

The Funeral Rites

Participation Handbook

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VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy.

The Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence. In this time of loss the family and community turn to God's word as the source of faith and hope, as light and life in the face of darkness and death. Consoled by the redeeming word of God and, by the abiding presence of Christ and his Spirit, the assembly calls upon the Father of mercy to receive the deceased into the kingdom of light and peace.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Greeting

Using one of the following greetings, or in similar words, the minister greets those present.

A May the God of hope give you the fullness of peace, and may the Lord of life be always with you.

*All Reply: **And also with you.***

B The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

be with you.

All Reply: And also with you.

C The grace and peace of God our Father, who raised Jesus from the dead, be always with you.

All Reply: And also with you.

D May the Father of mercies, the God of all consolation, be with you.

All Reply: And also with you.

Opening Song

The celebration continues with a song.

Invitation to Prayer

In the following or similar words, the minister invites those present to pray.

My brothers and sisters, we believe that all the ties of friendship and affection which knit us as one throughout our lives do not unravel with death.

Confident that God always remembers the good we have done and forgives our sins, let us pray, asking God to gather () to himself:

Pause for silent prayer.

Opening Prayer

The minister says one of the following prayers (other prayers may be used):

A Lord our God, the death of our brother/sister () recalls

our human condition and the brevity of our lives on earth. But for those who believe in your love death is not the end, nor does it destroy the bonds that you forge in our lives. We share the faith of your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of testing and pain as we pray for () and for those who love him/her, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

B O God, glory of believers and life of the just, by the death and resurrection of your Son, we are redeemed: have mercy on your servant (), and make him/her worthy to share the joys of paradise, for he/she believed in the resurrection of the dead. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The celebration continues with the liturgy of the word. Other readings, psalms, and gospel readings may be used.

SIT

First Reading

A reader proclaims the first reading.

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians 5:6-10

We have an everlasting home in heaven. We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we all must

appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

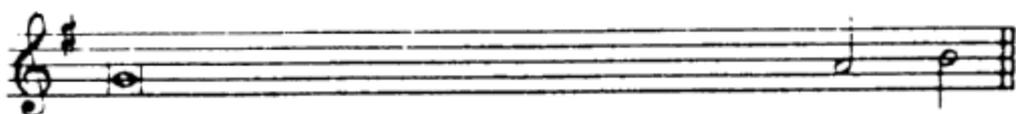
—This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 27

The following psalm is sung or said or another psalm or song.



R. The Lord is my light and my sal - va - tion.

Or:



R. I be-lieve that I shall see the good



things of the Lord in the land of the liv-ing.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid? ----- **Respond**

One thing I ask of the Lord;
this I seek:
To dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord
and contemplate his temple. ----- **Respond**

Hear, O Lord, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Your presence, O Lord, I seek.
Hide not your face from me. ----- **Respond**

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the
living.
Wait for the Lord with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord. ----- **Respond**

Psalm 122



R'. I re - joiced when I heard them say:



let us go to the house of the Lord.

Or:



R'. Let us go re-joic - ing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me
“We will go up to the house of the lord
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem. — **Respond.**

Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity. To it the tribes go
up, the tribes of the Lord. — **Respond.**

According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David. — **Respond.**

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings. — **Respond.**

Because of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you!”
Because of the house of the Lord, our God,
I will pray for your good. — **Respond.**

Gospel

The gospel reading is then proclaimed.

STAND

✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 12:35-40

Be prepared. Jesus told his disciples: “Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks: Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

—This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily

A brief homily ordinarily follows; it usually expresses praise and gratitude to God for his gifts, particularly the gift of a Christian life, to the deceased person. The homily also relates Christian death to the paschal mystery of the Lord death and resurrection and to the hope of eternal life. Thereupon follow the general intercessions or prayer of the faithful.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Litany

The minister leads those present in the following litany.

Let us turn to Christ Jesus with confidence and faith in the power of his cross and resurrection:

Assisting minister:

Risen Lord, pattern of our life forever:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Promise and image of what we shall be:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Son of God who came to destroy sin and death:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Word of God who delivered us from the fear of death:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Crucified Lord, forsaken in death, raised in glory:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, gentle Shepherd who bring rest to our souls,
give peace to () for ever:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, you bless those who mourn and are in pain.
Bless ()'s family and friends
who gather around him/her today:
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

Using one of the following invitations, or in similar words, the minister invites those present to pray the Lord's Prayer.

