

St. Mary's Parish & Holy Family Parish

Drogheda

Funeral Mass Booklet



Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.”

John 11:25 [NRSV]

Introduction

When someone we love dies, we often find that words are inadequate.
We struggle to express our grief and our sense of helplessness
in the face of the mystery of death.

We can allow the Word of God to speak to us at this time.
In our funeral liturgies, texts of readings, prayers and hymns comfort us with
the reminder that God is with us at every stage in our journey
of life and especially in death, when
'life is changed, not ended' (*Preface of Christian Death I*).

The parish community of St. Mary's & Holy Family wishes to express
its deep sympathy with you at this time.
You will be in our thoughts and prayers over the coming days and weeks.



The Funeral Liturgies

The funeral liturgies can be a very helpful step in the grieving process. There are usually three:

- The Rite of Reception (the Removal)
- The Funeral Mass
- The Rite of Committal (at the cemetery or crematorium)

Family members and friends may wish to take part in the preparation and planning of these liturgies. This booklet is designed to invite you fully into this process.

The Rite of Reception is a short, simple ceremony. There is one reading from Scripture and a psalm. The priest will then read a Gospel of his choosing and will lead the community in prayer before people approach the family with their sympathies.

The Funeral Mass takes place the following day. The Liturgy of the Word is as follows:

1. The **First Reading**, which is from the Old Testament, is read.
2. The **Responsorial Psalm** is sung – if this is not possible, it may be read.
3. The **Second Reading**, which is from the New Testament, is read.
4. After the Gospel and homily (which the priest will prepare) there are **Prayers of the Faithful**.

This booklet will help you in the task of choosing readings which speak to you in your grief and to compose suitable prayers. The staff of St Mary's/Holy Family parish will be glad to discuss any aspect of the funeral liturgies with you and to help and assist you in any way possible. We hope that these ceremonies will be a time of prayer for your loved one and a time of consolation and hope for you.

Eulogies

Eulogies in the Church are not permitted in the Diocese of Meath. Appreciations or speeches by family or friends sometimes occur at the rite of committal (burial/cremation) or perhaps at the meal/gathering which follows.

Please note the following:

- ❖ Readings provide an opportunity for people to become involved in a special way in the funeral liturgies. When choosing readers think about asking people who are used to reading in public and who will be well prepared and self composed. If the task of reading will cause them undue anxiety because of nervousness or grief, it is advisable to involve them in some other way.
- ❖ Only bread and wine to be consecrated in the Mass are presented in the Offertory procession. Family members or friends may like to present these.
- ❖ Sometimes people may wish to include some mementoes or symbols of their loved one in the ceremony. This is best done just after the beginning of the Mass. This short procession can lead to a table at the front of the church where these items are placed. The priest may then refer to these in his homily and people have the opportunity to see them during and after the Mass.

- ❖ You might like to consider putting together a few paragraphs for your priest which paint a picture of your loved one – their life, their character, special people and moments for them. Your priest will go over this with you and can include some of these details in his homily during the funeral Mass. In this way the Christian message of unending love and life everlasting becomes more closely linked to the life of the person you have loved.
- ❖ Music has the power to speak where words fail. It adds great beauty and dignity to the liturgy and is an integral part of the Mass. The following pages offer you some guidelines and suggestions on music for the funeral liturgies.

FIRST READINGS

1. A reading from the book of Job (19:1. 23-27a)

Job said:

"Ah, would that these words of mine were written down, inscribed on some monument with iron chisel and engraving tool, cut into the rock for ever.

This I know: that my Avenger lives, and he, the Last, will take his stand on earth. After my awaking, he will set me close to him, and from my flesh I shall look on God.

He whom I shall see will take my part: these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof."

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

2. A reading from the book of Wisdom (3:1-9)

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 blessing 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

3. A reading from the book of Wisdom (4:7-15)

The virtuous man, though he dies 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

4. A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes (3,1-8)

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to plant and a time to uproot,
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 refrain,
A time to search and a time to give up,
A time to keep and a time to throw away, A
time to tear and a time to mend,
A time to be silent and a time to speak, A
time to love and a time to hate,
A time to war and a time for peace.

