



Suggested Funeral Readings

Readings from the Old Testament

A Reading from the Book of Job (19: 1, 23-27)

Job said: " Ah, would that these words of mine were written down,
inscribed on some monument
with iron and chisel and engraving tool,
cut into the rock for ever.

This I know: that my Avenger lives,
and he, the last, will take his stand on earth.
After my awakening, he will set me close to him,
and from my flesh I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part:
these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof".

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 worthy to be with him;
he has tested them like gold in a furnace,
and accepted them as a holocaust.
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.

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

The virtuous person, though he die before his time, will find rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the 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 been carried off so that evil may not wrap his understanding
or treachery seduce his soul;
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.

A 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 forever.

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.

A Reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (5: 1. 6-10)

We know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up,
there is a house built by God for us,
an everlasting home not made by our human hands,
but in the heavens.

We are always full of confidence, then,
when we remember that to live in the body
means that we are exiled from the Lord,
going as we do by faith and not by sight
– I say, we are full of confidence
and we want to be exiled from the body so that
we make our home with the Lord.

Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it,
we are intent on pleasing God.

For the truth about us
will be brought out in the law court of Christ,
and each of us will get what we deserve for the things we do.

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 the stars for all eternity”.

A Reading from the Second Book of Maccabees (12: 43-45)

Judas, the leader of the Jews, took a collection from the people individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resurrection. For if he had not expected the fallen to rise it would have been 'superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes (3: 1-7, 11)

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to root up what is planted;

A time to break down and a time to build up;

A time to weep and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance;

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

A time to keep and a time to discard;

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

God has made everything suitable for its time.

A Reading from the Book of Lamentations (3: 17-26)

My soul is shut out from peace; I have forgotten happiness. And now I say, ' My strength is gone, that hope which came from the Lord'. Brooding on my anguish and affliction is gall and wormwood. My spirit ponders it continually and sinks within me.

This is what I shall tell my heart, and so recover hope: the favours of the Lord are not all past, his kindnesses are not exhausted; every morning they are renewed; great is his faithfulness. ' My portion is the Lord' says my soul ' and so I will hope in him.' The Lord is good to those who trust him, to the soul that searches for him. It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save.

Readings from the New Testament (First Reading in the Easter Season)

In the Easter Season the First Reading is traditionally taken from the New Testament, either the Acts of the Apostles or the Apocalypse.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10: 34-43)

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: ' The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, " is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. ' It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men, and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.'

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

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me, ' Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord! Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.'

A Reading from the Book of the Apocalypse (20: 11 - 21: 1)

I, John, saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. In his presence, earth and sky vanished, leaving no trace. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of his throne, while the book of life was opened, and other books opened which were the record of what they had done in their lives, by which the dead were judged. The sea gave up all the dead who were in it; Death and Hades were emptied of the dead that were in them; and everyone was judged according to the way in which he had lived. Ten Death and Hades were thrown into the burning lake. Tis burning lake is the second death; and anybody whose name could not be found written in the book of life was thrown into the burning lake. Ten I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea.

A Reading from the Book of the Apocalypse (21: 1-7)

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth;
the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now,
and there was no longer any sea.
I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven,
as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband.
Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne,
' You see this city? Here God lives among men.
He will make his home among them;
they shall be his people, and he will be their God;
his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes;
there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness.

The world of the past has gone.'

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke:

' Now I am making the whole of creation new,' he said.

' I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty;
it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious;
and I will be his God and he a son to me.'

Responsorial Psalms

Psalm 26

Response: The Lord is my light and my help.

The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
Before whom shall I shrink? (*Response*)

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. (*Response*)

O, Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer.
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face. (*Response*)

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! (*Response*)

Psalm 114

Response: I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

How gracious is the Lord, and just;
our God has compassion.
The Lord protects the simple hearts;
I was helpless so he saved me. (*Response*)

I trusted, even when I said:
“ I am sorely afflicted, ’
and when I said in my alarm:
‘ No man can be trusted ’. (*Response*)

O precious in the eyes of the Lord
is the death of his faithful.
Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;
you have loosened my bonds. (*Response*)

Psalm 22

Response: If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear, for you are there with me.

Or: *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. (*Response*)

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 your staff;
with these you give me comfort. (*Response*)

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. (*Response*)

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. (*Response*)

Psalm 42

Response: My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life.

Like the deer that yearns
for running streams,
so my soul is yearning
for you, my God. (*Response*)

My soul is thirsting for God,
the God of my life;
when can I enter and see
the face of God? (*Response*)

My tears have become my bread,
By night, by day,
As I hear it said all the day long:
" Where is your God?" (*Response*)

These things will I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I would lead the rejoicing crowd
into the house of God,
amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving,
the throng wild with joy. (*Response*)

Psalm 103

Response: The Lord is compassion and love.

The Lord is compassion and love,
Slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
Nor repay us according to our faults. (*Response*)

As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him;
for he knows of what we are made,
he remembers that we are dust. (*Response*)

As for man, his days are like grass;
he flowers like the flower of the field;
the wind blows and he is gone
and his place never sees him again. (*Response*)

But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear;
his justice reaches out to children's children
when they keep his covenant in truth,
when they keep his will in their mind. (*Response*)

Readings from the New Testament

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (5: 5-11)

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful people. It is not easy to die even for a good man - though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die - but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (5: 17-21)

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many will be made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus, 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. 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 anymore.

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. This is also why you should never pass judgement on a brother or treat him with contempt, as some of you have done. 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 himself.

A Reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (15: 20-28)

But Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father. For he must be King until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet. Though when it is said that everything is subjected, this clearly cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the one who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (4: 14-5: 1)

We know that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our turn, and put us by his side and you with us. You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God. That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day. Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. And so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal. For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

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

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 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 forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

A Reading from the First Letter of St. John (3: 1-3)

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.

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (8: 1-35, 37-39)

With God on our side, who can be against us? Since God did not spare his only Son, but gave him up to benefit all, we may be certain after such a gift, that He will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us - he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us. Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loves us. For I am certain of this; neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, nor heights, nor depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible through Christ Jesus our Lord.

A Reading from the Book of the Apocalypse (21: 1-7)

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth;
the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now,
and there was no longer any sea.
I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven,
as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband.
Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne,
' You see this city? Here God lives among men.
He will make his home among them;
they shall be his people, and he will be their God;
his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes;
there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness.
The world of the past has gone.'

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke:
' Now I am making the whole of creation new,' he said.
' I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty;
it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious;
and I will be his God and he a son to me.'