A Friends [and sisters], our true home is heaven. Therefore let us pray to our heavenly Father as Jesus taught us:

B With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:

C Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father...

Concluding Prayer

The minister says one of the following prayers (other prayers may be used):

A Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you willingly gave yourself up to death, so that all might be saved and pass from death to life. We humbly ask you to comfort your servants in their grief and

to receive () into the arms of your mercy. You alone are the Holy One, you are mercy itself; by dying you unlocked the gates of life for those who believe in you. Forgive () his/her sins, and grant him/her a place of happiness, light, and peace in the kingdom of your glory for ever and ever.

Reply: Amen.

B Lord God, you are attentive to the voice of our pleading. Let us find in your Son comfort in our sadness, certainty in our doubt, and courage to live through this hour. Make our faith strong through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

A member or a friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased.

CONCLUDING RITE

Blessing

The minister says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.

A gesture, for example, signing of the forehead of the deceased with the sign of the cross, may accompany the following words.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

All: And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.

All: Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

A *A minister who is a priest or deacon says:*

May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep
your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of
his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

B *A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs him self or herself with
the sign of the cross, saying:*

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord
Jesus Christ bless and console us
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

*The vigil may conclude with a song or
a few moments of silent prayer or both.*

Part 1: **RITE AT THE CHURCH ENTRANCE**

Wearing purple, White or black vestments, the priest, accompanied by the ministers, begins the rite at the door of the church with one of the following greetings:

GREETING

STAND

A

Priest: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

B

Priest: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: **Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
(or: And also with you.)

C

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

2Cor. 1:3-4

Priest: Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him.

All: **Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The priest may then sprinkle the body with holy water saying these or similar words:

I bless the body of (), with the holy water that recalls his (her) baptism of which Saint Paul writes:

All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.

By baptism into his death we were buried together with him, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life.

For if we have been united with him by likeness to his death, so shall we be united with him by likeness to his resurrection.

A white pall in remembrance of the baptismal garment, may then be placed on the coffin by the pallbearers or others, and the priest may say these or similar words:

On the day of his (her) baptism, () put on Christ. In the day of Christ's coming, may he (she) be clothed with glory.

The procession to the sanctuary begins. It is appropriate that the paschal candle be carried in the entrance procession. The gospel book, the Bible, or a Cross may be placed on the coffin. Lighted candles may be placed about the coffin or the paschal candle alone may be placed at the head of the deceased.

Part 2: **THE FUNERAL LITURGY**

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

4 Esdr. 2:34-35

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them.

After the entrance song, all make the sign of the cross:

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

GREETING

The priest welcomes us in the name of the Lord. We show our union with God, our neighbor, and the priest by a united response to his greeting.

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lord, we have sinned against you:
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord, show us your mercy and love.

All: **And grant us your salvation.**

Priest or other minister:
You were sent to heal the contrite:
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest or other minister:
You came to call sinners:
Christ, have mercy.

All: **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest or other minister:
You plead for us at the right hand of the Father:
Lord, have mercy.

All: **Lord, have mercy.**

OPENING PRAYER

Priest: Let us pray. Lord God, almighty Father, our faith testifies that your Son died for us and rose to life again.
May our brother (sister) () share in this mystery:
as he (she) has gone to his (her) rest believing in Jesus,
may he (she) come through him to the joy of the resurrection.
We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

SIT

FIRST

READING

Wis. 3:1-9
A reading from the book of Wisdom

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.

They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.

But they are in peace.

For if before men, indeed, they be punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;

Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them

and found them worthy of himself.

As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

In the temple of their visitation they shall shine,
and shall dart about as sparks through stubble;

They shall judge nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord shall be their King forever.

Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:

Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his care is with his elect.

—This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps. 2.3:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

Respond: Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil,
for you are with me.

*All repeat: **Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no
evil, for you are with me.***

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me;

he refreshes my soul.

*Respond: **Though I walk in the valley of darkness,
I fear no evil, for you are with me.***

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff that give me courage.

