

Funeral Readings



Old Testament

GUIDELINES FOR THE LECTOR

1. At a Catholic Funeral Mass, the lector must be a practicing Catholic.
2. After the Collect or Opening Prayer and the priest is seated, the reader for the Old Testament passage comes to the ambo or pulpit to proclaim the reading.
3. Begin the reading by announcing, “A reading from the book of _____.” Do not make personal comments or introduce yourself.
4. At the end of the reading, please say, “The word of the Lord” and return to your pew.

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(It is good and holy to think of the dead rising again)

2 Maccabees 12:43-46

A reading from the 2nd Book of Maccabees.

Judas (the ruler of Israel) then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be absolved from their sin.

The Word of the Lord.

(He accepted them as a holocaust)

Wisdom 3:1-6, 9

A reading from the Book of Wisdom.

The souls of the righteous 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 to others, indeed, they seem 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 blameless life is a ripe old age.)

Wisdom 4:7-15

A reading from the Book of Wisdom.

The righteous one, 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 passes for gray hair, and an unsullied life is the attainment of old age. The one who pleased God was loved, living 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 that consideration into account. Yes, the righteous one who has died will condemn the sinful who live; and youth, swiftly completed, will condemn the many years of the unrighteous who have grown old. For they will see the death of the wise one and will not understand what the LORD intended, or why he kept him safe.

The Word of the Lord.

(The Lord God will destroy death forever.)

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: “Indeed, this is our God; we looked to him, and he saved us! This is the LORD to whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

The Word of the Lord.

(It is good to wait in silence for the Lord God to save)

Lamentations 3:17-26

A reading from the Book of Lamentations.

My life is deprived of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is.

My enduring hope, I said, has perished before the Lord. The thought of my wretched homelessness is wormwood and poison.

Remembering it over and over, my soul is downcast. But this I will call to mind; therefore I will hope: The Lord's acts of mercy are not exhausted; his compassion is not spent.

They are renewed each morning—great is your faithfulness! The Lord is my portion, I tell myself, therefore I will hope in him. The Lord is good to those who trust in him, to the one that seeks him; it is good to hope in silence for the Lord's deliverance.

The Word of the Lord.

(Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake.)

Daniel 12:13

A reading from the Book of Daniel.

“At that time there shall arise Michael, the great prince, guardian of your people; it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since the nation began until that time. At that time your people shall escape, everyone who is found written in the book.

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, others to reproach and everlasting disgrace.

But those with insight shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.”

The Word of the Lord.

(No one can determine the right time to act)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

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 give birth, 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.

What profit have workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to mortals to be busied about. God has made everything appropriate to its time, but has put the timeless into their hearts so they cannot find out, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

The Word of the Lord.