



THE CATHOLIC CEMETERIES

Remembrance, Comfort and Hope since 1856

Praying at the Cemetery

During this time of pandemic, many families have found that there are limitations in how they have been able to say goodbye to their loved ones. They have not been able to be at the hospital or the residence where their loved one has lingered. They lack the “final touch” of farewell, even to the point where the final ritual of anointing and prayers are not able to be done. The funeral, if held, is limited to 10 individuals. The family and friends who would provide grief support at this time are unable to meet.

Archbishop John Ireland preached about visitation at one of his St. Paul cemeteries: “We come to this sacred place, the earthly home of our departed loved ones, where they rest in peaceful slumber, awaiting the day of resurrection. We come to this sacred place to be close to God and remember the love He has for us. We come to this sacred place to think of God and eternity, to pay a tribute of love and reverence to those we mourn, and to pray for the eternal repose of their souls. We come to this sacred place in prayer, asking for the intercession of those who are before the throne of grace. We come to this sacred place and are reminded that God is vividly present, for always and forever. We come to this sacred place as so many have some before us and will continue after us, as a member of God’s family.”

You may want to spend some reflection and prayer time at the grave of a loved one. Below is a simple service and some prayers that may assist you during this time.

Grave Side Service #1

Gathering

We have gathered here to praise God and to witness to our faith as we celebrate the life of _____. We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss. May God grant us grace, that in pain we may find comfort, in sorrow hope, in death resurrection.

O God, all that you have given us is yours. At first you gave _____ to us, so now we give him/her back to you.

or

Into your hands, O merciful God, we commend your servant _____.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive _____ into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of

(continued)

Grave Side Service #2

Almighty God,

You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations;

You are our guardian in life and death.

By you we were brought into being,
and in your care and keeping, we leave this life.

Through the resurrection of Christ Jesus,
we will live eternally with you and all the saints.

We praise you for all your servants,
who having lived in faith and discipleship,
are now at rest with you.

Our joy is to commit our loved one,
into the never-ending majesty of your presence,
where s/he can forever give you ceaseless praise.

We thank you that for him/her the pain of life and death is past.

S/he has fought the good fight, finished the course,
and kept the faith.

Now s/he claims the crown of righteousness
which the Lord has reserved for this servant.

(continued)

(Grave Side Service #1 continued)

everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints of light. Amen

You can use a special reading or psalm at this time.

A Prayer of Commendation

And now we offer and commend _____ to the Everlasting One.

_____, we say to you in the midst of our sorrow and loss that we are grateful that you lived your life among us. We are grateful for your quiet gentleness and for your firm resolve to live life and to die on your own terms. We take joy and relief in knowing that your suffering has ended. We ask you now for forgiveness for any of the ways we may have hurt you in this life, and we forgive you for any of the ways you may have hurt us. We release you now into the Everlasting Arms of God. May your passage be swift. May you know Wholeness and Peace now and through all eternity.

The Lord's Prayer

A Benediction

May you be at ease.

May you be free from suffering.

May you be healed.

May you know joy and lightness of being.

May you dwell in comfort and compassion.

May you be a source of comfort and compassion for all whom you meet.

Go in peace.

or

O God, by Whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,

send Your holy angel to watch over this grave, through Christ our Lord.

The Lord bless him/her and keep him/her, the Lord make His Face to shine upon him/her and be gracious to him/her, the Lord lift up His countenance upon him/her and give him/her peace.

May God remember forever my dear ones, (Name them),

who have gone to their eternal rest.

May they be at one with the God who is life eternal.

May the beauty of their lives shine forevermore, and may my life always bring honor to their memory.

(Grave Side Service #2 continued)

God of hope,
fill us who grieve with peace and assurance that we will one day stand with _____ and all your disciples who have labored for you. Together we will surround your throne in your glorious kingdom prepared for those who love and serve you. We ask this through Christ the resurrected one. Amen

You can use a special reading or psalm at this time.

Almighty and ever-living God,
in you we place our trust and hope,
in you the dead, whose bodies were temples of the Spirit, find everlasting peace.

As we take leave of _____,
give our hearts peace in the firm hope that one day s/he will live in the mansion you have prepared for him/her in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!

Hasten 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 the bosom of Abraham.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May s/he rest in peace. Amen.

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



(prayers continued)

Prayers

We thank You Lord for the passing of our brother/sister.
We exalt Your name for the good life s/he lived.
We pray Lord that everlasting life be given unto him or her.
And as s/he abides in Your garden,
let Your angels touch what he/she cannot touch again.
Father, be with his/her soul and may s/he rest in perfect
eternal peace. Amen

May the road rise to meet you,
may the wind be always at your back,
may the sun shine warm upon your face,
may the rains fall soft upon your fields, and
until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.
AMEN

Most merciful God, we commend our departed into your hands.
We are filled with the sure hope that our departed one will rise again on the last day
with all who have died in Christ.
We thank you for all the good things you have given during his/her earthly life.
O loving God, in your great mercy, accept our prayer that the Gates of Paradise may be opened to _____.
In our turn, may we too be comforted by the words of faith until we greet Christ in glory
and are united with you and our loved one.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

We give back to you, O God, those whom you gave to us.
You did not lose them when you gave them to us, and we do not lose them by their return to you.
Your dear Son has taught us that life eternal and love cannot die. Death is only a horizon,
and a horizon is only the limit of our sight. Open our eyes to see more clearly, and draw us closer to you,
that we may know we are nearer to our loved ones who are with you.
You have told us that you are preparing a place for us;
prepare us also for that happy place, that where you are we may also be forever. Amen

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 _____ will sleep here in peace
until you awaken him/her to glory,
for you are the resurrection and the life.
Then s/he will see you face to face
and in your light will see light
and know the splendor of God,
for you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen

Lord, in our grief we turn to you.
Are you not the God of love who open your ears to all?
Listen to our prayers for _____
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 our Father,
you know our thoughts and share our sorrows.
Lead us out of desolation
to the caring comfort of your love.
When we forget what happiness is,
renew in us fresh springs of hope.
When we feel bereft of peace,
restore our hearts and calm our fears.
And when we come at last to our departing,
bring us home with you forever,
the family of God complete;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord,
_____ is gone now from this earthly dwelling
and has left behind those who mourn for his/her absence.
Grant that as we grieve for _____ we may hold his/
her memory dear and live in hope of the eternal kingdom
where you will bring us together again.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you. Amen