Respond: **Though I walk in the valley of darkness,
I fear no evil, for you are with me.**

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Respond: **Though I walk in the valley of darkness,
I fear no evil, for you are with me.**

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come.

Respond: **Though I walk in the valley of darkness,
I fear no evil, for you are with me.**

SECOND READING

Rom. 6:3-9

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Through baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life.

If we have been united with him through likeness to his death, so shall we be through a like resurrection. This we know: our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves to sin no longer. A man who is dead has been freed from sin.

If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him. We know that Christ, once raised from the dead, will never die again; death has no more power over him.

—This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

ALLELUIA

STAND

Jesus will speak to us in the gospel. We rise now out of respect and prepare for his message with the alleluia.

Priest: Alleluia.

*All: **Alleluia.***

John 11:25. 26

*Priest: I am the resurrection and the life, said the Lord:
he who believes in me will not die for ever.*

*All: **Alleluia.***

During the Lenten season, the Alleluia is replaced by the following:

Priest: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

*All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!***

*Priest: I am the resurrection and the life, said the Lord:
he who believes in me will not die for ever.*

*All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!***

GOSPEL

John 11:17-27

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Priest: ✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to John

All: **Glory to you, Lord.**

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. The village was not far from Jerusalem — just under two miles — and many Jewish people had come out to console Martha and Mary over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet him, while Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would never have died. Even now, I am sure that God will give you whatever you ask of him.”

“Your brother will rise again,” Jesus assured her.

“I know he will rise again,” Martha replied, “in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her:

“I am the resurrection and the life:

whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life;

and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

“Yes, Lord,” she replied. “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God: he who is to come into the world.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

SIT

Homily

A brief homily on the readings is then given.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

STAND

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

Our brother (sister), (), was given the promise of eternal life in baptism; Lord, give him (her) communion with your saints for ever.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Priest: () ate the bread of eternal life, the body of Christ; raise him (her) up, Lord, at the last day.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Priest: We pray for our brothers and sisters, our relatives, for all who were close to us and good to us; Lord, give them the reward of their good ness.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Priest: We pray for all who have died in the hope of rising again; welcome them, Lord, into the light of your presence.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Priest: We pray for all who have gathered here to worship in faith; Lord, make us one in your kingdom.

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Prayer

Lord,
hear our prayers for our dead brothers and sisters;
forgive them their sins,
and bring them to the fullness of your salvation.
(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Part 3: RITE OF COMMITTAL

FINAL COMMENDATION AND FAREWELL

The priest stands near the coffin with the ministers who have the holy water and incense.

Priest: Our brother (sister) has gone to his (her) rest in the peace of Christ. With faith and hope in eternal life, let us commend him (her) to the loving mercy of our Father, and assist him (her;) With our prayers. He (she) became God's son (daughter through baptism and was often fed at the table of our Lord. May the Lord now welcome him (her) to the table of God's children in heaven, and, with all the saints, may he (she) inherit the promise of eternal life.

Let us also pray to the Lord for ourselves. May we who mourn be reunited one day with our brother (sister). Together may we meet Christ Jesus when he, who is our life, shall appear in his glory.

Then all pray in silence for a little while.

The body is sprinkled with holy water and incensed.

SONG OF FAREWELL

Saints of God, come to his (her) aid!
Come to meet him (her), angels of the Lord!

All: Receive his (her soul and present him (her) to God the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself; may angels lead you to Abraham's side.

All: Receive his (her soul and present him (her) to God the Most High.

Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord,
and may your light shine on him (her) for ever.

All: Receive his (her soul and present him (her) to God the Most High.

INVOCATIONS

To each of the invocations in the following litany all respond:

Lord save your people.

By your coming as man,	Lord, save your people.
By your birth,	Lord, save your people.
By your baptism and fasting,	Lord, save your people.
By your sufferings and cross,	Lord, save your people.
By your death and burial,	Lord, save your people.
By your rising to new life,	Lord, save your people.
By your return in glory to the Father,	Lord, save your people.
By your gift of the Holy Spirit,	Lord, save your people.
By your coming again in glory,	Lord, save your people.

