

# CELEBRATING THE RITES OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL



## HOLY SEPULCHER PARISH

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## SAINT KILIAN PARISH

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# MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL

In loving memory of:

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*(Name of deceased)*

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*(Date of death)*

*Presider:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Please keep this booklet in  
remembrance of your loved one.*

## **OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY**

We direct these words in particular to those who have lost loved ones. The parish clergy, the pastoral staff and the parishioners of Holy Sepulcher and Saint Kilian Parishes offer our prayerful support especially at this time of your loss. We want you to know that in the days and months ahead we are willing to be of whatever assistance we might be to you. We are also aware that we cannot remove your pain, but we hope to be able to assist you in whatever way possible as you find God's loving presence even in the midst of suffering. In addition to the parish clergy and pastoral staff, there are bereavement groups within our parishes which also may be of help to you.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This booklet is prepared to assist you in planning the Rites of Christian Burial that will be celebrated for the deceased. It contains: the principles by which the Catholic Church and this parish approach the death of its members; answers to some of the most often asked questions regarding the rites of Christian burial; and details regarding the funeral liturgy with choices for Scriptural readings and hymns to be used in the funeral liturgy. Please note that during the funeral liturgy only Biblical readings may be read and only sacred music may be employed. Songs from operas, films and the theater are not appropriate at the liturgy. Nor is pre-recorded music (CD's, tapes, etc.) permitted during the liturgy in church.

Please complete the enclosed Liturgy Planning Sheet and return it to the Parish Center so that we will have ample time to prepare the details of the liturgy according to your wishes. The planning sheet may also be faxed to the Parish Center at 724.625.1922 for Saint Kilian Parish and 724-586-7247 for Holy Sepulcher Parish.

## **PART ONE - PASTORAL PRINCIPLES**

The Catholic Church celebrates the Rites of Christian Burial chiefly for two reasons (as given in *The Order of Christian Funerals*, article four): 1) "The Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased" and 2) "The Church ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them with the Word of God and the Sacrament of the Eucharist."

Responding to this directive of the Church, Saint Kilian and Holy Sepulcher Parishes take seriously our responsibility to minister to those who have died and to their loved ones.

We do so in several ways, most notably, in the way we celebrate the liturgical rites for the deceased.

Within the limits of available pastoral staff and facilities, our parishes will celebrate the Rites of Christian Burial for all those who seek them (except those who are prohibited from receiving such rites by the universal law of the Church).

While it is expected that the Rite of Christian Burial be celebrated for baptized Catholics, the Catholic Church also permits the rites to be celebrated for unbaptized children (of Christian families) as well as baptized members of non-Catholic communities of faith.

While the Catholic Church continues to encourage the ancient custom of burying the dead, cremation is permitted (unless it is evident that cremation was chosen by the deceased or the family for reasons contrary to Catholic faith, for example, lack of faith in the resurrection of the dead). Where cremation is to take place, the following are the options for a funeral liturgy: (1) The body may be brought to the church for the funeral Mass and cremation follows. (2) Cremation may take place and the funeral Mass is celebrated in the presence of the ashes. (3) A service of prayer and Scripture reading may take place in the funeral home with cremation following. Please note that it is the Church's expectation that out of respect for the remains of the deceased, the ashes of cremated persons should be buried or entombed.

Special pastoral care is appropriate in the case of a person who dies as a result of suicide. While the Catholic Church would never condone such action, neither does it pass judgement on such a person. For it is quite possible that the person committing suicide was not in full possession of their rational faculties at the time of the act. Nor are we able to determine precisely the emotional or faith disposition of the person at the moment of death. Therefore, it is the normal pastoral response to provide for such persons all the appropriate rites of Christian burial. These rites are also provided in view of the family's special need for the prayerful support of the Christian community.

The Rite of Christian Burial provides for a variety of prayerful celebrations. While the traditional practice is the celebration of a funeral Mass, circumstances may dictate the choice of a service of Scripture and prayer in the funeral home (and/or at the cemetery).

This might be appropriate where the family or loved ones are not of the Catholic faith, or where the deceased has never been an active Catholic. In any case the expressed wishes of the deceased should be relied upon in making this decision. If there are questions regarding this matter, the parish clergy would be happy to discuss them with the family.

At the same time, persons who regularly participated in the celebration of the Eucharist should not be deprived of the funeral Mass simply because few (if any) relatives and/or friends might attend. The number of mourners should not be the determining factor in whether or not a funeral Mass is celebrated.

