

Readings for Funerals



Cathedral *of the* *Immaculate Conception* *Sligo*

To those who are bereaved:

Death is always a sad occurrence. To lose a spouse, parent, family member or close friend is surely one of the most painful experiences we must endure in life.

While nothing at this time can remove the pain of loss, the Funeral Mass has a clear message of hope. The Readings, Psalms and Communion Reflection here all convey compassion and hope.

The presence of people at a time of family bereavement may also be a wonderful source of strength. It is the local community speaking not in words but by their very presence.

The priests of the parish are most anxious to be a source of support and strength at this time and will be there to help in the months and years ahead.

People often suffer in isolation. The bereavement process for some can be very prolonged, but for all it is intense.

Our prayers are never unmindful of your grief. Your priests would feel privileged to be of help in anyway and at any time during your time of grief.

Funeral (or Requiem) Mass

The Funeral Mass is the central liturgical celebration for those who have died in the Catholic faith. On this occasion the Christian community comes together with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and to seek strength in the proclamation of the Paschal Mystery.

Here in Sligo Cathedral parish we support relatives and friends in participating in the celebration of the Mass but stress that no one is obliged to actively do so. We understand that those grieving can find public speaking, such as reading during the Liturgy of the Word, overwhelming in such sad circumstances.

There are a number of different ways to contribute to the Mass; family members and friends can help select Scripture readings, prayers of the faithful and symbols of the life of the deceased which can be brought up to the Sanctuary before the Mass begins.

Sacred Music

Music for the Celebration of the Funeral Mass should be Hymns approved by the Church that will enhance the sacredness of the occasion.

The Order of the Mass

Before the Mass begins a number of symbols relating to the life of the deceased may be brought up to the Sanctuary by family members/friends. These can include items such as a family photo, prayer book etc.

- **1st Reading** May be read by a family member/friend.
- **Responsorial Psalms** May be sung but if read will be by the person who reads the 1st Reading.
- **2nd Reading** Sometimes but not always included in a Funeral Mass may be read by a second family member or friend.
- **Gospel Acclamation** May be sung but if not is usually read by the person who reads the 2nd Reading.
- **Gospel** May be chosen by the family/friends of the deceased but is always read by the Priest.
- **Prayers of the Faithful** Introduced by the Priest. There should be no more than 6 and may be read by one or more family members/friends.
- **Presentation of the Gifts** Bread and Wine are presented to the Priest by two family members/friends.

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Funeral Mass 1st Readings

A selection of Readings from the Old Testament.

READING 1

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (41: 10, 44:22, 49:15 – 16)

Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, and uphold you with my right hand of justice. For I am the Lord your God who grasps your right hand; it is I who say to you “fear not, I will help you”.

I have brushed away your offences like a cloud, your sins like a mist, return to me, for I have redeemed you. Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child within her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palm of my hand I have written your name. Yes, in joy you shall depart, in peace you shall be brought back.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 2

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes. (3: 2-8)

There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven.

A time for giving birth, a time for dying.

A time for planting, a time for uprooting.

A time for building, a time for tearing down.

A time for sorrow, a time for joy.

A time for mourning, a time for dancing.

A time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing.

A time for finding, a time for losing.

A time for saving, a time for throwing away.

A time for mending, a time for tearing.

A time for keeping silent, a time for speaking.

A time for conflict, a time for peace.

What does a man gain from the efforts that he makes?

I contemplate the task that God gives mankind to labour at.

All that he does is apt for its time; but though he has permitted man to consider time in its wholeness, man cannot comprehend the work of God from beginning to end.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 3

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom. (3: 1 – 9)

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope was full of immortality, slight was their affliction great will their blessing be.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 4

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 nations, he will destroy Death for ever.

The Lord 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 5

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (61: 1 – 3)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the
oppressed; to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim
liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of our God;
to comfort all who mourn,
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 6

A Reading from the Book of Job. (19: 1. 23 – 27)

Job said:

‘Oh that my words were written!

Oh that they were inscribed in a book!

Oh that with an iron pen and lead they were graven in the rock for ever!

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.’

The Word of the Lord.

READING 7

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. (35: 3 – 6. 10)

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy. And the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 8

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom. (4: 7 – 15)

The virtuous man, though he die 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 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 9

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.”

The Word of the Lord.

Funeral Mass Responsorial Psalm

A selection of Psalms

PSALM 1

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.**

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 staff;
with these you give me comfort. **R.**

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.**

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.**

PSALM 2

R: For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
My body pines for you like a dry,
weary land without water. **R.**

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.
For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise. **R.**

So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy. **R.**

You have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast. **R.**

Funeral Mass 2nd Reading

A selection of Readings from the New Testament.

READING 10

A Reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Romans. (8: 14 – 18)

All 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 have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him, we do so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory which is waiting for us.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 11

A Reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.
(15: 51 – 57)

I will tell you something that has been a 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 12

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 an account of ourselves.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 13

A Reading from the second letter of St. Paul to Timothy. (4: 6
– 8)

As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation,
and the time of my departure has come.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved
for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord,
the righteous Judge, will give me on that day,
and not only to me but also to all who have
longed for his appearing.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 14

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

We want you to be quite certain, friends, 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 15

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 mortal 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 16

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans. (6: 3-9)

When we were baptised in Christ 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 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 is 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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 17

A Reading from the first Letter of St. John.

