

Planning your loved ones Funeral Liturgy

The Church encourages you to be fully involved in planning you loved ones funeral liturgy. It is the final journey of your loved one. In the liturgy, we celebrate the life of faith of your loved one; we commend him or her to the Lord.

Your local priest is there to help and guide you at this difficult time. In planning the liturgy, you will need to:

* Provide your priest with some biographical information about your deceased loved one that will help him in preparing the funeral homily
* Select the readings for the funeral Mass. Depending on the circumstances, you may decide to have either one or two readings before the Gospel reading. The first one is normally from the Old Testament and the 2nd reading is normally from the New Testament. You will find a large selection of suitable readings in the booklet to help and guide you. But you are free to choose your own. Should you decide to have two readings before the gospel, it is preferable to have a different reader for each.
* The responsorial psalm comes between the two readings and can either be read or sung by your singer. You will find a number of responsorial psalms in this booklet, but, again you are free to choose your own. In making your choice, you should take into account the Church’s recommendation that, if at all possible, the responsorial psalm or the response to it should be sung.
* Choose or compose the general intersession, which come after the homily. In the general intercessions we pray not only for the deceased and his or her family and friends but also for all the dead and those who mourn them. We pray also for the wider community. One or more family members should read the general intercessions.
* Choose family members or friends of the deceased to bring the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. You should keep in mind that the presentation of the gifts is not the time to carry up personal memorabilia or symbols of the life of the deceased. The best time for this is at the beginning of the Mass, though some churches prefer to do it at the offertory. Talk this through whit your priest as to which way it is done in your church.
* Choose the hymns and music for the funeral Mass. The hymns should be selected from those regularly sung during Sunday Mass, and should express our strong belief in the resurrection, which is the basis of Christian hope. You can find a selection of suitable hymns in this booklet to help and guide you, and your singer will also be a great guidance to you on helping to choose your selection.
* After communion time you might decide to have a little reflection read. You can find a selection of these in this booklet.
* If you decide to have a eulogy in honour of your deceased loved one, there are a number of things to keep in mind. It should be short, no longer than 5 minutes. It should be delivered by a family member or close friend of the deceased. It should contain only words of tribute to the deceased and thanks to those who have helped or supported the deceased’s family during this sad time. The eulogy usually takes place after communion, before the final commendation and farewell.

Old Testament Readings

A reading from the Book of Wisdom. (3:1-9)
The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God,
no torment shall ever touch them.
In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die,
their going looked like a disaster,
their leaving us, like annihilation;
but they are at peace.
If they experienced punishment as men see it,
their hope was rich with immortality;
slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be.
God has put them to the test
and proved them to be worthy with him;
he has tested them like gold in a furnace,
and accepted them as a holocaust.
When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out;
as sparks run through the stubble, so will they.
they shall judge nations, rule over peoples, and
the Lord will be their king forever.
They who trust in him will understand the truth,
those who are faithful will live with him in love;
for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.
**This is the Word of the Lord!**

A reading from the Book of Wisdom (4:7-15)
The virtuous person, though he die before his time, will find rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the measure of life;
understanding, this is man's grey hairs, untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
He has sought to please God, so God has loved him;
as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up.
He has been carried off so that evil may not wrap his understanding
or treachery seduce his soul;
Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life;
his soul being pleasing to the Lord,
he has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him.
Yet people look on, uncomprehending;
it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord,
and protection, his holy ones.
**This is the word of the Lord**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name, you are mine.
Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you;
Or through the rivers, they will not swallow you up.
Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you.
For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Book of Ecclesiasticus
Let us praise the illustrious,
our ancestors in their successive generations.
Here is a list of the generous
whose good works have not been forgotten.
In their descendents there remains
a rich inheritance born of them.
Their descendents stand by their covenants and
thanks to them, so do their children's children.
Their offspring will last forever,
their glory will not fade.
Their bodies have been buried in peace,
and their names live on for all generations.
The peoples will proclaim their wisdom,
the assembly will celebrate their praise.
**This is the word of the Lord.**

A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes: (3:1-7,11)
For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to root up what is planted;
A time to break down and a time to build up;
A time to weep and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance;
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep and a time to discard;
A time to tear, and a time to sew;
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
God has made everything suitable for its time.
**This is the word of the Lord.**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-9)
On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food. On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations, he will destroy death forever.
The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so. That day, it will be said: See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation; the Lord is the one in whom we hoped. We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us.
**This is the word of the Lord.**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (12,2-6)Truly, God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear, for the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my Saviour. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name! Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! Declare the greatness of his name! Sing a psalm to the Lord, for he has done glorious deeds, make them known to all the earth! People of Zion, sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**This is the word of the Lord.**