Then the priest says the prayer:

Father,
into your hands we commend our brother (sister).
We are confident that with all who have died in Christ
he (she) will be raised to life on the last day
and live with Christ for ever.
(We thank you for all the blessings
you gave him (her) in this life
to show your fatherly care for all of us
and the fellowship which is ours with the saints
in Jesus Christ.)

Lord, hear our prayer:
welcome our brother (sister) to paradise
and help us to comfort each other
with the assurance of our faith
(until we all meet in Christ
to be with you and with our brother (sister) for ever.)
(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Prayer over the People

The assisting minister says:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

All pray silently. The minister, with hands out stretched, prays over the people.

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.

All: Amen.

The minister then says the following:

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

All: And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May the angels lead you into paradise;
may the martyrs come to welcome you
and take you to the holy city,
the new and eternal Jerusalem.

May the choir of angels welcome you.
Where Lazarus is poor no longer,
may you have eternal rest.

I am the resurrection and the life.
The man who believes in me will live
even if he dies.

Part 4: PROCESSION TO THE CEMETERY

AT THE GRAVE

Let us pray.
Lord Jesus Christ,
by the three days you lay in the tomb
you made holy the graves of all who believe in you;
and even though their bodies lie in the earth,
they trust that they, like you, will rise again.

Give our brother (sister) peaceful rest in this grave,
until that day when you,
the resurrection and the life,
will raise him (her) up in glory.
Then may he (she) see the light of your presence,
Lord Jesus,
in the kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

*the priest may sprinkle and incense the body and the grave or tomb.
Then the priest may say. the following prayer of the faithful or a
similar one:*

Let us pray for our brother (sister)
to our Lord Jesus Christ,
who said:
“I am the resurrection and the life.
The man who believes in me will live
even if he dies,
and every living person
who puts his faith in me
will never suffer eternal death.”
Lord, you wept at the death of Lazarus, your friend;
comfort us in our sorrow.
We ask this in faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

You raise the dead to life
give our brother (sister) eternal life.
We ask this in faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

You promised paradise to the thief who repented:
bring our brother (sister) to the joys of heaven. We ask this in
faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Our brother (sister) was washed clean in baptism and anointed
with the oil of salvation:
give him (her) fellowship with all your saints. We ask this in
faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

He (she) was nourished with your body and blood:
grant him (her) a place at the table in your heavenly kingdom.
We ask this in faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Comfort us in our sorrow at the death of our brother (sister):
let our faith be our consolation
and eternal life our hope.
We ask this in faith:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

*Then all say the Lord Prayer together; the priest says the
following prayer:*

Almighty God, through the death of your Son on the cross,
you have overcome death for us.
Through his burial and resurrection from the dead
you have made the grave a holy place

and restored to us eternal life.
We pray for those who died believing in Jesus
and are buried with him in the hope of rising again.
God of the living and the dead.,
may those who faithfully believed in you on earth
praise you for ever in the joy of heaven.
(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful
departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

May the peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit

All: Amen.

RITE AT THE CHURCH ENTRANCE

Wearing purple, White or black vestments, the priest, accompanied by the ministers, begins the rite at the door of the church with one of the following greetings:

GREETING

STAND

A

Priest: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

B

Priest: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All: **Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
(or: And also with you.)

C

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

2Cor. 1:3-4

Priest: Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in all our afflictions and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble, with the same consolation we have received from him.

All: **Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

The priest may then sprinkle the body with holy water saying these or similar words:

I bless the body of (), with the holy water that recalls his (her) baptism of which Saint Paul writes:

All of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.

By baptism into his death we were buried together with him, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life.

For if we have been united with him by likeness to his death, so shall we be united with him by likeness to his resurrection.

A white pall in remembrance of the baptismal garment, may then be placed on the coffin by the pallbearers or others, and the priest may say these or similar words:

On the day of his (her) baptism, () put on Christ. In the day of Christ's coming, may he (she) be clothed with glory.

The procession to the sanctuary begins. It is appropriate that the paschal candle be carried in the entrance procession. The gospel book, the Bible, or a Cross may be placed on the coffin. Lighted candles may be placed about the coffin or the paschal candle alone may be placed at the head of the deceased.

THE FUNERAL MASS

MASS FOR THE DEAD

Introductory Prayers

A Mass for a deceased person, when the body is not present, begins in the usual manner.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

4 Esdr. 2:34-35

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them.

