

Catholic Prayers for Death and Dying



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
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Prayers with the Dying

The following prayers may be recited with the dying person, alternating with times of silence. Sometimes, the same prayer should be repeated many times. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be are also appropriate. The dying person may be signed on the forehead with the cross, as was done at Baptism.

Short Texts

- What will separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8:35)
- Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (Rom 14:8)
- We shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes 4:17)
- To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. (Ps 25:1)
- Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. (Ps 23:4)
- Into your hands I commend my spirit. (Ps 31:6a)
- Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. (Lk 23:42)
- Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (Acts 7:59)

Holy Mary, pray for me. Saint Joseph, pray for me. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Scripture Readings

Among many appropriate Scripture readings are the following:

John 6:37-40

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."

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.

In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;
he restores my soul.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.

You set a table before me
in front of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Indeed, goodness and mercy will pursue me
all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for endless days.

Psalm 91

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shade of the Almighty,
Say to the LORD, "My refuge and fortress,
my God in whom I trust."

He will rescue you from the fowler's snare,
from the destroying plague,
He will shelter you with his pinions,
and under his wings you may take refuge;
his faithfulness is a protecting shield.

You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,
Nor the pestilence that roams in darkness,
nor the plague that ravages at noon.

Though a thousand fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
near you it shall not come.

You need simply watch;
the punishment of the wicked you will see.
Because you have the LORD for your refuge
and have made the Most High your stronghold,

No evil shall befall you,
no affliction come near your tent.
For he commands his angels with regard to you,
to guard you wherever you go.

With their hands they shall support you,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
You can tread upon the asp and the viper,
trample the lion and the dragon.

Because he clings to me I will deliver him;
because he knows my name I will set him on high.
He will call upon me and I will answer;
I will be with him in distress;

I will deliver him and give him honor.
With length of days I will satisfy him,
and fill him with my saving power.

Psalm 121

I raise my eyes toward the mountains.
From whence shall come my help?

My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip;
or your guardian to sleep.

Behold, the guardian of Israel
never slumbers nor sleeps.
The LORD is your guardian;
the LORD is your shade
at your right hand.

By day the sun will not strike you,
nor the moon by night.
The LORD will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your soul.
The LORD will guard your coming and going
both now and forever.

As the time of death approaches

Prayer of Commendation

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world
in the name of God the almighty Father,
who created you,
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who suffered for you,
in the name of the Holy Spirit,
who was poured out upon you,
go forth, faithful Christian.
May you live in peace this day,
may your home be with God in Zion,
with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God,
with Joseph, and all the Angels and Saints.

Prayers after Death

Prayer for the Dead

In your hands, O Lord,
we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters.
In this life you embraced them with your tender love;
deliver them now from every evil
and bid them eternal rest.
The old order has passed away:
welcome them into paradise,
where there will be no sorrow, no weeping or pain,
but fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

Prayers Immediately after Death

The following prayers may be recited immediately after death and may be repeated in the hours that follow.

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!
Come to meet him/her, Angels of the Lord!
Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself;
may Angels lead you to Abraham's side.

Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord,
and may your light shine on him/her forever.

Let us pray.

All-powerful and merciful God,
we commend to you **N.**, your servant.
In your mercy and love,
blot out the sins he/she has committed
through human weakness.
In this world he/she has died:
let him/her live with you forever.
Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

These verses may also be used.

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

V/. May he/she rest in peace.

R/. Amen.

V/. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R/. Amen.

Gathering in the Presence of the Body

When the family first gathers around the body, before or after it is prepared for burial, all or some of the following prayers may be used. It is most fitting that, where possible, family members take part in preparing the body for burial.

All make the Sign of the Cross. Then one member of the family reads:

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says:

"Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened,
and I will give you rest.

Shoulder my yoke and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

The body may then be sprinkled with holy water:

The Lord God lives in his holy temple yet abides in our midst.
Since in Baptism, N. became God's temple
and the Spirit of God lived in him/her,
with reverence we bless his/her mortal body.

Then one member of the family may say:

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption;
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

Then this prayer is said:

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
forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

All may sign the forehead of the deceased with the Sign of the Cross. One member of the family says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;
let them rest from their labors
for their good deeds go with them.

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

V/. May he/she rest in peace.

R/. Amen.

V/. May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R/. Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross as one member of the family says:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
bless and console us and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit.

R/. Amen.

Prayers for Mourners

Lord God, you are attentive to the voice of our pleading. Let us find in your Son comfort in our sadness, certainty in our doubt, and courage to live through this hour. Make our faith strong through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

Lord, **N.** is gone now from this earthly dwelling, and has left behind those who mourn his/her absence. Grant that we may hold his/her memory dear, never bitter for what we have lost nor in regret for the past, but always in hope of the eternal Kingdom where you will bring us together again. Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ bless and console us and gently wipe every tear from our eyes: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R/. Amen.

For those who mourn the death of a child:

O Lord, whose ways are beyond understanding, listen to the prayers of your faithful people: that those weighed down by grief at the loss of this little child may find reassurance in your infinite goodness. Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

Prayers at Graveside

Lord Jesus Christ, by your own three days in the tomb, you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you and so made the grave a sign of hope that promises resurrection even as it claims our mortal bodies. Grant that our brother/sister, **N.**, may sleep here in peace until you awaken him/her to glory, for you are the resurrection and the life. Then he/she will see you face to face and in your light will see light and know the splendor of God, for you live and reign forever and ever.

R/. Amen.

O God, by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest, send your holy Angel to watch over this grave. Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