A Reading from the Book of Lamentations    (3,17-26)

My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "Gone is my glory, and all that I hoped for from the Lord". The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is gall to me! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.
But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him".
The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the book of Ruth       (1,8-17 passim)

Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's house. And may the Lord be kind to you, as you have been kind to those who have died and to me." And she kissed them but they started to weep aloud. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and went back to her people. But Ruth clung to her.
Naomi said to her, "Look, your sister-in-law returns to her people and her gods. You too must return. Go after her."
But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Wherever you die, I will die and there I will be buried. And may the Lord deal severely with me if even death should come between us.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah        (49,8.14-16)

Thus says the Lord: "In a time of favour I have answered you, on a day of salvation I have helped you". But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me".
"Can a woman forget her child at the breast, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Look, I have written your name on the palm of my hand."

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Book of Job        (19,1.23-27)

Job said: "O that these words of mine were written down,
inscribed on some monument
with iron and chisel and engraving tool,
cut into the rock for ever.
This I know: that my Avenger lives,
and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth.
After my awakening, he will set me close to him,
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part:
these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof'.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Prophet Daniel              (12,1-3)

I, Daniel, was doing penance when I received this message from the Lord:
"At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as the stars for all eternity".

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the second book of Maccabees          (12,43-45)

Judas, the leader of the Jews, took a collection from the people individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resurrection. For if he had not expected the fallen to rise it would have been 'superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

**This is the Word of the Lord**

A reading from the second book of Samuel    (19,1-5)

King David went up to the room over the gate and burst into tears, and weeping said, "My son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! Would I had died in your place! Absalom, my son, my son!" Word was brought to Joab, "The king is now weeping and mourning for Absalom". And the day's victory was turned to mourning for all the troops, because they learned that the king was grieving for his son. And the troops returned stealthily that day to the town, as troops creep back ashamed when routed in battle. The king had veiled his face and was crying aloud, "My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!"

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

Responsorial Psalms

R:  The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

1. The Lord is my Shepherd,
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. **R/**

2. He guides me along the right path,
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness,
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff,
with these you give me comfort. **R/**

3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil,
my cup is overflowing.  **R/**

4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell,
for ever and ever. **R/**

R:  The Lord fills the earth with his love.    Ps 32

1. They are happy, whose God is the Lord,
 the people he has chosen as his own.
 The Lord looks on those who revere him,
 on those who hope in his love. **R/**

2. Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
 The Lord is our help and our shield.
 In him do our hearts find joy.
 We trust in his holy name. **R/**

3. May your love be upon us, O Lord,
 as we place all our hope in you. **R/**

R:  Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.    Ps 129
1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
 Lord, hear my voice!
 O let your ears be attentive
 to the voice of my pleading. **R/**

2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
 Lord, who would survive?
 But with you is found forgiveness:
 for this we revere you. **R/**

3. My soul is waiting for the Lord,
 I count on his word.
 My soul is waiting for the Lord,
 more than the watchman for daybreak.  R/

4. Because with the Lord there is mercy
 and fullness of redemption,
 Israel indeed he will redeem
 from all its iniquity. R/

R:  I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

1. How gracious is the Lord, and just;
 Our God has compassion.
 The Lord protects the simple hearts;
 I was helpless so he saved me. **R/**

2. I trusted, even when I said:
 "I am sorely afflicted,"
 And when I said in my alarm:
 "No man can be trusted". **R/**

3. O precious in the eyes of the Lord
 is the death of his faithful.
 Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
 you have loosened my bonds. **R/**

New Testament Readings

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans  (5,5-11)

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful people. It is not easy to die even for a good person - though of course for someone really worthy, one might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans       (5,17-21)

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many will be made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**This is the Word of the Lord**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans   (6,3-9)

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus, we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.
If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection. We must realise that our former selves have been crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin.
But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him; Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans   (8,14-23)

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a son of God. The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of Sons, and it makes us cry out, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well; heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans    (14,7-12)

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God; as scripture says: By my life - it is the Lord who speaks - every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

(8,31-35.37-39)

If God is for us, who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Jesus Christ? No! He not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No! In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor anything that exists, nor anything still to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians    (15,20-28)
Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father. For he must be King until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet. Though when it is said that everything is subjected, this clearly cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the one who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians  (15,51-57)

I will tell you something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all be changed. This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed as well, because our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.
When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of Scripture will come true:
Death is swallowed up in victory. Death where is your victory? Death where is your sting? Now the sting of sin is death, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians   (4,14-5,1)

We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians  (5,1.6-10)

We know that when the tent we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made of human hands, in the heavens. We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight - we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord. Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians       (3,20-21)

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the Saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy

 (2,8-13)

Remember the Good News that I carry: "Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David"; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal - but they cannot chain up God's news. So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.
Here is a saying you can rely on:

If we have died with him, then we shall live with him.
If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.
If we disown him, then he will disown us.
We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful,
for he cannot disown his own self.

