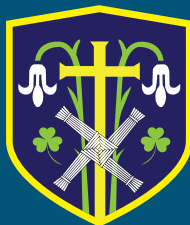




PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL MASS



THE THREE PATRONS
ST. PATRICK | ST. BRIGID | ST. JOSEPH

*“Do not let your
hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still,
and trust in me.”
John 14:1*

WHO TAKES PART IN THE FUNERAL MASS?

The Funeral Mass provides an opportunity for the family and friends of the deceased to participate in the Mass, if you wish. If you would rather leave these tasks to someone else, please let the priest know. If someone does wish to take part, it is done at the following times during the Mass:

- Reading the Word of God – usually 2 readers are needed:
 - **1 person reads the First Reading** (*Page 5*)
 - *The Psalm comes after the first reading and is usually sung.*
 - **1 person reads the Second Reading** (*Page 7*)
 - *The Alleluia verse comes after the second reading and is usually sung*
 - *The Gospel is read by the priest*

 - The gifts of Bread and Wine are carried to the Altar in procession by **2 or 3 people**.

 - The Prayer of the Faithful are read by **2 or 3 people**. (*Page 10*)
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Please give some thought as to who you would like to take part. It is best to choose someone to read who has experience speaking in front of a large number of people and who will proclaim the Word of God clearly and audibly. The priest will want to know the names of those reading and carrying forward the gifts so that he can invite them by name during the Mass.

The following pages contain a selection of readings, approved by the Church for use at funerals. Take your time to read through the various readings offered. Each one has something to say to us about the experience of death and the life of faith.

MUSIC AT THE FUNERAL MASS

The undertaker can provide you with details of musicians who are experienced at singing at a Funeral Mass. They will help you to choose hymns for the Mass. Typically, hymns are sung at the following times during the Mass:

1. **Opening Hymn** – as you enter the Church.
2. The **Psalm** is sung after the first reading.
3. The **Alleluia** verse is sung after the second reading.
4. During the **Offertory** as the gifts of bread and wine are being brought to the altar.
5. During the distribution of **Holy Communion**. Usually there is time for 2 hymns.
6. **Recessional** – as you leave the Church.

Hymns should be sacred and appropriate for a funeral Mass. There is an opportunity at the graveside to play secular songs if you wish.

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE:

- The priest will usually give a homily after the Gospel when the Christian teaching on death and resurrection may be explained. The priest may also speak about how God was active in the life of the deceased.
- Should a family member wish to speak about the deceased, this can be done at the graveside.
- Should a family member want a poem or a reflection to be read, this is best done at the home of the deceased before the body is moved to the Church or at the graveside.
- Please do not hesitate to contact the priest to discuss any matter relating to the funeral liturgy.

THE FIRST READING

Choose 1 reading from this section

1. A reading from the book of Wisdom

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 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 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 for ever. 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.

2. A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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 for ever. 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

3. A reading from the book of Wisdom

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.

4. A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven: A time for giving birth, a time for dying; a time for planting, a time for uprooting what has been planted. A time for killing, a time for healing; a time for knocking down, a time for building. A time for tears, a time for laughter; a time for mourning, a time for dancing. A time for throwing stones away, a time for gathering them; a time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing. A time for searching, a time for losing; a time for keeping, a time for discarding. A time for tearing, a time for sewing; a time for keeping silent, a time for speaking. A time for loving, a time for hating; a time for war, a time for peace.

The word of the Lord.

5. A reading from the book of the Proverbs

Let kindness and loyalty never leave you; wear them around your neck, write them on your heart. Trust in God, put no faith in your own perception; in every course you take have God in your mind. Happy the person who discovers such wisdom, because wisdom is beyond the price of pearls, nothing you could wish for is her equal. Her ways are delightful ways, her paths all lead to contentment. She is a tree of life for those who hold her fast, those who cling to her live happy lives.

The word of the Lord.

THE SECOND READING *Choose 1 reading from this section*

1. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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

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. 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.

3. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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 judgment 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.

The word of the Lord.

4. A reading from the 2nd letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

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.

5. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

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.

The word of the Lord.

6 A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

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 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.

The word of the Lord.

7. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to depart. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the upright 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.

8. A reading from the first letter of St John

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 revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

The word of the Lord.

9. A reading from the book of Revelation

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

The word of the Lord.

10. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Do not weep for those who have died, or be filled with sadness like those who have nothing to hope for. We believe that Jesus died and rose to new life, and that the same thing will happen to all who believe in him. Take comfort in knowing that everyone who died in Christ shall rise to new life and be with him forever.

The word of the Lord.

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

2 or 3 people to read

1. In baptism _____ was given the pledge of eternal life. May he/she now be admitted to the company of the saints. Lord hear us.

2. For the family of _____, that in these difficult and dark days they may be sustained by their faith, and by the knowledge that they will one day be reunited with _____ in God's heavenly kingdom. Lord hear us.

3. For all here present. That our remembrance of _____ may be a source of comfort and strength to us. Lord hear us.

4. For peace and love in family life. That the Holy Family of Nazareth may be our example and guide. Lord hear us.

5. We pray for all nurses and carers, particularly those who cared for _____ throughout his/her life/illness. May they be rewarded for their goodness. Lord hear us.

6. For all our deceased relatives and friends, especially (*you may wish to mention here relations of the deceased*). That God may bring them into the light of his presence, and give them a share in his glory. Lord hear us.



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