

Through Death to Life



*Preparing to Celebrate
the Funeral Mass*

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The Catholic liturgy always provides courage and comfort for those mourning the death of the one they loved. However, the more the family, relatives and friends actively plan and participate in the ceremony itself, as the Simons did, the deeper will be the consolation and strength they experience.

This book has been designed to facilitate such active involvement in preparing for and taking part in the Funeral Mass of Christian Burial.

We suggest that you first look at “A Message for the Family” to gain a general view of the funeral service and some possibilities which are open to you. Then read through the various prayers, scriptural passages and other options available, selecting the one from each category that best expresses your sentiments at this moment.

Frequently on these occasions there is a scarcity of time for quiet reflective reading. If that should be the situation and you will not be able to study the entire text, concentrate on the Old and New Testament readings plus the gospel.

When you have finished the selection process, complete the form provided in the back, tear out those pages and present them to your parish priest the night before or at least several hours prior to the liturgy.

In most cases these planning and preparation tasks fall to the immediate survivors. Nevertheless, because of today’s extensive popular discussions about death and dying, it is more common for a critically ill person to enter into this process. When an individual has reached that degree of understanding and acceptance about her or his final moments on earth, reading through these pages with the family and other concerned people could be most supportive. It should deepen their faith in the eternal life God has prepared for those who love the Lord.

Truly, then, they all will be walking together through death to life.

Opening Prayer

On reaching the altar, the priest, with the assisting ministers, makes the customary reverence, kisses the altar, and (if incense is used) incenses it. Then he goes to the chair. When all have reached their places, the priest invites the assembly to pray in silence for a period of time and then sings or says one of the following prayers:

1

Outside the Easter season

(164-A)

Almighty God and Father,
it is our certain faith
that your Son, who died on the cross, was raised from the dead,
the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
Grant that through this mystery
your servant N., who has gone to his/her rest in Christ,
may share in the joy of his resurrection.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

2

Outside the Easter season

(164-B)

O God,
to whom mercy and forgiveness belong,
hear our prayers on behalf of your servant N.,
whom you have called out of this world;
and because he/she put his/her hope and trust in you,
command that he/she be carried safely home to heaven
and come to enjoy your eternal reward.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

3

Outside the Easter season

(164-C)

O God,
in whom sinners find mercy and the saints find joy,
we pray to you for our brother/sister N.,
whose body we honor with Christian burial,
that he/she may be delivered from the bonds of death.
Admit him/her to the joyful company of your saints
and raise him/her on the last day
to rejoice in your presence for ever.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

47

Several persons

(398-46)

O Lord,
you gave new life to N. and N.
in the waters of baptism;
show mercy to them now,
and bring them to the happiness of life in your kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

48

Several persons

(398-47)

All-powerful God,
whose mercy is never withheld
from those who call upon you in hope,
look kindly on your servants N. and N.,
who departed this life confessing your name,
and number them among your saints for evermore.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Reading II From the New Testament

- 1. Since we are now justified by his Blood,** (1014-1)
we will be saved through him from the wrath.

Romans 5:5-11

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his Blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The word of the Lord.

14. We shall see him as he is.

(1014-14)

1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

The word of the Lord.

15. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.

(1014-15)

1 John 3:14-16

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

The word of the Lord.