

REGARDING CHRISTIAN DEATH AND BURIAL

The burial of a Christian is an occasion of both sorrow and joy—our sorrow in the face of death, and our joy in Jesus’ promise of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. As the burial liturgy proclaims, “life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens.”

The Christian burial liturgy looks forward to eternal life rather than backward to past events. It does not primarily focus on the achievements or failures of the deceased; rather, it calls us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and his triumph over death, even as we celebrate the life and witness of the deceased.

The readings should always be drawn from the Bible, and the prayers and music from the Christian tradition. A wake preceding the service and a reception following the service are appropriate places for personal remembrances. Where possible, the burial liturgy is conducted in a church, and it is often celebrated within the context of the Eucharist.

The *Book of Common Prayer* has always admonished Christians to be mindful of their mortality. It is therefore the duty of all Christians, as faithful stewards, to draw up a Last Will and Testament, making provision for the well-being of their families and not neglecting to leave bequests for the mission of the Church. In addition, it is important while in health to provide direction for one’s own funeral arrangements, place of burial, and the Scripture readings and hymns of the burial liturgy, and to make them known to the Priest.

RECEPTION OF THE BODY

The following form may be used at whatever time the body is brought to the church.

The Officiant meets the body at the door of the church and says

With faith in Jesus Christ, we receive the body of our *brother N.* for burial. Let us pray with confidence to God, the Giver of life, that he will raise *him* to perfection in the company of the saints.

Silence may be kept; after which the Officiant says

O Sovereign Lord Christ, deliver your servant, *N.*, from all evil, and set *him* free from every bond; that *he* may rest with all your saints in the eternal habitations; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Let us also pray for all who mourn, that they may cast their care on God, and know the consolation of his love.

Silence may be kept; after which the Officiant says

Almighty God, look with pity upon the sorrows of your servants for whom we pray. Remember them, Lord, in mercy; nourish them with patience; comfort them with a sense of your goodness; lift up your countenance upon them; and give them peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If a funeral pall is to be used, it should be draped over the casket at this time.

CONCERNING THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

The death of a member of the Church should be reported as soon as possible to, and arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with, the Minister of the Congregation.

The Baptized are properly buried from a church.

This Burial Office is intended for those who have been baptized and profess the Christian Faith. Portions of this Office may be adapted for other circumstances.

The coffin is to be closed before the liturgy, and it remains closed thereafter. It is appropriate that it be covered with a funeral pall or other suitable covering.

The Committal normally follows the burial liturgy, at the place where the remains are to be interred. If necessary, the Committal and interment may take place before the burial liturgy. The Committal may also be used prior to cremation.

A Priest normally presides at the liturgy. It is appropriate that the Bishop, when present, preside at the Eucharist and pronounce the Commendation. When the services of a Priest cannot be obtained, a Deacon or lay reader may preside at the liturgy.

It is desirable that the Lesson from the Old Testament and the Epistle be read by lay persons. At the burial of a child, the passages from Lamentations, 1 John, and John 6, together with Psalm 23, are recommended.

It is customary that the Officiant meet the body and go before it into the church (page 247) or towards the grave.

The anthems at the beginning of the liturgy are sung or said as the body is borne into the church, or during the entrance of the Ministers, or by the Officiant standing in the accustomed place.

THE
BURIAL *of the* DEAD

PROCESSION OF THE BODY

All stand while the following anthems are said or sung. A hymn, psalm, or some other suitable anthem may also be used.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.
Whoever believes in me,
though he die, yet shall he live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me
shall never die.

JOHN 11:25-26^T

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,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

JOB 19:25-27

For none of us lives to himself,
and none of us dies to himself.
For if we live, we live to the Lord,
and if we die, we die to the Lord.
So then, whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord's.

ROMANS 14:7-9

For we brought nothing into the world,
and it is certain we carry nothing out.
The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;
blessed be the name of the Lord.

1 TIMOTHY 6:7^T; JOB 1:21

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;
Even so, says the Spirit,
for they rest from their labors.

REVELATION 14:13^T

The Officiant may greet the Congregation and briefly introduce the purpose of Christian Burial.

The Officiant then says

The Lord be with you.

People **And with your spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray.

AT THE BURIAL OF AN ADULT

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that your servant *N.*, being raised with Christ, may know the strength of his presence and rejoice in his eternal glory; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

AT THE BURIAL OF A CHILD

O God, whose beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them: Give us grace to entrust *N.* to your never-failing care and love, and bring us all to your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Officiant may add the following prayer

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding: deal graciously with those who mourn [especially _____]. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The People sit.