After the entrance song, all make the sign of the cross:

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

GREETING

The priest welcomes us in the name of the Lord. We show our union with God, our neighbor, and the priest by a united response to his greeting.

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

PENITENTIAL RITE

After the introduction to the day's Mass, the priest invites the people to recall their sins and to repent of them in silence:

Friends in Christ, to prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred

mysteries, let us call to mind our sins.

Priest and people:

I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned through my own fault
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

*Other invocations may be used. At the end of any of the forms
of the penitential rite:*

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: **Amen.**

KYRIE

*Unless included in the penitential rite, the Kyrie is sung (see
page 51) or said by all, with alternating parts for the choir or
cantor and for the people:*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Reply: **Lord, have mercy.**
Reply: **Christ, have mercy.**
Reply: **Lord, have mercy.**

OPENING PRAYER

Priest: Let us pray.
Lord God,
you are the glory of believers
and the life of the just.
Your Son redeemed us
by dying and rising to life again.

Since our brother (sister) () believed in the mystery of our own resurrection, let him (her) share the joys and blessings of the life to come. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE SIT WORD

Rev. 21:1-5, 6-7

A reading from the book of Revelation
There will be no more death

I, John, saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne cry out: "This is God's dwelling among men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them. He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away."

The One who sat on the throne said to me, "See, I make all things new! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To anyone who thirsts I will give to drink without cost from the spring of life-giving water. He who wins the victory shall inherit these gifts; I will be his God and he shall be my son."

—This is the Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps. 27:1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13-14

Respond (1) The Lord is my light and my salvation;

All repeat: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid?

Respond: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

One thing I ask of the Lord;
this I seek:
To dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord
and contemplate his temple.

Respond: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Hear, O Lord, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Your presence, O Lord, I seek.
Hide not your face from me.

Respond: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.

Respond: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Alleluia

1

Alleluia.

STAND

All: Alleluia.

Matthew 25:34

Come, you whom my Father has blessed, says the Lord;
inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the
world.

All: Alleluia.

2

Alleluia.

All: Alleluia.

John 3:16

God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

All: Alleluia.

Gospel

The gospel reading is then proclaimed.

John 6:51-5

- ✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to John
*Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever;
and I will raise him up on the last day*

Jesus told the crowd:

“I myself am the living bread
come down from heaven.
If anyone eats this bread
he shall live forever;
the bread I will give
is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

At this the Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can he give us his flesh to eat?”

Thereupon Jesus said to them:

“Let me solemnly assure you,
if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man
and drink his blood,
you have no life in you.
He who feeds on my flesh
and drinks my blood
has life eternal,
and I will raise him up on the last day.
For my flesh is real food
and my blood real drink.
The man who feeds on my flesh
and drinks my blood
remains in me, and I in him.
Just as the Father who has life sent me
and I have life because of the Father,
so the man who feeds on me
will have life because of me.
This is the bread that came down from heaven.
Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless,
the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

INTERCESSIONS

One of the following or other intercessions may be used or adapted to the circumstances, or new intercessions may be composed.

The minister begins:

For our brother/sister, (), let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me shall live even in death and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

Assisting minister:

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn for (), and dry the tears of those who weep.
We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow.
We pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

You raised the dead to life; give to our brother/sister eternal life. -
We pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

You promised paradise to the repentant thief; bring () to the joys of heaven.

We pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Our brother/sister was washed in baptism and anointed with the Holy Spirit; give him/her fellowship with all your saints.

We pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

He/she was nourished with your body and blood; grant him/her a place at the table in your heavenly kingdom.

We pray to the Lord:

All: Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Comfort us in our sorrow at the death of ();
let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Prayer

Lord,

Prayhear our prayers for our dead brothers and sisters;

forgive them their sins,

and bring them to the fullness of your salvation.

(We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

OFFERTORY

SONG

SIT

While the gifts of the people are brought forward to the priest and are placed on the altar, the offertory song is sung. Before placing the bread on the altar, the priest says quietly:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

If there is no singing, the priest may say this prayer aloud, and the people may respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

When he pours wine and a little water into the chalice, the deacon (or the priest) says quietly:

By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Before placing the chalice on the altar, the priest says quietly:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

If there is no singing, the priest may say this prayer aloud, and the people may respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

The priest says quietly:

Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts.