Occasionally, people will ask whether or not a deceased person will be denied Christian burial because he or she did not receive the "last rites." The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (not "last rites") is the Church's prayer for health and healing. It is not administered to those who have died. Nor is the reception of this sacrament required in order for a person to be buried from the Church.

## **PART TWO - PARISH POLICIES**

We welcome the presence of other priests as concelebrants at funeral Masses. If the family requests another priest to conduct the entire funeral, the family should contact the priest, verify his availability and ask him to contact Saint Kilian Parish or Holy Sepulcher Parish to confirm his willingness to celebrate the Rites of Christian Burial. Unless we hear from the priest, we will not assume his presence.

Normally, the clergy of the parish will visit the family of the deceased in the funeral home sometime before the funeral. If the family wishes the priest to pray with them, they should indicate that. If they wish the rosary to be said, we will oblige, but our preference is for a brief Service of the Word.

Normally the clergy of Saint Kilian Parish and Holy Sepulcher Parish do not conduct any type of concluding service in the funeral home immediately before the body is brought to the church for the funeral.

Generally, the clergy of our parishes will accompany the body to the cemetery. However, in some instances, this may not be possible (e.g. because of the number of funerals on a

given day, or the distance to the cemetery). In such cases, the parish will provide a "Rite of Committal" which may be used by the funeral director, family member, or others.

If a flag covers the casket when it is brought to the church, it must be removed so that the funeral pall (large white cloth) may be placed upon the casket.

If the family wishes, funeral flowers may be brought to the church for the funeral and left there following the funeral as a memorial to the deceased (usually this is limited to two baskets or arrangements). During Lent and Advent when the churches are not decorated with flowers, they will be removed following the funeral.

### **PART THREE - PARISH FUNERAL PROCEDURES**

Phone calls regarding funerals are accepted at any time. Contact with our parishes should be made by means of the phone numbers of the Parish Centers (724-625-1665 for Saint Kilian Parish and 724-586-7610 for Holy Sepulcher Parish).

Financial arrangements for funerals at Saint Kilian Parish and Holy Sepulcher Parish are as indicated on the page that accompanies this booklet.

Families may participate in Funeral Masses at Saint Kilian Parish and Holy Sepulcher Parish in the following ways:

1. Placing the pall (white cloth) over the casket at the beginning of the liturgy
2. Placing some religious symbol upon the pall
3. Reading the first or second Scriptural readings
4. Being part of the procession with the gifts - bread and wine (usually two people)
5. Making some brief remark at the end of the Liturgy
6. Selecting Scripture readings and hymns to be used during the liturgy

This type of participation is entirely optional. Those wishing to do so will find appropriate places to note this on the Funeral Planning Sheet included with this booklet.

## **PART FOUR - SCRIPTURAL READINGS FOR FUNERALS**

The following pages contain the choices for Scripture readings at a funeral Mass (or other service). Please remember that only Scriptural readings may be selected for use at a funeral Mass. No readings from secular sources may be used. The Funeral Planning Sheet contains places to note your selections. You may choose one Old Testament and one New Testament reading in addition to the Gospel. You may also elect to have proclaimed only one reading (Old or New Testament) and the Gospel.

Those selected to read the Sacred Scripture at a funeral should be appropriately dressed and able to read in a manner which can be understood by all in the congregation. During Mass the readings take place immediately following the opening prayer. If there are two readers, both may go to the lectern together and remain there until both have finished reading. Please note that the organist / cantor will usually sing a response following the first scriptural reading.

**THE FIRST READING:** Any of the following Old Testament readings may be chosen and the family may select someone to do this reading. The Funeral Planning Sheet included with this booklet includes a place where this selection may be indicated.

### Reading #1

### Job: 19:1,23-27

*A Reading from the Book of Job*

Then Job answered and said:

Oh, would that my words were written down!

Would that they were inscribed in a record:

That with an iron chisel and with lead

they were cut in the rock forever!

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.  
*The Word of the Lord.*

## Reading #2

## Proverbs 31:11-15, 20, 25-26, 28-30

### *A Reading from the Book of Proverbs*

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household. She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel. Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her: "Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all." Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## Reading #3

## Wisdom 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.

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 the elect.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes*

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A Reading from the Book of Wisdom*

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest.

For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time,

nor can it be measured in terms of years.

Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men,

and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

He who pleased God was loved;

he who lived among sinners was transported-

Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind

or deceit beguile his soul;

For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right

and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind.

Having become perfect in a short while,

he reached the fullness of a long career;

for his soul was pleasing to the LORD,

therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness.

But the people saw and did not understand,

nor did they take this into account.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## Reading #6

## Isaiah 25: 6a, 7-9

*A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples.

