

Readings for a Funeral



THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

It is Christ who gives meaning
to life and to death.

Introduction

For a Christian the death of a loved one, affects the whole community, and so the Funeral Rites provide an important basis for a parish community to share the grief of an individual family. The Funeral Rites in the Catholic tradition seek both to comfort the bereaved and also to intercede for the dead. The emphasis is of a celebration of hope in God's mercy which teaches us, that for the Christian, death can never be the end, but rather only an interval in our onward journey to being in God's presence.

In the Catholic Funeral Rites we give thanks to God for His precious gift of a particular human life, but the hope of our faith encourages us not merely to look back over a life now past but rather to look ahead to a more fulfilled life, and to realise that our prayers can assist those who have died.

Our faith, at this moment, is of the utmost importance. We may feel lost, alone, afraid, angry, guilty or even that God has abandoned us when we need Him most. But in the midst of these shadows Christ's light continues to shine for us. He is with us and displays himself in those who are strengthening and supporting us in our hour of need. We remember God's promise that,

"...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 into 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."

I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

We turn to God, as we are, with tears, sadness and grief. We come with our doubts and fears asking Him to take care of our loved one. It is hard to let go and say goodbye but God will give us the strength and grace we need. He will shine the light of His love on our loved one and on us. We will all face the reality of death,

“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.” - Romans 6:8-9.

With this faith we journey on with the Lord, knowing it is He who carries us when we do not have the strength to walk ourselves.

Old Testament Reading



1. A Reading from the Book of Job

(19:1.23-27)

Job said,

“Ah, would that these words of mine were written down,
inscribed on some monument
with iron chisel and engraving tool,
cut into the rock forever.

This I know: that my Redeemer lives,
and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth.
After my awaking, 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.”

The Word of the Lord.

2. **A Reading from the Book of Exodus** (23:20-23)

The Lord says this:

‘I myself will send an Angel before you to guard you as you go and bring you to the place that I have prepared. Give him reverence and listen to all that he says. Offer him no defiance; he would not pardon such a fault, for my name is in him. If you listen carefully to his voice and do all that I say, I shall be enemy to your enemies, foe to your foes. My angel will go before you.’

The Word of the Lord.

3. **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 in peace.
If they experienced punishments 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 worthy to be 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.

The Word of the Lord.

4. **A Reading from the Book of Wisdom** (4:7-15)

The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years, the true 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 warp his
understanding or treachery seduce his soul;
for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade,
and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart.
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.

The Word of the Lord.

5. **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.

The Word of the Lord.

6. A Reading from the Book of Lamentations (3:17-26)

My soul is shut out from peace;
I have forgotten happiness.
And now I say, 'My strength is gone,
that hope which came from the Lord'.
Brooding on my anguish and affliction
is gall and wormwood.
My spirit ponders it continually
and sinks within me. This is what I shall tell my heart,
and so recover hope: the favours of the Lord are not all past,
His kindnesses are not exhausted;
every morning they are renewed;
great is His faithfulness.
'My portion is the Lord' says my soul
'and so I will hope in Him.'
The Lord is good to those who trust Him, to the soul that
searches for Him. It is good to wait in silence
for the Lord to save.

The Word of the Lord.

7. 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 brightly as the vault of Heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.

The Word of the Lord.

The Responsorial Psalm



Psalm 41

R *My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life.*

Like the deer that yearns
For running streams,
So my soul is yearning
for you, my God. R

My soul is thirsting for God,
The God of my life;
When can I enter and see
The face of God? R

And I will come to the altar of God,
The God of my joy.
My redeemer, I will thank you on the harp,
O God, my God. R

Why are you cast down, my soul,
Why groan within me?
Hope in God; I will praise Him still,
My Saviour and my God. R

