of Christ. These rites are a faith expression and experience. Death is seen in that faith perspective. When people ask for a funeral Mass to be celebrated they are expressing that faith message. In the funeral rites of a Christian we pray that divine life given to us in baptism may be brought to its fulfillment in eternal glory. In celebrating a funeral we strive to bring consolation and hope to the bereaved and pray that the dead may obtain God's mercy and have eternal rest and peace.



Celebrating A Catholic Funeral

– Fr. Joe Mullan

There are 27,000 deaths in Ireland every year, 73 funerals everyday most with the funeral rites of the Catholic Church. The news of a death sends some priest out on a mission, to bring consolation, to offer hope and to prepare liturgy. After the call from the undertaker priests set aside everything else in the diary and make arrangements to be available for the family during the following two or three days as needed. With many of us ministering alone, we respond with little thought to the personal arrangements that need to be cancelled and rescheduled, the day off can wait, maybe till next week. Personally I am always glad of the collar when I approach the home of the dead person. Stepping into the driveway, crossing the threshold I am rarely the first to call. The door is opened, a welcome extended, an invitation in, with "I'll get Mary for you Father." Faced with a sea of faces it can be hard to tell the family from the friends. There is a lot of nodding and quiet words. No matter who the dead person is, a regular on the First Friday sick list, or a total stranger, it always helps to hear the bereaved give their blow by blow, minute by minute account of the death. The story of the life lived reveals itself slowly, sometimes in a direct account, other times in fragments of words matched with the images on the mantle and the walls. The deceased looks back at you from a photograph taken at a wedding, graduation, birthday, holiday, christening or communion. Sometimes the remains of the deceased are brought home, from the hospital or from the undertakers. Someone always supplies the crucifix, candles, holy water and a sprig of a branch to sprinkle the dead. But even in a funeral home the gathering is accompanied by the familiar signs that this was a Christian, a member of the community of faith.

The Order of Christian Funerals is the normative text, with its "Prayers in the home of the deceased" or its "Vigil prayers" words are available to bring the prayer and faith of the Church to every gathering of mourners. This book is what every funeral has in common, it is in the hand of each and every priest, no exceptions. It explains what the Church teaches about death and it provides the rituals to be observed, and it allows for the adaptation to the circumstances of the individual funeral. If it doesn't sound too obvious it is worth remembering that this person, now deceased, was one of those Jesus died for. Bringing back the lost sheep was his mission and at funerals it can seem like ours too. The Order says "Among the priests responsibilities are the following, to comfort the family of the deceased, to sustain them amid the anguish of their grief, to be as kind and helpful as possible, and through the use of the resources provided and allowed in the ritual to prepare with them a funeral celebration that has meaning for them."

In practice I find it best to negotiate a meeting with the family, telling them that we need half an hour on our own to chat this through. In the busy house this is often a little cluster sitting in a bed room, a refuge away from door bell and ringing phones. What follows takes on many forms, sometimes there is a clear leader of the family who has a very real attachment to the idea that what the deceased liked, or didn't like, should be the starting point of the discussion. Hence music gets ruled in or out, keeping it simple or having some specific reading, song or act becomes essential, "Dad always liked....." Other

families are very ready to be led through the liturgy, examining the options, making choices about what to include, what to leave out.

Obviously this is very appealing to the priest, who can help the family adapt the liturgy in a sensitive and appropriate manner to embrace the reality of the specific death and the wider context of the community gathering to celebrate the rich liturgy of the Church.

The Order of Christian Funerals is refreshingly open with regard to the Funeral Mass. The presumption is that the celebrant, the ministers and the family will prepare the liturgy according to the occasion and local norms. The opening procession, bringing of symbols, images, mementos to display near the coffin as part of the gathering rites may be appropriate. The choice of readings and the decision as to who will proclaim the Word often gives the celebrant a fairly clear indication as to the resources of the family, sometimes a gentle nudge in the direction of readers who are not over whelmed with grief is necessary. Intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful are recommended and sometimes giving the family an outline of how 6 prayers might be composed will allow some genuinely appropriate prayers to emerge, of course it is always as well to get to look over them in advance of the Mass. The offertory can be a genuine presentation of the Eucharistic gifts since the personal mementos have been placed in the gathering rites.