One or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read.

THE LESSONS

ISAIAH 25:6-9 (*He will swallow up death for ever*)
ISAIAH 61:1-3 (*To comfort all who mourn*)
LAMENTATIONS 3:22-26,31-33 (*The Lord is good to those who wait*)
WISDOM 3:1-5, 9 (*The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God*)
JOB 19:21-27A (*I know that my Redeemer lives*)

A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow. The following Psalms are appropriate: 39, 42:1-7, 46, 90:1-12, 121, 130, 139:1-11^a.

ROMANS 8:14-19,34-39 (*The glory that is to be revealed*)
1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-26,35-38,42-44,53-58 (*The imperishable body*)
2 CORINTHIANS 4:16—5:9 (*Things that are unseen are eternal*)
1 JOHN 3:1-2 (*We shall be like him*)
REVELATION 7:9-17 (*God will wipe away every tear*)
REVELATION 21:2-7 (*Behold, I am making all things new*)

*A suitable psalm, hymn, or canticle may follow.
The following Psalms are appropriate: 23, 27, 106:1-5^a, 116.*

JOHN 5:24-27 (*Whoever believes has eternal life*)
JOHN 6:37-40 (*All that the Father gives me will come to me*)

JOHN 10:11-16 (*I am the good shepherd*)
JOHN 11:21-27 (*I am the resurrection and the life*)
JOHN 14:1-6 (*In my Father's house are many rooms*)

If Communion is to follow, a passage from the Gospels always concludes the Lessons. At a Eucharist, all stand, and the Deacon or Minister appointed says

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Officiant invites the people to stand and says

Let us confess the Faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed:

Officiant and People

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

If Communion is not to follow, the Lord's Prayer is said here, and the liturgy continues with the Prayers of the People, or with other suitable prayers.

When there is Communion, the following form of the Prayers of the People is used.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Deacon or other person appointed says the following or other appropriate prayers.

Let us pray, saying, "Hear our prayer."

Almighty God, you knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we pray, to your whole Church in heaven and on earth, your light and peace.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life, that through the grave and gate of death we may pass with him to our joyful resurrection.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that your Holy Spirit may lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve you in faithful obedience.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant to all who mourn a sure confidence in your fatherly care, that, casting their grief on you, they may know the consolation of your love.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life everlasting.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant us grace to entrust *N.* to your never-failing love; receive *him* into the arms of your mercy, and remember *him* according to the favor which you show to all your people.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of you, *he* may go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service in your heavenly kingdom.

Reader Lord, in your mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Silence may be kept.

The Officiant concludes with the following or some other prayer

Almighty God, grant us, with all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, the fullness of life in your eternal and ever-lasting glory, and, with all your saints, to receive the crown of life promised to all who share in the victory of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

When there is no Communion, the liturgy continues with the Commendation, or with the Committal.

AT THE EUCHARIST

The liturgy continues with the Peace and the Offertory. An offertory hymn or anthem may be sung.

The Proper Preface of Burial is used (page 156).

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

The following Post Communion Prayer is used

Almighty God, we thank you that in your great love you have fed us with the spiritual food and drink of the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ, and have given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet. Grant that this Sacrament may be to us a comfort in affliction, and a pledge of our inheritance in that kingdom where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying, but the fullness of joy with all your saints; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

If the body is not present, the liturgy continues with the blessing and dismissal; otherwise, the following Commendation is used.

THE COMMENDATION

The Officiant and other ministers take their places at the body.

Officiant Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints,

All **Where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

Officiant You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you decree, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

All **Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.**

The Officiant, facing the body, says

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant *N.* Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive *him* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**

The Priest, or the Bishop if present, may then bless the people, and a Deacon or other Minister may dismiss them, saying

Alleluia, alleluia. Let us go forth in the Name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

As the body is borne from the church, a hymn, or one or more of these anthems, may be sung or said

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and giving life to those in the tomb.
The Sun of Righteousness is gloriously risen, giving light to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

The Lord will guide our feet into the way of peace, having taken away the sin of the world.
Christ will open the kingdom of heaven to all who believe in his Name, saying, Come, O blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

Into paradise may the angels lead you.

At your coming may the martyrs receive you, and bring you into the holy city Jerusalem.

or one of the following Canticles

BENEDICTUS
The Song of Zechariah

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
 he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
 born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies, *
 from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
 and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
 by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death, *
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; *
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen.