Psalm 23

R *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

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

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

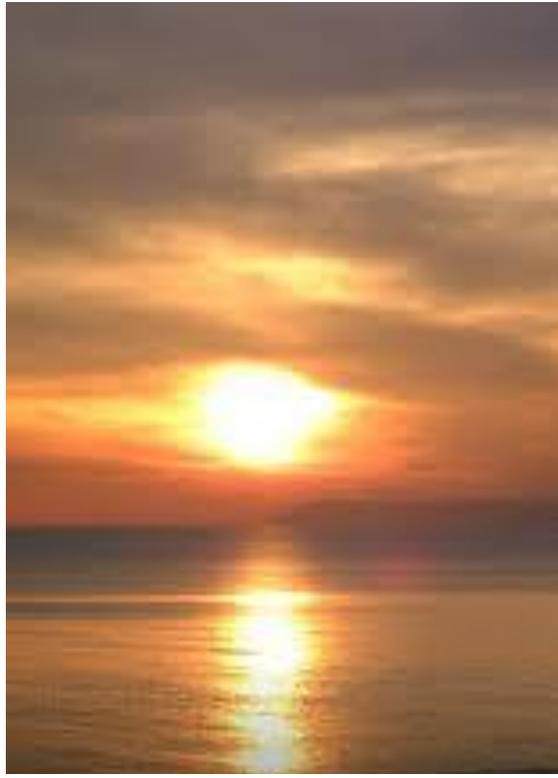
You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

R

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

New Testament Reading



1. 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 men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man 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.

The Word of the Lord.

2. 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 bought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As 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 from Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

3. 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.

The Word of the Lord.

4. 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 suffering 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.

The Word of the Lord.

5. A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans

(8:31-35, 37-39)

With God on our side 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 Christ Jesus? 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.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of Him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

6. 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 account of himself.

The Word of the Lord.

7. 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 men die in Adam, so all men 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 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.

The Word of the Lord.

8. A Reading from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

(15:51-57)

I will tell you something that 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 death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

9. A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
(4:14-5:1)

We know that He who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our turn, and put us by His side and you with us. You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God.

That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day. Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. And so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things which are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal.

For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

The Word of the Lord.

10. A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
(5:1, 6-10)

We know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by 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.

The Word of the Lord.

11. A Reading from the First Letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians
(4:13-18)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, 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 at 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 into 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.

The Word of the Lord.

12. 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 own glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which He can subdue the whole universe.

The Word of the Lord.

13. 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 that 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.

The Word of the Lord.

14. A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to Timothy

(4:6-8)

I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. All there is to come for me now is the Crown of Righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for His appearing.

The Word of the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL



- 1/ In Baptism N was given the pledge of eternal life.
May he/she now be admitted to the company of the saints.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 2/ For our brother/sister N who ate the body of Christ,
the bread of life, that he/she may be raised up on the last day.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 3/ For the whole family; that in these difficult and dark days
they may be sustained by their faith and by the knowledge
that they will be reunited with N one day in God's
heavenly kingdom.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 4/ For all the faithful departed: that they may see God
face to face in the kingdom of heaven.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 5/ For all of us gathered here: that we may remember at all times,
but especially at times of trouble and anxiety, that we are loved
by God and that he will take care of us.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 6/ For those who are without faith: that Christ may
open their ears and hearts to receive
the Good News of salvation.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

- 7/ We pray for all nurses and carers, particularly the nurses
and carers who were so good to N. in the last months of his/her
life.
[Pause]
Lord hear us.

2, 3 or 4 people might like to take part in the Offertory Procession by bringing up the gifts of bread and wine.

These are the gifts which are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the action of the priest into the Body and Blood of Christ.

(It is not appropriate to bring forward other gifts at this point, only those to be offered to God the Father.)



Rita McCann-Goldsmith, B Mus.
St Patrick's Parish Organist & Singer
3 Oakwood Mews
BT9 6SF
Tel: 9066 5647

I, John, 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, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, “You see the 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.”

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: “Now I am making the whole of creation new,” he said. “I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty; it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious, and I will be his God and he a son to me.”

The word of the Lord.