

I AM
THE RESSURECTION
AND THE LIFE



Sharing in the Funeral liturgy

Saint Aidan Parish

Hope in the Resurrection

As a Church, we confidently proclaim that God has created each person for eternal life. By his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has set us free from the chains of sin and death. As a Christian community, we come together to share in the funeral rites of the Church, confident that death is not the end. The rites celebrate the mystery of our life, death and resurrection in Christ. Through Baptism we enter into this mystery. We live our lives in the hope of sharing eternal life with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit when we complete our passage through death. For Christians, death in Christ results in life in greater abundance. This new life, like a seed, was planted in us at Baptism, flowered during our lifetime, and at death yields a rich harvest. With this in mind, and praying with you in this time of grief and loss, we present the funeral guidelines for Saint Aidan Parish.

About the Funeral Rites of the Church

Normally, the Rite of Christian Burial is celebrated for baptized Catholics but 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 body of a deceased person, cremation is permitted. 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 then cremation follows.
2. Cremation may take place and the funeral Mass is celebrated in the presence of the cremains. Prior to cremation, a service of prayer and Scripture reading may take place in the funeral home

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 in a timely fashion. It is against Church law for cremains to be placed on a mantle at home or spread anywhere. The Church will only bury someone as long as there is complete assurance that the cremains will be buried or interred.

Pastoral care is our focus 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. 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.

The Rite of Christian Burial provides several options for prayerful celebrations. While the traditional practice is the celebration of a funeral Mass, circumstances may dictate a preference for 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 was not an active Catholic. If there are questions regarding options for the celebration of the Funeral Rites, please contact one of the priests at St. Aidan.

Please note that if the deceased regularly participated in the celebration of the Eucharist, he/she 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.

Planning and Sharing in the Funeral Liturgy

It is difficult to plan a funeral liturgy while you are grieving the death of a loved one. Yet, it can be important that we involve family or friends in the celebration of the rites. This type of participation is entirely optional. The following are places within the funeral liturgy when the involvements of family or friends are possible.

Sprinkling with Holy Water and Placing the Pall

After family and friends have gathered at the entrance of the church, the priest greets the congregation and sprinkles the body with holy water as a reminder of our baptism. Family members or friends may wish to place the pall, a large white cloth reminding us of the garment we received at baptism, over the casket at this time. Then the procession to the front of the church begins and family and friends take their seat.

Liturgy of the Word

Family or friends are encouraged to choose readings from scripture, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Family members or friends may wish to proclaim these readings. If not, a trained lector from our parish will be assigned. If a person chooses to read, he/she should be given the reading in order to prepare to proclaim the Word at the funeral liturgy.

Presenting the Gifts at the Altar

There are two gifts-bread and wine-that are presented following the General Intercessions. Two family members or friends may bring these gifts to the altar.

Reflection at the Funeral Home, at the Church, or at the Cemetery

This is an opportunity for a family member or friend to reflect on the person we are going to bury. It is limited to ONE PERSON, a maximum of five minutes, and the presiding priest may ask to review it. It should be remembered that we are celebrating a Christian funeral so stories, jokes, etc., should have an appropriate tone.

Music

The Music Director will contact you concerning special hymns which may be requested by the family or by the deceased in his/her own preparation of the funeral liturgy. Please remember that the Mass is a public act of worship of the church, therefore the hymns should reflect the idea of resurrection and hope. No secular or “popular” music is permitted. Please reserve this type of music for a special time outside of the church.

Symbols of the Liturgy

Paschal (Easter) Candle

The Paschal candle reminds us of Christ’s undying presence among us, of his victory over sin and death, and of our share in that victory by virtue of the Sacraments. It recalls the great Easter Vigil, the night when the Church awaits the Lord’s passing over from death to eternal life and new light for the living and the dead is lit and blessed. The candle also reminds us of our baptism, when we received the Light of Christ. During the funeral rites in the church, the Paschal candle is placed near the coffin.

Holy Water

Several times during the funeral rites, the body is sprinkled with holy water. Blessed water (holy water) reminds us of the saving waters of Baptism. The water calls to mind the deceased's own baptism into Christ's death and resurrection as well as initiation into the community of faith.

