

## PREPARING A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

It is likely that not everyone who wants to attend the funeral will be able to. It is possible that you will not be able to be present either. This will be very painful. Your parish priest, the funeral directors – and others – will all understand the additional grief this causes you – but need also to consider the risk to you and to others if you attend.

There will be opportunities to celebrate in church at a later date but it is important to mark the day your loved is buried or cremated. There are different ways to do this but there is an outline Service of Commendation available if you would find that helpful. It can be prayed by those in your own household or a larger group through social media.

To prepare for the Service:

- If you don't have one, set up a social media Group (for example, WhatsApp, Skype or Facebook). This could be a job delegated to a younger member of the family – even if you could do it yourself, it helps them to feel that they are making an important contribution. Use this send – and receive – messages and to help to organise things.
- Think about what Readings from scripture would you like. Your parish priest, deacon or pastoral assistants will be able to offer you a selection.
- What music would you like? You can find many hymns online – and you may have favourite CDs or mp3s. Make – or delegate someone to make a playlist.
- Which prayers would you like to include?
- What ritual might you include?

The suggestion in the Service is lighting a candle. You might like to have someone – perhaps a child, young person or the artistic one in the family – to decorate a family “paschal candle”. You can find information about these and the symbols to include online. (The incense is not essential in a family candle).

- Who will do what? Ensure that everyone who would like to take an active part in the Service has something to read/ do.



Think also about what you would like after the service.

- Could someone compile a presentation of photos that you could share? Alternatively, share a selection beforehand or get your albums and photo-files ready.
- What music might you play/ share?
- Would people like to write poems or draw pictures to remember the person who has died?
- Invite everyone to think about their favourite story about the loved one. If you can arrange an online meeting, people can take turns in sharing them. If not, ask people to write them in advance and post them to each other to read after the service.
- What are you going to have to eat and drink afterwards? Are there favourite foods that everyone could have ready?

## A POSSIBLE OUTLINE FOR YOUR SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

### GATHERING RITUAL

Start the Service with your candle(s) unlit.

Reader Our beloved N... has died  
and a light has gone out of our lives.  
*(A short pause here for people to have a moment of reflection)*

Reader But we are here to honour the light that he/she brought into our lives –  
to say that light is stronger than darkness –  
that hope is stronger than despair –  
and our love for N...  
and the love we received from N...  
is stronger than death.

Reader We remember that the Light of Christ came into the world –  
and the darkness cannot overcome it.

*The chief mourner lights a candle (using the family paschal candle if one was made) to represent the Light of the Risen Christ – then lights their own candle.*

*Everyone lights their candle in turn, perhaps saying these or their own words:*

For the light N... brought to my life

### OPENING PRAYER

Our brother/sister N. has gone to his/her rest in the peace of Christ.

May the Lord now welcome him/her to the table of God's children in heaven.

With faith and hope in eternal life, let us assist him/her with our prayers.

Let us pray to the Lord also for ourselves.

May we who mourn be reunited one day with N.;

together may we meet Christ Jesus when he who is our life appears in glory.

*From Order of Christian Funerals*

*Or*

Reader We gather in the name of the Father:

**All The God who is love  
and who created us from love  
and for love.**

Reader We gather in the name of the Son:

**All Who gave his life out of love for the world  
and whose resurrection opens to us  
the way to eternal life.**

Reader We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit:

**All Giver of solace and consolation -  
Giver of comfort when we die;  
Giver of joys that never end.**

## SCRIPTURE READING

## MUSIC

## INTERCESSIONS

Use 'I/ me' or 'We/us' as appropriate. If you are praying with others, you could take turns in praying for each intention and add Lord, in your mercy—**hear our prayer.**

Gracious Lord, forgive the sins of N... who has died in Christ.

Remember all the good he/she has done.

Welcome him/her into eternal life.

We pray for those who mourn. Comfort us in our grief.

Lighten our sense of loss with your presence.

Increase our faith and strengthen our hope.

We pray for ourselves on our pilgrimage through life. Keep us faithful in your service.

Kindle in our hearts a longing for heaven.

We pray for all who will be commending their loved ones to the mercy of God today.

We pray for N... who is conducting the service on our behalf.

We pray for all who cared for N... May they be strengthened in their service of the sick.

*Add prayers for other people or needs here if desired.*

We place all our prayers into the hands of the Father who enfolds our broken hearts in his tenderness and compassion:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

Amen.

## CLOSING PRAYERS

Loving God, from whom all life proceeds  
and by whose hand the dead are raised again,  
though we are sinners, you wish always to hear us.  
Accept the prayers we offer in sadness for your servant N.:  
deliver his/her soul from death,  
number him/her among your saints  
and clothe him/her with the robe of salvation  
to enjoy for ever the delights of your kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

or

### **Litany of Letting Go (1)**

Into the Love that created a universe – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love that created you – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love that blessed our love – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love that laughed with our laughter – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love the wept with our tears – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love that healed you by welcoming you Home – **I/ we let you go.**  
Into the Love the holds my broken heart in his heart – **I/ we let you go.**  
or

### **Litany of Letting Go (2)**

Go forth, O Christian soul, N...from this world,  
in the name of God the Father Almighty, 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 forth upon you.

Into company in the name of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of St. Joseph – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of the Angels and Archangels – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of the Cherubim and Seraphim – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of the Patriarchs and Prophets – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of Apostles and Evangelists – **may you be welcomed.**

Into the company of the holy Martyrs and Confessors – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of holy men and women – **may you be welcomed.**  
Into the company of all those whom we have loved and lost – **may you be welcomed.**  
May your place this day be in peace, and your eternal abode be in holy Sion.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.  
And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.  
May he/she 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.**

*Gentle music to close your Service would be appropriate at this point.*

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Opening Responses, Litany of Letting Go (1) and Litany of Letting Go (2) Wellspring