Let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

God's Love was revealed among us in this way: God sent His only Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 18

A Reading from the First Letter of St. John.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

READING 19

A Reading from the Book of the Apocalypse. (14:13)

I, John, heard a voice from Heaven saying,
‘Write this: Blessed are those who die in the Lord.
Blessed indeed, says the Spirit,
now they may rest forever from their labours,
for their good deeds go with them!’

The Word of the Lord.

READING 20

A Reading from the First Letter of St. John. (1:5-7)

This is what we have heard from Him,
and the message we are announcing to you:
God is light; there is no darkness in Him at all.
If we say that we are in union with God while we are living in
darkness, we are lying because we are not living the truth.
But if we live our lives in the light, as He is in the light, we
are in union with one another, and the blood of Jesus,
His Son, purifies us from all sin.

The Word of the Lord.

Funeral Mass Gospel Acclamation
A selection of Gospel Acclamations

ACCLAMATION 1: (John 11: 25-26)

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the Resurrection and the Life, says the Lord,
whoever believes in me will never die.

Alleluia!

ACCLAMATION 2: (Matthew 11: 25)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you Father
Lord of heaven and earth;
For revealing the mysteries of the Kingdom
To mere children.

Alleluia!

Funeral Mass Gospel

A selection of Gospel Readings

READING 21

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John. (19: 17-18. 25-30)

Carrying His own cross, Jesus went out of the city to the place of the skull or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgatha, where they crucified Him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.

Seeing His mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to His mother, 'Woman, this is your Son'. Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'. After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the Scripture perfectly He said:

'I am thirsty'.

A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to His mouth.

After Jesus had taken the vinegar He said:

'It is accomplished'; and bowing His head He gave up His spirit.

The Gospel of the Lord.

READING 22

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke. (24: 13-16. 28-35)

On the first day of the week, two of the disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem.

There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what happened on the road and how they recognised him at the breaking of bread.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

READING 23

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (11:
25-30)

Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you who labour 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 Gospel of the Lord.

READING 24

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John.(14:1 – 6)

Jesus said to His disciples:

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house; if there were not, I should not have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going.’

Thomas said, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’

Jesus said: ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

READING 25

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (5:1–12)

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There He sat down and was joined by His disciples. Then He began to speak. This is what He taught them: ‘How happy are the poor in spirit:

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Prayers of the Faithful

A selection of Prayers of the Faithful, also known as Bidding Prayers.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL 1

Presider: God the almighty Father, raised Jesus from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save all his people, living and dead.

1. We thank God for all the blessings he gave _____ during his/her life and we pray that he/she may be happy in heaven with all who have gone before him/her.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

2. We pray for all who cared for _____ during his/her illness; the doctors and nurses who looked after his/her medical needs, the friends and neighbours who visited him/her, the priests who tended to his/her spiritual care.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

3. We ask God to comfort all those who were part of _____'s circle of love and care and to give them comfort and strength.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

4. We ask God to bless all who worked with _____, his/her colleagues in _____ and his/her friends who now grieve his/her passing.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

5. We pray for those who have to cope with sudden and unexpected deaths, that the pain they experience may be lessened through the goodness of God and the support of those around them.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Presider: God of loving kindness, listen favourably to our prayers. Strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead and our hope that your servant _____ will also rise again. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL 2

Presider: God the almighty Father, raised Jesus from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save all his people, living and dead.

1. For _____ who received the body of Christ, the bread of life, that he/she may be raised up on the last day.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

2. For the family and friends of _____ that they may be consoled in their grief by the Lord who wept at the death of his friend Lazarus.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

3. For those who bear the cross of pain in mind or body. May they never feel forgotten by God.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

4. For all who are gathered here to worship in faith, that we may be gathered together again in God's kingdom.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

5. For all who have died. May God give them a place in the kingdom of heaven.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Presider: God of loving kindness, listen favourably to our prayers. Strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead and our hope that your servant _____ will also rise again. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL 3

Presider: Jesus is the Son of God and the pattern of our own creation. His promise is that one day we shall be truly like him. With our hope founded on that promise we pray;

1. That God will receive our praise and thanksgiving for the life of _____.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**
2. That God will bring to completion
_____’s baptism into Christ.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**
3. That all of us, _____’s family and friends, may be comforted in our grief.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**
4. That God will grant release to those who suffer in mind and body.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**
5. That God will grant peace to all who have died in the faith of Christ.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Presider: Lord God, you entrusted _____ to us and now you embrace him/her in your love. Comfort us, your sorrowing servants, who seek to do your will and to know your saving peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL 4

Presider: God the almighty Father, raised Jesus from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save all his people, living and dead.

1. In baptism _____ received the light of Christ. Scatter the darkness now and lead him/her over the waters of death.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

2. The family and friends of _____ seek comfort and consolation. Heal their pain and dispel the darkness and doubt that come from grief

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

3. For all who are gathered to worship in faith, that we may be gathered together again in God's kingdom..

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

4. For our deceased relatives and friends, and for all who have helped us, that they may have the reward of their goodness.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

5. For those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising again, that they may see God face to face.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Presider: God, our shelter and our strength, you listen in love to the cry of your people. Hear the prayers we offer for our departed brothers and sisters, cleanse them of their sins and grant them the fullness of redemption. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.