When it comes to speaking after Communion we are challenged with incorporating into the liturgy words that are neither prayer nor scripture. Whether this should happen or not is open to discussion. The Order didn't foresee this practice and while it forbids eulogies it seems to have been referring to them replacing the liturgical homily. To forbid someone speaking seems unnecessary to me, harsh even, why not allow one of the community to speak about the deceased and the way in which their life was God's gift to the world. The length of the address, the choice of person to deliver it and the general tone can all be discussed often with some pretty firm guidelines laid down. Hopefully the close family member will say something succinct about the deceased, something to express thanks to a wide circle of the community who showed their Christian love and care during the final illness and since the death. Perhaps they will also make an invitation to the community to gather for refreshments after the burial, all perfectly appropriate to the liturgy.

Finally, and often most contentious of all, is the choice of the music for the liturgy. In a perfect world the Sunday choir, or funeral music group would be available for funerals, in most cases this is not so. More often than not the undertaker offers the service of a professional musician, with or without the parish organist. From time to time the so called "favourite song" is requested with a strength that suggests that to demur would be a grave affront to the family. Ok so be it, either find a place for it, suggest an alternative or put the priestly foot down and explain that you are very uncomfortable with that choice. You win some, you lose some, that's life.

With the liturgy arranged and armed with a list of the family names and the names of those who will undertake the tasks at the liturgy the priest himself is left with the task of preparing the homily. I recently took some books from the study of an older colleague who after a stroke can no longer read.

The section on Liturgy was a testament to his careful preparation for preaching and presiding, not only did he have the books but they were well read. Flor Mc Carthy's, Funeral Liturgies was dog eared and held together with cellotape, in between the pages were notes and little cards with both the full texts of individual homilies and the additional prayers that he may have used on occasion. Flor's text was underlined, amended, words added and comments in the margins. This man prepared well, even for the funerals of people he knew, and all that after 30, 40, 50 years in ministry. He also had Pastoral Commentaries, Creative Ideas and Funeral Homilies by the late Eltin Griffin O Carm, Funeral Rites and Readings by the late Brian Magee, The Catholic Funeral by Chris Aridas, Funeral Homilies by Liam Swords, Christy Kenneally's Life after Loss and Julia Watson's Poems and Readings for Funerals. He obviously did, as so many priests do, take this aspect of ministry seriously, and while he hardly did it for praise, it was no doubt greatly appreciated by the people he served. Each priest will prepare the homily in his own style, most will be sensitive to the need of the family to recognise the person they loved in his words. Few will simply give a eulogy, most will allow the Scriptures proclaimed to lead into a reflection on the promise of eternal life central to the Paschal Mystery.

I have never worked in parish that had a Funeral Ministry team. I was recently at a funeral where three men with bright yellow sashes, white gloves and military bearing carried cross and candles, it did not sit well with me. In one parish we had a parish sister who often took on the role of assisting with the placing of the Pall and Bible at the removal. One lady took on the role of waiting until the very end of the removal to walk out with the family, she had noticed that the clergy shook hands and made a quick exit and that sometimes when all had made their gesture of sympathy and slipped away that there was no one to accompany the bereaved from the church, save the sacristan whose jangling keys suggested that the doors would soon be closed.

I love the CD, "Songs of Farewell" that in the absence of a musician at the removal creates an envelope of consolation during the procession and has a choice of psalms which when played create a meditative atmosphere.

There is so much potential for parishioners to fulfil participative roles and liturgy groups to contribute prayerfully to the Funeral Liturgies. In time perhaps someone other than the priest will be called on to lead the prayers at the removal and the graveside, so training now might avert a crisis reaction later.

