

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, we beseech thee to deliver thy servant, *N.*, from all evil, and set *him* free from every bond; that *he* may rest with all thy saints in the eternal habitations; where thou livest and reignest with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Let us also pray for all who mourn, that they may cast their care upon 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 thy servants for whom we pray. Remember them, O Lord, in mercy; nourish them with patience; comfort them with a sense of thy goodness; lift up thy 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, saith the Lord:
He that believeth in me,
though he were dead, yet shall he live:
and whosoever liveth and believeth in me
shall never die.

JOHN 11:25-26^T

I know that my Redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.
And though after my skin hath been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh shall I see God:
whom I shall see for myself,
and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

JOB 19:25-27^T

For none of us liveth to himself,
and no man dieth to himself.
For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;
and whether we die, we die unto the Lord:
Whether we live therefore, or die
we are the Lord's.

ROMANS 14:7-9^T

We brought nothing into this world,
and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away;
blessed be the name of the LORD. I TIMOTHY 6:7; JOB 1:21

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;
Even so, saith 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 thy spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray.

AT THE BURIAL OF AN ADULT

O God, who by the glorious resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ didst destroy death and bring life and immortality to light: Grant that thy servant *N.*, being raised with Christ, may know the strength of his presence and rejoice in his eternal glory; who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

AT THE BURIAL OF A CHILD

O God, whose beloved Son didst take little children into his arms and bless them: Give us grace, we beseech thee, to entrust the soul of this child *N.* to thy never-failing care and love, and bring us all to thy heavenly kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **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 thy love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in thy 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^v.

ROMANS 8:14-19, 34-39 (*The glory that is to be revealed*)

I 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*)

I 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^v, 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 be to thee, Lord Christ.**

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise be to thee, 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,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.**

The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,
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, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: Grant, we beseech thee, to thy whole Church in heaven and on earth, thy light and thy peace.

Reader Lord, in thy 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, and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass with him to our joyful resurrection.

Reader Lord, in thy mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

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

Reader Lord, in thy mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

Grant to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that we may be cleansed from all our sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind.

Reader Lord, in thy mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

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

Reader Lord, in thy 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 thy never-failing love; receive *him* into the arms of thy mercy, and remember *him* according to the favor which thou bearest unto thy people.

Reader Lord, in thy mercy:

People **Hear our prayer.**

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

Reader Lord, in thy 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 thine eternal and everlasting glory, and, with all thy saints, to receive the crown of life which thou dost promise to all who share in the victory of thy Son Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **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 thee that in thy great love thou hast fed us with the spiritual food and drink of the Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and hast given unto us a foretaste of thy heavenly banquet. Grant that this Sacrament may be unto 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 thy 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 thy servant with thy saints,
All **Where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing,
but life everlasting.**

Officiant Thou only art immortal, the creator and maker of
mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth,
and to earth shall we return. For so didst thou decree,
saying, "Thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou 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 thy servant with thy saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing,
but life everlasting.**

The Officiant, facing the body, says

Into thy hands, O merciful Savior, we commend thy servant *N*.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech thee, a sheep of thine own
fold, a lamb of thine own flock, a sinner of thine own redeem-
ing. Receive *him* into the arms of thy 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 thee.
At thy coming may the martyrs receive thee,
and bring thee into the holy city Jerusalem.

or one of the following Canticles

BENEDICTUS
The Song of Zechariah

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, *
for he hath visited and redeemed his people;
And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us *
in the house of his servant David,
As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, *
which have been since the world began:
That we should be saved from our enemies, *
and from the hand of all that hate us;
To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, *
and to remember his holy covenant;

To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham,
that he would give us,
That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies *
might serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him, *
all the days of our life.
And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, *
for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord
to prepare his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people *
for the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God, *
whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us;
To give light to them that sit 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 Ghost; *
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 lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, *
according to thy word;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, *
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, *
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen. LUKE 2:29-32

PASCHA NOSTRUM

Christ our Passover

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; *
therefore let us keep the feast;
Not with the old leaven,
neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: *
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia.
Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: *
death hath no more dominion over him.
For in that he died, he died unto sin once: *
but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin: *
but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Alleluia.
Christ is risen from the dead, *
and become the first fruits of them that slept.
For since by a man came death, *
by a man came also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, *
even so in Christ shall all be made alive. Alleluia.

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

THE COMMITAL

The following anthems may be said

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succor, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

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

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Savior, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.

or this

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. JOHN 6:37

He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. ROMANS 8:11

Wherefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. PSALM 16:10

Thou shalt show me the path of life: in thy presence is the fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore. PSALM 16:12

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 sepulcher in the garden: Bless, we pray, this grave, set apart for the repose of thy 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 thy Son 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 hath 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 mortal body, that it may be like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working of his Spirit, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. **Amen.**

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with thy 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 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.**

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

Then may be said

Officiant Rest eternal grant unto *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, through 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 Ghost, be amongst 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 magnify thy holy Name for all thy servants who have finished their course in thy faith and fear: for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs; and for all other thy righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we beseech thee 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 thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy death didst take away the sting of death: Grant unto us thy servants so to follow in faith where thou hast led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in thee and wake up after thy likeness; for thy tender mercies' sake. **Amen.**

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

O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life: We meekly beseech thee to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, and that, at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this, we beseech thee, 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 thy great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with all who love thee. 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 thee, with all those who mourn; that, casting all their care on thee, they may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: Make us, we beseech thee, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let thy Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days; that, when we shall have served thee in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, 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 thee, 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, who by the strength of thine own arm hast won for us final victory over the power of sin and death: We give thee thanks for thy 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 thine eternal dwelling place, that with all the heavenly host, the noble army of martyrs, and all the powers of heaven he may praise thy 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.**