

# Annual Service of Remembrance



*Suggested format, scripture readings, and prayers for a parish  
Memorial Service.*

## **Set-up**

Depending on established parish-practice, the liturgy group may decide to celebrate Mass for the Dead, or outside of Mass, a Service of Remembrance. This should include specific reference to those who died in the last year as well as general prayers for the Holy Souls.

It may be an opportune moment for the priests of the parish or the parish bereavement team to reconnect with families in mourning over the last year. A personalised invitation inviting those whose Funeral Masses were celebrated in the parish, as well as those living in the parish who lost loved ones elsewhere should be considered.

In preparation for the parish's Annual Memorial Service, a list of all those to be included in the service should be compiled. Ideally, the names of those who died in the last year should be read out during the service. This can be accompanied with photos of the deceased, or accompanying background music as family members light candles in their memory.

The parish should consider offering a token (candle, prayer card etc) for families to take home at the end of the service.

The Liturgy Team should consider lighting, candles, incense, music, scripture readings, prayers, reflections, hospitality after the service, etc.

Given the sensitivity of such an occasion, the priests/liturgy team/bereavement team should welcome and greet people as they arrive to the church.

## **Opening Hymn**

Suggested hymns:

How Great Thou Art  
Christ be beside me  
Make me a Channel of your Peace  
Abide with me  
Morning has broken  
Amazing Grace  
Holy God we praise thy name  
I'll sing a hymn to Mary  
Hail Queen of Heaven

## **Introduction**

Good evening everyone and welcome to our Annual Service of Remembrance as we call to mind the memory of our loved ones who have died. We remember those whom we have had the privilege of knowing and loving as we shared life's journey with them.

We are gathered here to remember a mother or a father, a husband or wife, a grandfather or grandmother, a son or a daughter, a grandson or granddaughter, a brother or sister, a relative or a friend.

These cherished memories we have of them will never fade because we carry them in the depths of our hearts. Our hope - that those who have died now rest with God. Our faith assures us that we will be reunited with them again when there will be no more partings.

## **Opening Prayer**

Almighty God,  
through the death of your Son on the cross  
you destroyed our death;  
through his rest in the tomb  
You hallowed the graves of all who believe in you;  
and through his rising again you restored us to eternal life.  
God of the living and the dead  
accept our prayers for those who have died in Christ  
and are buried with him in the hope of rising again.  
Since they were true to your name on earth,  
let them praise you forever in the joy of heaven.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## **First Reading**

A reading from the Book of Wisdom.

(3:1-9)

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us like annihilation; but they are at peace.

If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be. God has put them to the test and proved them to be worthy with him; he has tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust. When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out; as sparks run through the stubble, so will they. They shall judge nations, rule over peoples, and the Lord will be their king forever. They who trust in him will understand the truth, those who are faithful will live with him in love; for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

The Word of the Lord.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

The Lord will heal the Broken Heart (Psalm 34:18)

*Lawton*

You are Mine

*Haas*

The Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23)

### **The Second Reading**

(1 Thess 4:13-18)

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.

We want you to be quite certain, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like other people who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be taken up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

The Word of the Lord.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

(John 6:40)

### **Alleluia, alleluia!**

It is my Father's will, says the Lord,  
That whoever believes in the Son  
Shall have eternal life,  
And that I shall raise him up on the last day.

### **Alleluia!**

## **Gospel**

Matthew 11:27-30)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

## **Homily**

### **Reflection**

Tonight, we reflect on how loss has touched our lives and the lives of our families. Each light that is brought forward is an opportunity for us to remember our own loss, but we also remember the loss of other families, and as they journey with us, we journey with them.

We ask the Lord of life to bring His healing light to the darkness of our lives and to the lives of our families.

Lord be our rock and our strength when we need You most.

*Members of the congregation or parish bereavement team carry forward large candles and place them in the sanctuary as each invocation is read aloud.*

**We remember:**

We remember:

- 1. Families whose loved ones have died alone.*
- 2. Families whose loved ones have died tragically in road traffic accidents.*
- 3. Families whose loved ones have died in work-related accidents.*
- 4. Families whose loved ones never got the chance to begin their lives in this world.*
- 5. Families whose loved ones have died of Cancer, Heart-related illness or complications, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Cystic Fibrosis, and other illnesses.*
- 6. Families who have lost parents/grandparents.*
- 7. Families who have lost a brother or sister.*
- 8. Families whose loved ones died violently.*
- 9. Families whose loved ones have died by suicide.*
- 10. Families whose loved ones have died from Dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other related illnesses.*
- 11. Families whose loved ones died abroad, whose loved ones are missing and who continue to mourn without a grave.*
- 12. Families who have lost a child.*

We now light the Paschal Candle which burns brightly.

The lighted candle reminds us that in our grief and sadness Christ our Light is with us. He is the light at the end of our sadness.

## **The Reading of the Names & the Lighting of Candles**

{accompanied with soft music in the background}

When all the names are read and the candles are lit, a quiet stillness should be created within the liturgy to prayerfully remember those who have died. This quiet prayer should be concluded with a piece of music.

### **Music – A Time to Remember**

#### **Prayers of the Faithful**

May God give a place in the kingdom of heaven to all the faithful departed.  
Lord, hear us.

We pray for all those who mourn the death of a child, or a husband or wife, a parent, a brother or a sister, a relative or a friend. Lord, hear us.

We pray for all those who have died alone, unwanted and unmourned.  
Welcome them Lord into your heavenly kingdom. Lord, hear us.

We pray for all those who have suffered an unspeakable loss and who are unable to overcome their sorrow. Lord, hear us.

A Dhia, Gabhaimis buíochas leo siud a chabhraoinn in aon slí le h-einne atá ag fulaingt pian an bhais. A thiarna eist linn.

We pray for one another, that our faith may be strengthened and that we may find peace knowing that our loved ones are at home with the Lord and Saviour.  
Lord, hear us.

#### **Presider:**

Let us ask Mary our Mother, who stood beneath the cross of her dying Son to pray for us as we say..... Hail Mary, full of grace.....

### **Reflection**

### **In the Quiet**

Liam Lawton

When the leaves are fallen, and the branch is bare  
Winter is calling, and chills the silent air  
When the moon is covered, by shadows of the night  
Know that I am with you, to call you to the quiet.

Be still, O be still, for I am your God  
Be still now and listen, and you will hear my word  
Be still, O be still, deep within your life  
For you will find me, in the quiet.

When souls are hurting, and they know not why  
When hearts are broken, and children have to cry  
When prayers are spoken, late into the night  
You will find your answer, if you come into the quiet.

When days grow longer, and the sun so shines  
When hearts grow stronger, and hope becomes our sign  
Leave the past behind you, walk into the light  
You will know my healing, if you come into the quiet.

### **Our Father....**

### **Concluding Prayer**

Lord, God, whose days are without end  
and whose mercies beyond counting.  
Keep us mindful that life is short and the hour of death unknown.  
Let your spirit guide our days on earth  
in the ways of holiness and justice,  
that we may serve you in union with the whole Church,  
sure in faith, strong in hope, perfect in love.  
And when our earthly journey is ended,  
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,  
where you live for ever and ever. Amen

## **Final Hymn**

May the road rise to meet you

How Great Thou Art

Holy God we praise thy name

Make me a Channel of your Peace

Nearer my God to Thee