If incense is used, the priest, after incensing the gifts and the altar, may incense the body. The deacon or another minister then incenses the priest and people. Then the priest washes his hands, saying quietly:

Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Priest: Pray, brethren, that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

People: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS STAND

Lord,
receive the gifts we offer for the salvation of ().
May Christ be merciful in judging our brother (sister) ().
for he (she) believed in Christ
as his (her) Lord and Savior.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Introductory Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

PREFACE OF THE DEAD

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,
we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

In him, who rose from the dead,
our hope of resurrection dawned.
The sadness of death gives way
to the bright promise of immortality.
Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended.

When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death
we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.

And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven
we proclaim your glory
and join in their unending hymn of praise:

SANCTUS

Priest and people: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and
might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

The priest, with hands extended, says:
Father, you are holy indeed,
and all creation rightly gives you praise.
All life, all holiness comes from you
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
by the working of the Holy Spirit.
From age to age you gather a people to yourself,
so that from east to west
a perfect offering may be made
to the glory of your name.

*He joins his hands and, holding them outstretched over the
offerings, says:*

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts.
We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit,

*He joins his hands and, making the sign of the cross once over
both bread and chalice, says:*

that they may become the body ✠ and blood of your Son, our
Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.

He joins his hands.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks
and praise.

He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and eat it:
this is my body which will be given up for you

He shows the consecrated host to the people, places it on the paten, and genuflects in adoration. Then he continues:

When supper was ended, he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks and praise,
gave the cup to his disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and drink from it:
this is the cup of my blood,
the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.
It will be shed for you and for all
so that sins may be forgiven.

Do this in memory of me

He shows the chalice to the people, put it on the corporal, and genuflects in adoration. Then he sings or says:

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith

The people continue the acclamation:

Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.

With hands extended, the priest says:

Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured
for our salvation,
his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven,
and ready to greet him when he comes again,
we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look with favor on your Church's offering,
and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself.
Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood,
may be filled with his Holy Spirit,
and become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make us an everlasting gift to you
and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints,
with Mary, the virgin mother of God;
with the apostles, the martyrs,
(Saint N. — the saint of the day or the patron saint)
and all your saints,

on whose constant intercession we rely for help.

Lord, may this sacrifice, which has made our peace with you,
advance the peace and salvation of all the world.

Strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth;

your servant, Pope (), our bishop (),

and all the bishops,

with the clergy and the entire people your Son has gained for you.

Father, hear the prayers of the family you have gathered

here before you.

In mercy and love unite all your children

wherever they may be.

Remember ().

In baptism he (she) died with Christ;

may he (she) also share his resurrection,

when Christ will raise our mortal bodies

and make them like his own in glory.

Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters,
and all who have left this world in your friendship.

There we hope to share in your glory

when every tear will be wiped away.

On that day we shall see you, our God, as you are.

He joins his hands.

We shall become like you

and praise you for ever through Christ our Lord,

from whom all good things come.

He takes the chalice and the paten with the host and, lifting them up,

says:

Through him,

with him,

in him,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

all glory and honor is yours,

almighty Father

for ever and ever.

The people respond:

Amen.

COMMUNION RITE

STAND

LORD'S PRAYER

Priest: Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:

Priest and people: Our Father, who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, from every evil,
and grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy keep us free from sin
and protect us from all anxiety
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

People: **For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.**

SIGN OF PEACE

The priest says the prayer for peace:

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:
I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but
on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of
your kingdom where you live for ever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **And also with you.**

Deacon (or priest): Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The people exchange a sign of peace and love, according to local custom in countries where so authorized by the National Hierarchy of Bishops.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Christians are gathered for the “breaking of the bread,” another name for the Mass. In Communion, though many we are made one body in the one bread, which is Christ.

The priest breaks the host over the paten and places a small piece in the chalice, saying quietly:

May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

Meanwhile the people sing or say:

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.**

We pray in silence and then voice words of humility and hope as our final preparation before meeting Christ in the Eucharist.

Before communion, the priest says quietly one of the following prayers:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God
by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit
your death brought life to the world.