**This is the Word of the Lord**

A Reading from the Second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy.   (4,6-8)

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but to all who have longed for his appearing.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians  (4,13-18)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, 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. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

**This is the Word of the Lord**

A reading from the First Letter of St. John    (3,1-2)

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,
by letting us be called God's children;
and that is what we are.
Because the world refused to acknowledge him,
therefore it does not acknowledge us.
My dear people, we are already the children of God,
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed;
all we know is, that when it is to be revealed
we shall be like him
because we shall see him as he really is.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the First Letter of St. Peter    (1,3-9)

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons and daughters, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we can have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has been prepared is revealed at the end of the time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold - only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire - and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A reading from the Book of Revelation         (14,3)

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me, "Write down: happy are those who die in the Lord!  Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them".

**This is the Word of the Lord**

A reading from the Book of Revelation    (21,1-4)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, a beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, "You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Only faith can guarantee the blessings that we hope for, or prove the existence of the realities that at present remain unseen. It was for faith that our ancestors were commended.
All these died in faith, before receiving any of the things that had been promised, but they saw them in the far distance and welcomed them, recognising that they were only strangers and nomads on earth. People who use such terms about themselves make it quite plain that they are in search of their real homeland. They can hardly have meant the country they came from, since they had the opportunity to go back to it; but in fact they were longing for a better homeland, their heavenly homeland.

**This is the Word of the Lord.**

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

**Reader:**

Let us thank God for having given N… the gift of life and pray that he will now grant N… the greater gift of eternal life.

*Lord hear us*

**Lord graciously hear us**

**Reader:**

Let us praise God for all that he did through N… during his life on earth. May he have the reward of his goodness.

*Lord hear us*

**Lord graciously hear us**

**Reader:**

We are all God’s creatures, so we must ask God to forgive N… for his sins and failings, confident that he will be welcomed by the whole community of saints.

*Lord hear us*

**Lord graciously hear us**

**Reader:**

Let us pray especially for the sorrowing relatives and friends, that the pain of their sorrow may be softened, and that the emptiness may be filled with the love of God.

*Lord hear us*

**Lord graciously hear us**

**Reader:**

Let us pray for all those who care for the sick, especially those who cared for N… during the last illness of our friend.

*Lord hear us*

**Lord graciously hear us**

**Reader:**

Let us pray for all who are suffering that the Lord may give them strength in their weakness. Mary was close to Jesus when he died, so we know she can understand our sorrow at this time. Let us turn to her for help. Hail Mary….

Let us now pray in silence for the repose of the soul of our friend N…

Suggested music for the Funeral Mass

Entrance Hymn

* I’m on a journey, I’m going home
* I watch the sunrise
* Softly and tenderly
* Amazing grace
* Christ be beside me
* Hail queen of heaven
* Sweet heart of Jesus
* How great thou art
* Here I am Lord
* I’ll sing a hymn to Mary
* Make me a channel of your peace
* Holy God we praise thy name

Psalms

* You are mine
* The Lord’s my shepherd (old)
* The Lord’s my shepherd (Modern)
* Be not afraid
* Eagles wings
* Here I am Lord
* Shepherd of my soul
* Only in God
* Faithful one
* What a faithful God
* Yahweh’s love

Offertory

* The bread of life
* As I kneel before you
* Ave Maria
* Soul of my Saviour
* In love for me
* In bread we bring you Lord

Communion

* There are many rooms in my father’s house
* Footprints
* Cloud’s veil
* Close to you
* Lord I come to you
* Panis Angelica
* There is a place
* You raise me up
* You are mine
* Sweet heart of Jesus
* Forever friend
* How great thou art
* Queen of the May

Blessing of the Coffin

* The hand of God shall hold you
* Jesus remember me
* Father, I place my life in your hands

Recessional

* Pie Jesu
* Nearer my God to thee
* Abide with me
* I’ll walk with God
* Be not afraid
* Going home
* May songs of the Angels
* In Paradisum
* I’m on a journey going home
* Sweet heart of Jesus
* Close to you

Understanding the Grieving Process

During our lifetime we will all experience a loss of a loved one at some stage of our life. A loss may be due to the death of a partner, child, parent or dear friend. It may also be incurred due to ill health, disability, the ageing process, the list is endless. Regardless of why the loss has occurred, the onset of such an event will bring with it a grieving process. The intensity of our feelings and our ability to cope with these losses depends on various factors which include our degree of attachment to the person, whether or not the loss was expected and the person prepared or not and whether or not the person had any control over the loss or if it was involuntary and against their will.