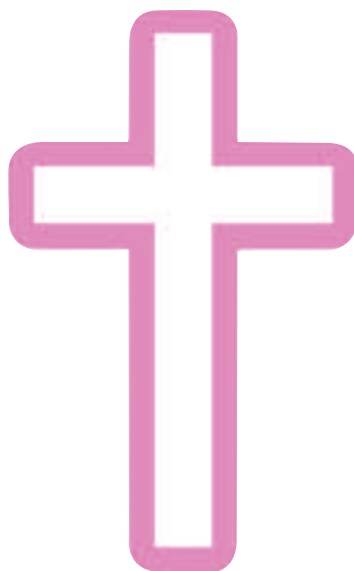
A last word, only once have I presided and preached at the funeral of a celebrity, a famous son of the parish. It was an extraordinary experience of the community extending hospitality to an enormous gathering, with a generosity of welcome that was incredible. Their loss, pride, dignity and support touched the family and everyone who came. I felt for the family that it was so hard for them just to bury their boy, with so many coming to lay an icon to rest. Yes there was media and extra music and some extensions to the normal liturgical practices, but as he lived with all that attention so too he was buried. Such a funeral is an exception, we accept it as such, it doesn't diminish the integrity of all the regular funerals we celebrate week by week.

**Further Thoughts inspired by the Order of Christian Funerals
MINISTRY AND PARTICIPATION (1 Corinthians 12:26).**

'If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member' For this reason, those who are baptised into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are responsible for one another. When Christians are sick, their brothers and sisters share a ministry of mutual charity and 'do all that they can to help the sick return to health by showing love for the sick, and by celebrating the sacraments with them'. So too when a member of Christ's Body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love.

1. I have been brought up to believe that death is a part of life and while I don't clearly understand what happens to people when they die I have a strong hope that there is a plan by God who cares for people.
2. The sadness of never seeing that person again and not hearing their voice can be overpowering. One of the frightening things that can happen is for a time not being able to bring to mind an image of our loved ones.
3. The funeral is a great support structure for a family – there is a formula and a rite and so many customs attached to death. People find it reassuring that so many care for them in their time of need. The family are amazed that so many people from different parts of their lives will take the time to phone, to call and to attend the religious services. At a spiritual level, we pray for the deceased and those who mourn. The strong support that people get from the ritual is probably the most important thing.
4. Telling the story of the person who died is essential. People want to remember things and to say thanks publicly for the life of the person who has died. Often this is done in a eulogy given at the end of Mass by a family member. However, a priest who listens sensitively to people can bring all that together in a homily where the story of the person and the story of the Scripture meet. Suggestions that people come up with such as bringing mementoes of the life of the deceased can be accommodated in the gathering rites and help people deal tangibly with the loss of their loved one.
5. Music in the funeral liturgy is at the service of those who gather. It is a ministry of service. The music consoles, uplifts, helps people to remember and make connections. It is a wonderful way to communicate in word and song what we believe as Christians. We sing what we believe.

6. Family members can take a direct part in the music choices with the advice of the professionals. Recordings should be made available for people to choose from. From time to time in the local parish there might be reminders about the role of music in such liturgies. The best way to encourage people to make the right choices that are appropriate for the Church is by modelling good liturgies in the parish. Liturgy is caught not taught.
7. The music should reflect those who gather together for the service. It can also capture the spirit of the person who has died and draws them closer into the celebration. Songs that emphasise forgiveness and mercy may not be appropriate to the funeral of a young child. Special circumstances such as death by suicide or the death of a child require special handling and sensitive choices. The music should offer hope while helping to console and acknowledge the loss.
8. Let the Scriptures chosen be reflected in the music choices. Let the music help to open up the Word of God by making links. The music resources of the community should be taken into account. Music should be live. Give people a choice and let them hear recordings where possible. Secular music could be used if introduced and placed in context at a suitable part of the liturgy. We overload the Mass with too many expectations. There is often need for a wake and if the church can accommodate that on the evening when the body is brought to the Church this might help the celebration of the Eucharist the next day. e.g. invite family and friends to come to a vigil for the person who has died. People can share their stories and play the music that the deceased liked and which reminds them of him/her.
9. Instrumental music can be very powerful on its own as it allows a freedom that words do not. Silence is a profound gift and people relish the space that sacred silence creates. Prayer or reflection with instrumental music behind it can also be very effective.