LUKE 1:68-79

NUNC DIMITTIS
The Song of Simeon

Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, *
 according to your word.
For my eyes have seen your salvation, *

which you have prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *
and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

PASCHA NOSTRUM
Christ our Passover

Alleluia. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; *
therefore let us keep the feast,
Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, *
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia.
Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; *
death no longer has dominion over him.
The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all; *
but the life he lives, he lives to God.
So also consider yourselves dead to sin, *
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.
Christ has been raised from the dead, *
the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
For since by a man came death, *
by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, *
so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8; ROMANS 6:9-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22

THE COMMITTAL

The following anthems may be said

Man born of woman has but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He springs up, and is cut down like a flower; he flees like a shadow, and never continues the same.

In the midst of life we are in death; of whom may we seek for help, but you, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Savior, deliver us not into the pains of eternal death.

You know, O Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not your ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Savior, most worthy Judge eternal; do not let us, in our final hour, through the pains of death, fall away from you.

or this

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

JOHN 6:37

He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also give new life to our mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells within us.

ROMANS 8:11^r

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope.

You shall show me the path of life; in your presence is the fullness of joy, and at your right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

The grave may be blessed. The Priest may use the following prayer here, or before the liturgy of Committal, or at some other convenient time.

O God, whose blessed Son was laid in a tomb in the garden: Bless, we pray, this grave, set apart for the repose of your servant *N.*, that *he* whose body is buried here may rest from *his* labors in peace and quietness, until the resurrection on the last day, when the New Jerusalem comes down, the dead are raised, and the righteous are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Then, while earth is cast upon the coffin, the Officiant says these words

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our *brother N.*, and we commit *his* body to the ground [*or the deep or its resting place*]; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless *him* and keep *him*, the Lord make his face to shine upon *him* and be gracious unto *him*, the Lord lift up his countenance upon *him* and give *him* peace. **Amen.**

Or this

Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear *brother* [*or this beloved child*], here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground [*or the deep or its resting place*]; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our perishable body, that it may be like his own glorious body, according to the mighty working of his Spirit, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. **Amen.**

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with your spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Officiant and People

**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.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

The following prayer or other Additional Prayers (pages 263-265) may be added.

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity: We praise and magnify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course and kept the faith; and committing our *brother N.* to your gracious keeping, we pray that, together with *him* and with all those who are departed in the true faith of your holy Name, we may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in your eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Then may be said

Officiant Rest eternal grant to *him*, O Lord; and may *his* soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

People **And may light perpetual shine upon them.**

A Priest may bless the people saying

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always.

Amen.

The Officiant may dismiss the people with these words

Alleluia, alleluia. Let us go forth in the Name of Christ.

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

O God, the King of saints, we praise and glorify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course in your faith and fear: for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; and for all your other righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we pray that, encouraged by their examples, and strengthened by their fellowship, we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. **Amen.**

Father of all, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer: Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and, in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life: Raise us, we humbly pray, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; that when we depart this life we may rest in him, and at the resurrection on the last day we may be found acceptable in your sight, and receive that blessing which your well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear you: "Come, you blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world." Grant this, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. **Amen.**

Grant, O Lord, to all who are bereaved the spirit of faith and courage, that they may have strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience; not sorrowing as those without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with all who love you. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn; that, casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: Make us, we pray, deeply aware of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let your Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days; that, when we shall have served you in our generation, we may be gathered to our ancestors, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope; in favor with you, our God; and in perfect charity with the world. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For a veteran of the armed forces.

O Ruler of the universe, Lord God, by the strength of your own arm you have won for us final victory over the power of sin and death: We give you thanks for your servant *N.* who served as a (*soldier, seaman, airman, mariner, etc.*) in the armed forces of our nation, giving of *his* life for the defense of liberty and the preservation of freedom. Grant to *him* a place of eternal rest and peace in your eternal dwelling place, that with all the heavenly host, the noble army of martyrs, and all the powers of heaven *he* may praise your great and glorious Name unto the ages of ages. **Amen.**

ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

It is particularly appropriate to light the Paschal Candle for the Burial of the Dead. It may be carried in procession and placed near the body.

If the Committal is long delayed from the time of the Burial Office, one of the lessons from the Burial Office may be read at the Committal, followed by a brief homily.

AT CREMATION

At the cremation of a body, this alternate committal prayer may be used:

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we commend to Almighty God our *brother N.*, and we commit *his* body to be consumed by fire; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless *him* and keep *him*, the Lord make his face to shine upon *him* and be gracious unto *him*, the Lord lift up his countenance upon *him* and give *him* peace. **Amen.**