Pall

A pall (large white cloth) is placed over the coffin when it is received at the church. The pall is a reminder of our baptismal garment, when we "put on Christ." The pall also signifies that all are equal in the eyes of God.

Incense

Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honor to the body of the deceased, which through baptism became a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Incense is also used as a sign of the community's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God.

Book of the Gospels or Bible

A Book of the Gospels or a Bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the Word of God and that fidelity to the Word leads to eternal life.

Cross

A cross may be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism. Also, through Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, we are brought to the victory of his resurrection.

Fresh Flowers

Fresh flowers, when used in moderation, are appropriate to the church environment during the funeral liturgy. The family may wish to order flowers for the funeral liturgy to be placed in the sanctuary of the church. The flowers are to remain in church after the liturgy.

Other Christian Symbols and Non-Christian Symbols

Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols such as national flags, flags or insignia of associations, and sports or other kinds of memorabilia, have no place in the funeral liturgy.

Special Needs and Other Questions

If family and friends have special needs, requests, or questions that are not addressed above, please contact your funeral director. All local funeral directors are very conscientious in providing parish leaders with necessary information.

Old Testament Readings

B-1

A reading from the Book of Job

19:1, 23-27

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.

B-2

(shorter form)

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

3:1-6, 9

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 his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

B-2

(longer form)

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

3:1-9

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 time 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.

The Word of the Lord.

B-3

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

4:7-15

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 please 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.

B-4

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

25:6a, 7-9

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.

B-5

A reading from the Book of Lamentations

3:17-26

My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is;
I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the
Lord.

The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall;
Remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast
within me.

But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope:

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

My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore, will I hope in him.
Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him;
It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

B-6

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

12:1-3

[I, Daniel, mourned and I heard this word of the Lord:]

“At that time there shall arise

Michael, the great prince,

Guardian of your people;

It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress since nations 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 shall live forever; others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

But the wise 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.

B-7

A reading from the Second Book of Maccabees

12:43-46

Judas, [the ruler of Israel] 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 of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view of 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 freed from this sin.

The Word of the Lord.

B-8

A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

3:1-11

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.

New Testament Readings

D-1 (longer form)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

10:34-43

Peter proceeded to address the people in these words:

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Word of the Lord.

D-1 (shorter form)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

10:34-36, 42-43

Peter proceeded to address the people in these words:

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Word of the Lord.

D-2

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

5:5-11

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord.

D-3

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

5:17-21

If, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one of the many will be made righteous. The law entered in so that transgression might increase but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

D-4 (longer form)

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

6:3-9

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 we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. 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.

D-4 (shorter form)

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

6:3-4, 8-9

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. 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.

D-5

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

8:14-23

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, *Abba*, "Father!" The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

The Word of the Lord.

D-6

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

8:31b-35, 37-39

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.

D-7

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

14:7-9, 10b-12

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.

D-8 (longer form)

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for “he subjected everything under his feet.” But when it says that everything has been subjected, it is clear that it excludes the One who subjected everything to him. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the One who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

The Word of the Lord.

D-8 (shorter form)

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

15:20-23

Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

D-9

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

15:51-57

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when that which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and that which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.
Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

D-10

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 4:14 – 5:1

We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence. Everything indeed is for you, so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God.

Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

For all 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.

The Word of the Lord.

D-11

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

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.

D-12

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Philippians

3:20-21

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.

The Word of the Lord.

D-13

A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians

4:13-18

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers [and sisters], 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.

D-14

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy

2:8-13

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David; such is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy:

If we have died with him
 we shall also live with him;
if we persevere
 we shall also reign with him.
But if we deny him
 he will deny us.
If we are unfaithful
 he remains faithful,
 for he cannot deny himself.

The Word of the Lord.

D-15

A reading from the First Letter of John

3:1-2

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

The Word of the Lord.

D-16

A reading from the First Letter of John

3:14-16

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers [and sisters]. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so, we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers [and sisters].

The Word of the Lord.

D-17

A reading from the Book of Revelation

14:13

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.

D-18

A reading from the Book of Revelation

20:11-21:1

I saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire.

Then 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.

The Word of the Lord.

D-19

A reading from the Book of Revelation

21:1-5a, 6b-7

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.