When we grieve the process involves us having physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cognitive reactions to our loss. The grieving process is not one that requires us to follow through progressive stages in certain orders. It is a process whereby we may revisit many of the stages more than once

According to various models of grief, the grieving process may encounter a various number of stages of grief.

**The first stage** is shock / denial. This usually occurs immediately after the loss has occurred and this particular stage can be revisited many times as we work our way through our grief. It involves a feeling of numbness and an inability to accept the loss. It can last for a period of time as short as a few hours or for as long as a few weeks’ months or much more. This is often a time when the grieving person will feel paralyzed and isolated or even deny that the loss has occurred.

**The second stage** is searching / yearning involves the grieving person being pre-occupied with the person, item or circumstance that has led to the loss. They often experience reactions such sensing the person or dreaming about them. It is during this stage that the individual is likely to pine for their loss and feel a deep sense of anger, irritability, sadness, guilt or fear as they yearn for what has been taken from them. At this stage the grieving individual is susceptible to weight gain, physical illness, fatigue and pain). The grieved person may experience feelings of anger with the world and with their god or higher power as they try to come to terms with their loss It is during this stage that the grieving person experiences the pain of grief and is supported in coming to terms with their loss by those around them.

**The third stage** of disorganization / depression involves the need for the grieving person to learn new ways to begin to live their lives in order to regain control. It is within this stage that we often see the grieving person learning new skills and different ways to cope with the changes that have occurred within their lives. The grieving person often feels muddled and disorganized, as they grasp at incorporating new ways into their lives Depressive thoughts are often encountered as the grieving person begins to acknowledge the loss as real and begins to accept the impact that it places on their life. During this stage the grieving person is supported in coming to terms with their loss by others within the wider community.

**The fourth stage** involves reorganization / recognition of the loss. This stage involves the grieving individual being able to fully recognize the loss as real and involves them utilizing any new found skills and coping mechanisms they may have developed in the disorganization / depression stage in order to move forward with their lives.

**The fifth stage** is called acceptance / hope. This stage is reached when the grieving person has acknowledged the loss as real and been able to now see hope in their future. It involves them being able to look beyond their loss in order to establish a new meaning to their life. This stage can still involve outbursts of emotions from the grieving person, such as crying or sadness, however it brings with it a sense of increased happiness and improved outlook towards one future. This stage often incorporates the ability for the grieving individual to increase ones social involvement with others in order to establish new meaningful relationships. During this stage the grieving person learns to reinvest their emotional energy.

For the counsellor, therapist, and friend they can provide useful insights into the process of bereavement.

Grief work usually involves the need for the grieving person to work through three main tasks in order to reintegrate successfully back into the world. “These tasks include emancipation from the bonds of the deceased or loss, readjustment to the environment from which the deceased is missing, and formation of new relationships. The five stages of grief tackle these issues and work towards addressing the three tasks required to move forward with one’s life.

This model of grief is effective in explaining the grieving process as it covers the main aspects that a grieving person goes through. However it is important, as stated earlier, to recognize that not every person will travel though the stages as outlined, they may skip a stage and come back to it later or revisit a stage that had previously been worked through.

**Grieving is a process that every individual will encounter at some time during their lives.** To successfully work through and overcome the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive reactions to our loss, we must work through our grief. We must acknowledge that the process of grieving is a healthy and needed response to any loss and that unless we are provided with the social support and tools required to deal with such loss and grief we cannot effectively deal with the many emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive reactions that we encounter.  The five stages of grief outlined within this model of grief serve to provide a basis on which to acknowledge and gain an understanding of the processes that a grieving person will experience. They are not set in stone and therefore do not require the grieving person to follow through the stages in any particular order, but strive towards an understanding of how a person grieves and can be used by others to identify the stage at which a grieving individual may be at.

Just like no two individuals are alike, neither is the manner in which they tackle their grieving process. The individual, just like Loss and Grief: Dealing with Death and the grieving process itself is full of complexity, which affects the manner in which they encounter and work through the stages of grief. Regardless of how one grieves and the order of the stages they go through, this model recognizes that there are certain steps that must be achieved in order for a successful outcome to eventuate from the grieving process. The process of acceptance is moving to a realization that life will never be the same again, and that your loved one is with you in a different but special way. It will take time, but your grief will pass. There will be another dawn.