On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples,

The web that is woven over all nations;

he will destroy death forever.

The Lord GOD will wipe away

the tears from all faces;

The reproach of his people he will remove

from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

On that day it will be said:

"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!

This is the LORD for whom we looked;

let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

*The Word of the Lord.*

**THE SECOND READING:** Any of the following New Testament readings may be chosen and the family may select someone to do the reading. The Liturgy Planning Sheet accompanying this booklet has a place where this selection may be indicated.

## Reading #7

## Revelation 14:13

*A reading from the Book of Revelation*

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."

*The Word of the Lord*

## Reading #8

## Romans 6:3-4, 8-9

*A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 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.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## Reading #10

## Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12

*A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A Reading from the Second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*

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 must all 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.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians*

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

*The Word of the Lord.*

*A reading from the Book of Revelation*

I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away." The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**THE GOSPEL READINGS:** Any of the following Gospel readings may be chosen. This may be indicated on the Liturgy Planning Sheet accompanying this booklet. A priest or deacon will read the Gospel at the Liturgy.

## Reading #14

## Matthew 25:1-13

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew*

"The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise ones replied, "No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves." While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, "Lord, Lord, open the door for us!" But he said in reply, "Amen, I say to you, I do not know you." Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #15

## Matthew 5:1-12a

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew*

When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #16

John 6:37-40

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John*

Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it [on] the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him [on] the last day."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #17      Matthew 25:31-40

### *A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew*

Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #18

## Luke 7:11-17

### *A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Luke*

Jesus journeyed to a city called Naim, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst," and "God has visited his people." This report about him spread through the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #19

## John 11:21-27

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John*

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #20

## John 12:23-26

*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. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Reading #21

## John 14:1-6

*A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John*

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where [I] am going you know the way." Thomas said to him, "Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## Prayers for the Dead

*The following are prayers taken from the Order of Christian Funerals that may give you comfort and strength during the time of your grief.*

God of faithfulness,  
in your wisdom you have called your servant N. out of this world;  
release him/her from the bonds of sin,  
and welcome him/her into your presence,  
so that he/she may enjoy eternal light and peace  
and be raised up in glory with all of your saints.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Lord, in our grief we turn to you.  
Are you not the God of love  
who opens your ears to all?  
Listen to our prayers for your servant N.,  
whom you have called out of this world:  
lead him/her to your kingdom of light and peace  
and count him/her among the saints in glory.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



God of loving kindness, listen favorably to our prayers:  
strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead  
and our hope that your servant N. will also rise again.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Holy Lord, almighty and eternal God,  
hear our prayers for your servant N.,  
whom you have summoned out of this world.  
Forgive his/her sins and failings  
and grant him/her a place of refreshment, light and peace.  
Let him/her pass unharmed through the gates of death  
to dwell with the blessed in light,  
as you promised to Abraham and his children for ever.  
Accept N. into your safekeeping and on the great day of judgment  
raise him/her up with all the saints to inherit your eternal kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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

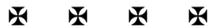


Almighty God and Father,  
by the mystery of the cross, you have made us strong;  
by the sacrament of the resurrection you have sealed us as your own.  
Look kindly upon your servant N., now freed from the bonds of mortality,  
and count him/her among your saints in heaven.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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 N.,  
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. Amen.



Into your hands, O Lord,  
we humbly entrust our brother/sister N.  
In this life you embraced him/her with your tender love;  
deliver him/her now from every evil  
and bid him/her enter eternal rest.  
The old order has passed away:  
welcome him/her then into paradise,  
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,  
but the fullness of peace and joy  
with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
for ever and ever. Amen.



Lord God, in whom all find refuge, we appeal to your boundless mercy:  
grant to the soul of your servant N. a kindly welcome,  
cleansing of sin, release from the chains of death,  
and entry into everlasting life.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Guidelines for the Reception of Communion in Catholic Churches  
From the National Conference of Catholic Bishops***

**For Catholics:** As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive holy communion. We are encouraged to receive communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason when there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition including the intention of confession as soon as possible.

**For Fellow Christians:** We welcome our fellow Christians to the celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us close to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions that separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (John 17:21). Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to holy communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires the permission of the diocesan bishop.

**For Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church:** They are urged to respect the discipline of their own churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, canon law does not object to their reception of communion.

**For Those Not Receiving Holy Communion:** All who are not receive holy communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayer for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

**For Non-Christians:** We also welcome to the celebration of the Eucharist those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to holy communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and unity of the human family.