MEMO ON MEDIA TO PARISHES PREPARING FOR HIGH PROFILE FUNERALS

- Every media outlet will wish to be present at Funerals which are the subject of public interest either as a result of a tragedy, crime or if the individual was well known.
- The Parish, with its priests and staff should carefully consider the level of access it is willing to allow or that it can properly manage on these occasions. The family of the deceased may not always be best placed to make such a decision.

There are three options which can be considered concerning access to the Church.

- **None** – from a parish perspective this is the easiest to manage and is recommended. Reporters and photographers can be notified in advance of this arrangement through the Diocesan Communications Office and parish websites. However, where possible reporters should be facilitated to carry out their job in the public interest with help and support from the Communications Office and Parish. Funeral arrangements, Homilies and bidding prayers should be made available to the media in advance. Names of readers and those taking part in the Offertory procession are also of interest and can be published, with the consent of the family. These can be circulated through the Communications Office and under embargo. They can be printed in hard copy and distributed to media on the day, or published on a parish website and social media platforms. If possible, where large crowds are expected a PA system should be put in place in the church grounds not just for helping the media, but for facilitating very large congregations. Churches with webcams should ask media to log on there.

(N.B. In the case of a number of recent tragic funerals members of the media were asked to stay just outside Church grounds with cameras to respect the dead and the family. Media were happy to observe and respect this request).

- **Limited Access:** If there is a large volume of media requests, journalists can be asked to “pool” resources. Usually, one broadcast camera and one print camera is allowed access and they undertake to share their images with their colleagues. Arrangements concerning Homilies, bidding prayers etc. as outlined above should still be applied.
- **Unlimited Access** This is possible in larger churches but can be most intrusive. It would require appointing one person to liaise with media personnel present throughout, to ensure a level of decorum and respect is maintained. If unlimited access is given, it is recommended that the media be asked to remain in one fixed spot in the church, to refrain from close up filming of individuals and to conclude filming after the Homily or during Communion. Arrangements concerning Homilies, bidding prayers etc. as outlined above should still be applied.

- **Available space:** As a courtesy to members of the press, it is always appreciated if a room with an electrical power point (and maybe even a cup of coffee) can be made available to them as they file copy back to their news desks.
- **Co-operation** with the media is a service to the bereaved as it often removes the necessity for reporters to approach friends and family members directly for basic information. Co-operation also ensures that the details of the Funeral Liturgy are reported accurately.

Further advice and support is available from the Communications Office at any time on 01 – 8360723



Diocesan Guidelines for planning, construction and maintenance of Columbaria

A Columbarium is a place for the respectful and usually public storage of urns containing a deceased's cremated remains.

Current Position

With the scarce availability of space for the traditional interment of remains of the deceased (lack of space in traditional cemeteries), alternative forms of "burial" are being considered. Consideration is being given, in certain areas, for the development of Columbaria.

Columbaria

Columbaria could possibly be respectfully created in the following situations:

- A Graveyard/Cemetery attached to a Parish Church
- A Church with a crypt
- A large Church with surplus "space" from that which is required for current appropriate liturgical requirement.

It should be acknowledged that not all parishes will be in a position to provide Columbaria.

Statutory Consents

In the proposed provision of Columbaria, Statutory Consents would have to be obtained from the relevant Local Authority in advance of commencement of works. Consultation with the Conservation Officer (of the relevant Planning Authority) with regard to a Protected Structure would always be required at the initial stages of consideration.

Construction

The constructional requirement should be such that the cremated remains would always remain "in tact" – "protected in perpetuity". Parishes should make honest provision for "maintenance in perpetuity".

Maintenance

At the Planning Stage due consideration should be given to the long term implication of maintenance. In this regard the Parish should make honest provision for "maintenance in perpetuity".