By your holy body and blood
free me from all my sins and from every evil.
Keep me faithful to your teaching,
and never let me be parted from you.

Priest: This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Happy are those who are called to his supper.

Priest and people (once only):

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

*Before receiving communion, the priest says quietly: May the
body of Christ bring me to everlasting life, and May the blood of
Christ bring me to everlasting life.*

The priest then gives communion to the people.

Priest: The body of Christ.

Communicant: **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

STAND

Priest: Let us pray.

Lord God,
your Son Jesus Christ gave us
the sacrament of his body and blood
to guide us on our pilgrim way to your kingdom.
May our brother (sister) (), who shared in the eucharist,
come to the banquet of life Christ has prepared for us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

The final blessing and dismissal are omitted at funeral Masses.

BLESSING

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Priest: May almighty God bless you, the Father,
and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

May the angels lead you into paradise;
may the martyrs come to welcome you
and take you to the holy city,
the new and eternal Jerusalem.

May the choir of angels welcome you.
Where Lazarus is poor no longer,
may you have eternal rest.

I am the resurrection and the life.
The man who believes in me will live
even if he dies.

READINGS

GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-12

✠ **A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew**

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven

When Jesus saw the crowds he went up on the mountainside. After he had sat down his disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them:

“How blest are the poor in spirit: the reign of God is theirs.

Blest too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled.

Blest are the lowly; they shall inherit the land.

Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness;
they shall have their fill.

Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs.

Blest are the single-hearted, for they shall see God.

Blest too the peacemakers; they shall be called sons of God.

Blest are those persecuted for holiness' sake; the reign of God is theirs.

Blest are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me.

Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

Matthew 11:25-30

✠ **A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew**

You have hidde these things from the learned and have revealed them to children

On one occasion Jesus spoke thus: “Father, Lord of heaven and earth, to you I offer praise; for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children. Father, it is true. You have graciously willed it so. Everything has been given over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son—and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and

learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

Matthew 25:31-46

✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

Come, you whom my Father has blessed

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit upon his royal throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. Then he will separate them into two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep he will place on his right hand, the goats on his left. The king will say to those on his right: ‘Come. You have my Father’s blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the just will ask him: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?’

“The king will answer them: ‘I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left: ‘Out of my sight, you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was away from home and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to comfort me.’

“Then they in turn will ask: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or away from home or naked or ill or in prison and not attend you in your needs?’

“He will answer them: ‘I assure you, as often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it to me.’

“These will go off to eternal punishment and the just to eternal life.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

✠ A reading from the holy gospel according to John
Jesus told his disciples:

“The hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I solemnly assure you,
unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies,
it remains just a grain of wheat.
But if it dies,
it produces much fruit.
The man who loves his life loses it,
while the man who hates his life in this world
preserves it to life eternal.
If anyone would serve me,
let him follow me; where I am,
there will my servant be.
If anyone serves me,
him the Father will honor.”

—This is the gospel of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

A men will be brought to life in Christ

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Death came through a man; hence the resurrection of the dead comes through a man also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits and then, at his coming, all those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when, after having destroyed every sovereignty, authority, and power, he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

Christ must reign until God has put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Scripture reads that God “has placed all things under his feet.” But when it says that everything has been made subject, it is clear that he who has made everything subject to Christ is excluded. When, finally, all has been subjected to the Son, he will then subject himself to the One who made all things subject to him, so that God may be all

in all.

—This is the Word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans *Rom. 5:17-21*

However great the number of sin& committed, grace was ever greater. If death began its reign through one man because of his offense,

much more shall those who receive the overflowing grace and gift of justice. live and reign through the one man, Jesus Cl

To sum up, then: just as a single offense brought condemnation to all men, a single righteous act brought all men acquittal and life. Just as through one man's disobedience all became sinners, so through one man's obedience all shall become just.

The law came in order to increase offenses; but despite the increase of sin, grace has far surpassed it, so that, as sin reigned through death, grace may reign by way of justice leading to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—This is the Word of the Lord.

A reading from the first letter of John *John 3:1-2*

We shall see him as he really is

See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God! Yet that is what we are.

The reason the world does not recognize us is that it never recognized the Son. Dearly beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall later be has not yet come to light. We know that when it comes to light we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

—This is the Word of the Lord.