This is the Word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God.

5. A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-9)

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 the nations, he will destroy Death for ever.

The Lord God 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

6. A reading from the book of Lamentations (3:17-26)

My soul is shut out from peace; I have forgotten happiness. And now I say, "My strength is gone, that hope which came from the

Lord." Brooding on my anguish and affliction is gall and wormwood.

My spirit ponders it continually and sinks within me. This is what I shall tell my heart, and so recover hope: the favours of the Lord are not all past, his kindnesses are not exhausted; every morning they are renewed; great is his faithfulness.

"My portion is the Lord," says my soul, "and so I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who trust him, to the soul that searches for him.

It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

7. A reading from the prophet Daniel (12:1-3)

I, Daniel, was doing penance, when I received this message from the Lord:

"At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity."

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

8. A reading from the second book of Maccabees (12:43-45)

Judas, the leader of the Jews, took a collection from the people individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an

altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resurrection. For if he had not expected the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved to those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

FIRST READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT (USUALLY USED IN THE EASTER SEASON)

(Shorter version)

9. A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10:34-36. 42-43)

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:

'The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.'

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ - but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men, and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalms

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

R/ The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or

R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

How gracious is the Lord, and just;
our God has compassion.
The Lord protects the simple hearts;
I was helpless so he saved me.

R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

I trusted even when I said:
'I am sorely afflicted,'
and when I said in my alarm:
'No man can be trusted.'

R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds.

R/ I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

SECOND READINGS

1. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (5:17-21)

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

2. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (6:3-9)

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.

If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection. We must realise that our former selves have been crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin.

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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

3. A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (14:7-12)

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 judgement 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 account of oneself.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

4. A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8:31b-35. 37-39)

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He

not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

5. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (15:51-57)

I will tell you something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all be changed. This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed as well, because our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of Scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So, let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

6. A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:14-5:1)

We know that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our turn, and put us by his side and you with us. You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God.

That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer human form of ours may be falling into decay, the inner person is renewed day by day. Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. And so, we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal.

For 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 heavens.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

7. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Philippians (3:20-21)

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

8. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-18)

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 for ever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

9. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy (2:8-13)

Remember the Good News that I carry, 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David'; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal – but they cannot chain up God's news. So, I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.

Here is a saying that you can rely on:

If we have died with him, then we shall live with him.

If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.

If we disown him, then he will disown us.

We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful,

For he cannot disown his own self.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

10. A reading from the first letter of St John (3:1-2)

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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATIONS

(Note Alleluia is not used during the season of Lent)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, you whom my Father has blessed, says the Lord;
inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.

Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia!

Our true home is in heaven, and Jesus Christ, whose return we long for,
will come from heaven to save us.

Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord;
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

Alleluia!

During Lent the Alleluia is not said but is replaced with one of the following or similar Acclamations:

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal Glory

Come, you whom my Father has blessed, says the Lord;
inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal Glory

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal Glory

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven, says the Lord;
Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of eternal Glory.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL – may be adapted

Let us pray with confidence and trust in the power of God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and whose promise is that one day we shall be like him.

1. In gratitude for N,
for precious memories,
and for the good he/she did for others,
Lord hear us,
R. Lord graciously hear us.

2. For all who will miss N.,
that the Lord may give them his comfort,
and be their companion during this time of sorrow.
Lord hear us,
R. Lord graciously hear us.

3. For all our deceased relatives and friends,
that they may enjoy the light of heaven
and the company of the saints.
Lord hear us,
R. Lord graciously hear us.

4. For ourselves as we gather at the table of the Lord,
that we may be gathered together again in God's kingdom.
Lord hear us,
R. Lord graciously hear us.

5. For all God's people,
that we may set our hearts on the things of heaven,
and be faithful in our service of God and neighbour.
Lord hear us,
R. Lord graciously hear us.

6. We pray for who has died: - may God now welcome him/her
into his heavenly home of eternal happiness and peace. *Lord, hear*
us
R. Lord graciously hear us.