Procedure

If a Parish is considering the development of Columbaria they should consult the Diocesan Committees/Commission at the preliminary development stage – (e.g. Buildings Committee, Commission for Sacred Art and Architecture and Historic Buildings – particularly if a Protected Structure is involved).

Gathering in the Presence of the Body

OPENING

We gather in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

THE WORD

We listen to these words of scripture (John 14:1-3)

Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still and trust in me.
There are many rooms in my Father's house;
If there were not, I should have told you.

I am going now to prepare a place for you,
And after I have gone and prepared a place,
I shall return to take you with me,
so that where I am
you may be too.

*After some time of silence those gathered could be invited to share stories
about their loved one*

THE WATER

The lay minister sprinkles the body with holy water saying these words:

Since in baptism N., became God's temple
and the Spirit of God lived in him/her,
with reverence we bless his/her mortal body

*An invitation could be extended to those gathered
to take part in sprinkling of holy water*

PRAYER

A suitable psalm is sung or said

*This could also be a moment for singing or listening
to a favourite hymn or tune*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray together as Jesus taught us - Our Father.....

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Into your hands, O Lord,
We humbly entrust our brother/sister N.

In this life you embraced him/her with tender love;
Deliver him/her now from every evil
And give him/her eternal rest.

BLESSING

Blessed are those who died in the Lord;
Let them rest from their labours
For their good deeds go with them.

*Each person can be invited to come forward
and bless the deceased on the forehead
With the sign of the cross*

May the love of God
And the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
Bless and console us
And gently wipe away every tear from our eyes:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.



Rite of Committal

INVITATION *An appropriate piece of music may be played or sung*
Our, brother/sister N., has gone to his rest in the peace of Christ.
May the Lord now welcome him to the table of God's children in heaven.
With faith and hope in eternal life, let us assist him/her with our prayers.

Let us pray to the Lord also for ourselves.
May we who mourn be united one day with our
brother/sister;
together may we meet Christ Jesus when He who is our life appears in glory.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

*We read in scripture: **Matt 25:34-40***
Come, you whom my Father has blessed, says the Lord;
Inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the
foundation of the world.

PRAYER OVER THE PLACE OF COMMITTAL

Almighty and ever-lasting God,
in you we place our trust and hope.
In you the dead, whose bodies were temples of the spirit,
find everlasting peace.

As we take leave of our brother/sister, give our hearts peace in the firm hope
that one day N. will live in the mansion you have prepared for him/her in
heaven. AMEN.

COMMITTAL

The coffin may now be sprinkled with holy water and incensed.
These words are then said:

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to
eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ,
we commend to Almighty God our brother/sister N., and we commit his/her
body to its resting place, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

The Lord bless him/her and keep him/her,
the Lord make his face to shine upon him/her
and be gracious to him/her
the Lord lift up his countenance upon him/her
and give him/her peace.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us together offer our prayers to God the source of all consolation.

You raised the dead to life; give our brother/sister N., eternal life
Lord hear our prayer

You consoled Martha and Mary in their
distress; draw near to us who mourn for N., and dry the tears of
those who weep
Lord hear our prayer

Comfort us in our sorrow at the death of N.,
let our faith be our consolation and
eternal life our hope
Lord hear our prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Together let us pray in the words our Saviour gave us: Our Father.....

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God of holiness and power,
accept our prayers on behalf of your servant N.,
do not count his/her deeds against him/her,
for in his/her heart he/she desired to do your will.

As his/her faith united him/her to your people on earth, so may your mercy join
him/her to the angels in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Together we bow our heads and pray for
God's blessing.

Merciful Lord, you know the anguish of the sorrowful,
you are attentive to the prayers of the humble.
Hear your people who cry out to you in their need,
and strengthen their hope in your lasting goodness;
We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.

A piece of music may be played (especially if it is a
cremation), Other prayers may be added – for
example, Eternal Rest....



NOTES



Archdiocese of Dublin
Liturgical Resource Centre