We Shall See God

And Job said:...

But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives,
and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;
Whom I myself shall see:

my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him, And from my
flesh I shall see God;
my inmost being is consumed with longing.

—*Job 19:1, 25-26*

The Just Are in Peace

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.
They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.
But they are in peace.

—*Wisdom 3:1-3*

The Lord Is Faithful

The favors of the Lord are not exhausted,
his mercies are not spent;
They are renewed each morning,
so great is his faithfulness.

—*Lamentations 3:22-23*

Undying Union with Christ

What will separate us from the love of Christ?
Will anguish, or distress,
or persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly
through him who loved us.
For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor principalities,
nor present things, nor future things,
nor powers,
nor height, nor depth,
nor any other creature
will be able to separate us

from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—*Romans 8:35, 37-38*

Our Citizenship in Heaven

Our citizenship is in heaven,
and from it we also await a savior,
the Lord Jesus Christ.
He will change our lowly body
to conform with his glorified body
by the power that enables him
also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

—*Philippians 3:20-21*

Happy Are the Dead in the Lord

I heard a voice from heaven say,
“Write this:
Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”
“Yes,” said the Spirit,
“let them find rest from their labors,
for their works accompany them.”

—*Revelation 14:13*

Life Everlasting

I believe in. . . the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

—*The Apostles' Creed*

PRAYERS

Peace at Last

May God support us all the day long
till the shades lengthen
and the evening comes
and the busy world is hushed
and the fever of life is over
and our work is done.
Then, in his mercy
may he give us a safe lodging
and a holy rest
and peace at last. Amen.

—*J. H. Newman*

Grieving for a Friend

“A great grief darkened my heart and death faced me everywhere. Even my own home was a torture to me. When I entered those rooms they seemed filled with unhappiness. The one I loved was gone. And everything we once shared gave me pain.

“I wanted to see him somewhere, but he was gone. And I was disgusted with everything, because nothing said to me now ‘Look, he is coming’ as things so often did when he was alive. No, I could not even understand myself now.

“I wondered how can you live when someone you love dies. I thought he would never die. I wondered how could I go on living since he was so much a part of my life. They say a friend is half your own soul. Half my life was gone, so I hated life itself.

“I carried on with a spirit wounded and bleeding, so tired I could hardly bear it, yet there was nowhere I could lie down and rest. I found no joy in beautiful gardens, in plays and music, in good food and pleasures, in books or poems. Without the one I loved, every thing, even the sun, looked dark. So I turned away from everything, except my sighs and tears. Only in these did I find a little rest.”

—*St. Augustine, Confessions*

Death Is Only an Horizon

We seem to give them back to you, O God,
who gave them to us.
Yet as you did not lose them in giving,
so we do not lose them by their return.
Not as the world gives, do you give,
O Lover of souls.
What you give, you do not take away,
for what is yours is ours too, if we are yours.
And life is eternal, and love is immortal
and death is only an horizon,
and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.

Lift us up, strong Son of God,
that we may see further,
cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly;
draw us closer to you that we may know ourselves
to be nearer our loved ones who are with you.
And while you prepare a place for us,
prepare us also for that happy peace,
that where you are
we may also be forevermore. Amen

—*B. Jarrett*

To Live in God's Presence

Lord,
those who die still live in your presence;
their lives change but do not end.
We pray in hope for ()
and for all the dead known to you alone.
In company with Christ who died and now lives
may they rejoice in your kingdom
where all our tears are wiped away.
Gather us there together again as one family
to sing your praise forever and ever.
Amen.

May Our Dear Ones Find Rest

God our Father,
your power brings us to birth,
your providence guides our lives,
and by your command we return to dust.
We pray for the dead, especially for ().
May those dear to us in life
find a place with you in heaven. Amen.

The Comfort of Faith

Those who have a friend or relative to kindly lead them back into life's mainstream are indeed blessed. A bereavement group in your church made up of people who have gone through the same crisis as you have can be very helpful. You'll have occasional setbacks as you reorganize your life, but you'll begin to take control of your life again. Above all, don't resist a helping hand. We all need others at every stage of the journey of life, but probably never more than when we have lost a loved one.