7. We pray for the relatives and friends of, especially his /her
wife/husband, his/her sons and daughters, his/her brothers

and sisters....., the members of his/her extended family, his/her neighbours and friends: - may God fill their hearts with his comfort and consolation. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

8. We pray for all those whose lives are dedicated to caring for the sick and in particular we pray for the doctors, nurses, chaplain and staff ofHospital/Nursing Home who cared for during his/her illness/old age: - may God reward their goodness and kindness. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

9. We pray in thanksgiving for our neighbours and friends who have been so kind to us during this time of sadness: - may God reward their kindness and bless their homes with happiness and peace. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

10. As we pray that will find eternal peace, we pray that the peace that is in heaven will touch the troubled parts of our world, our country, our parish, our homes and our hearts. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

11. We pray for all who are ill at this time: - may God lay his healing hand on them and give them courage and hope. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

12. We pray for young people: - may they always value goodness, kindness and friendship. May they see the beauty of the gift of human life. May they come to know God the Father's love for each and every one of them. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

13. We pray for all elderly people: - may they receive love and care from their families and friends and may they have courage to give witness to faith and to the hope of eternal life. *Lord, hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

14. We pray for all who have died, especially the relatives and friends of who have gone before him/her: - may God unite them all in the happiness and peace of his heavenly home. *Lord hear us*

R. Lord graciously hear us.

Lord God,

Whose days are without end and whose mercies beyond counting, keep us mindful that life is short and the hour of death unknown. Let your Spirit guide our days on earth in the ways of holiness and justice, that we may serve you in union with the whole church, sure in faith, strong in hope, perfect in love. And when our earthly journey is ended, lead us rejoicing into your kingdom, where you live forever and ever. Amen.

Structure of the Funeral Mass

The Mass

Procession to the Sanctuary

Welcome (symbols of persons life may at this stage be placed on a table at the altar).

Penitential rite

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word (Note: all readings are to be taken from Sacred Scripture):

First Reading (usually from the Old Testament)

Psalm

Second Reading (always from the New Testament)

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Homily
Prayers of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Offertory: The Gifts of Bread and Wine are brought forward
The Preface, Holy, Holy and Eucharistic Prayer

The Communion Rite

Our Father
Prayer for Peace – exchange of Sign of Peace
Lamb of God
Holy Communion
Communion reflection (if used)
Prayer after Communion

Rite of Final Commendation

Prayer
Reverence for the remains – Holy Water and Incense
Song of Farewell – “Saints of God...”
Prayer of Commendation of our brother/sister to God
Invitation to travel to Place of Rest

Procession to Place of Burial or Cremation for Rite of Committal

Please note that orations or appreciations by family members do not take place in the church, but take place at the graveside or at a gathering following the funeral.

Structure of the Funeral Mass

(With removal immediately before Mass)

Reception of the Remains at the Church

Reception of the remains at the Church door – blessing with Holy Water
Procession to the Sanctuary (with symbols of persons life which are placed on a table at the altar)
Welcome
Placing of the symbols of a Christian life on the coffin: the Bible, the Cross

The Mass

Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word (Note: all readings are to be taken from Sacred Scripture):

First Reading (usually from the Old Testament)
Psalm
Second Reading (always from the New Testament)
Gospel Acclamation

Gospel
Homily
Prayers of the Faithful

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Offertory: The Gifts of Bread and Wine are brought forward
The Preface, Holy, Holy and Eucharistic Prayer

The Communion Rite

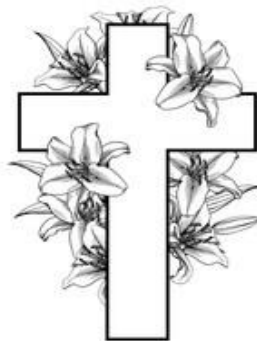
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Prayer of Commendation of our brother/sister to God
Invitation to travel to Place of Rest

Procession to Place of Burial or Cremation for Rite of Committal

Parishes of St Mary's & Holy Family



THE FUNERAL RITES