

RITE OF COMMITTAL AT A CEMETERY

When a Funeral Liturgy
has immediately preceded

from Order of Christian Funerals

OUTLINE OF THE RITE

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6 RITE OF COMMITTAL AT A CEMETERY

[INCLUDING BURIAL AT SEA]
WHEN A FUNERAL LITURGY HAS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED

Invitation

243 When the funeral procession arrives at the place of committal the minister says the following or a similar invitation.

Our brother/sister N. has gone to his/her rest in the peace of Christ. May the Lord now welcome him/her to the table of God's children in heaven. With faith and hope in eternal life, let us assist him/her with our prayers.

Let us pray to the Lord also for ourselves. May we who mourn be reunited one day with N.; together may we meet Christ Jesus when he who is our life appears in glory.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

244 One of the following or another brief Scripture verse is read. The minister first says:

We read in sacred Scripture:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| A | Matthew 25:34 | 119 |
| | Come, you whom my Father has blessed, says the Lord;
inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation
of the world. | |
| B | John 6:39 | 121 |
| | This is the will of my Father, says the Lord,
that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me,
and that I should raise it up on the last day. | |
| C | Philippians 3:20 | 124 |
| | Our true home is in heaven,
and Jesus Christ whose return we long for
will come from heaven to save us. | |
| D | Apocalypse 1:5-6 | 126 |
| | Jesus Christ is the first-born of the dead;
glory and kingship be his for ever and ever. Amen. | |

PRAYER OVER THE PLACE OF COMMITTAL

245 The minister says one of the following prayers.

A All praise to you, Lord of all creation.
Praise to you, holy and living God.
We praise and bless you for your mercy,
we praise and bless you for your kindness.
Blessed is the Lord, our God
R/ Blessed is the Lord, our God.

You sanctify the homes of the living
and make holy the places of the dead.
You alone open the gates of righteousness
and lead us to the dwellings of the saints.
Blessed is the Lord, our God.
R/ Blessed is the Lord, our God.

We praise you, our refuge and strength.
We bless you, our God and Redeemer.
Your praise is always in our hearts and on our lips.
We remember the mighty deeds of the covenant.
Blessed is the Lord, our God
R/ Blessed is the Lord, our God.

Almighty and ever-living God,
remember the mercy with which you graced
your servant N. in life.
Receive him/her, we pray, into the mansions of the saints.
As we make ready our brother's/sister's resting place,
look also with favour on those who mourn
and comfort them in their loss.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
R/ Amen.

B If the place of committal is to be blessed

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Lord Jesus Christ,
by your own three days in the tomb,
you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you
and so made the grave a sign of hope
that promises resurrection
even as it claims our mortal bodies.

Grant that our brother/sister may sleep here in peace
until you awaken him/her to glory,
for you are the resurrection and the life.
Then he/she will see you face to face
and in your light will see light
and know the splendour of God,
for you live and reign for ever and ever.

R/ Amen.

C If the place of committal is to be blessed

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O God,
by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,
bless this grave,
and send your holy angel to watch over it.

As we bury here the body of our brother/sister,
deliver his/her soul from every bond of sin,
that he/she may rejoice in you with your saints for ever.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/ Amen.

D If the place of committal is to be blessed

Almighty God,
you created the earth and shaped the vault of heaven;
you fixed the stars in their places.
When we were caught in the snares of death
you set us free through baptism;
in obedience to your will
our Lord Jesus Christ
broke the fetters of hell and rose to life,
bringing deliverance and resurrection
to those who are his by faith.
In your mercy look upon this grave,
so that your servant may sleep here in peace;
and on the day of judgement raise him/her up
to dwell with your saints in paradise.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

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E If the place of committal is to be blessed

God of endless ages,
through disobedience to your law
we fell from grace
and death entered the world;
but through the obedience and resurrection of your Son
you revealed to us a new life.
You granted Abraham, our father in faith,
a burial place in the promised land;
you prompted Joseph of Arimathea
to offer his own tomb for the burial of the Lord.
In a spirit of repentance
we earnestly ask you
to look upon this grave and bless it,
so that, while we commit to [the earth/its resting place]
the body of your servant N.
his/her soul may be taken into paradise.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

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COMMITTAL

246 The minister then says the words of committal. One of the following texts is used, during or after which the coffin is lowered.

- A Because God has chosen to call our brother/sister N.
from this life to himself,
we commit his/her body to [the earth/its resting place],
for we are dust and unto dust we shall return.
But the Lord Jesus Christ will change our mortal bodies
to be like his in glory,
for he is risen, the firstborn from the dead.
So let us commend our brother/sister to the Lord,
that the Lord may embrace him/her in peace
and raise up his/her body on the last day.
- B In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
we commend to Almighty God our brother/sister N.,
and we commit his/her body to [the ground/its resting place]:
earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
The Lord bless him/her and keep him/her,
the Lord make his face to shine upon him/her
and be gracious to him/her,
the Lord lift up his countenance upon him/her
and give him/her peace.
- C For burial at sea
Lord God,
by the power of your Word
you stilled the chaos of the .primeval seas,
you made the raging waters of the Flood subside,
and calmed the storm on the sea of Galilee.
As we commit the body of our brother/sister N. to the deep,
grant him/her peace and tranquillity
until that day when he/she and all who believe in you
will be raised to the glory of new life
promised in the waters of baptism.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

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R. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

247 One of the following sets of intercessions may be used or adapted to the circumstances, or new intercessions may be composed.

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A The minister begins:

For our brother/sister, N., let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me shall live even in death and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.'

A reader or the minister then continues:

Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn for N., and dry the tears of those who weep.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy.

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy.

You raised the dead to life; give to our brother/sister eternal life.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy.

You promised paradise to the repentant thief; bring N. to the joys of heaven.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy

Our brother/sister was washed in baptism and anointed with the Holy Spirit; give him/her fellowship with all your saints.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy.

He/she was nourished with your body and blood; grant him/her a place at the table in your heavenly kingdom.

We pray to the Lord:

R Lord, have mercy.

Comfort us in our sorrow at the death of N.; let our faith be our consolation,
and eternal life our hope.

We pray to the Lord:

R. Lord, have mercy.

B The minister begins:

Dear friends, in reverence let us pray to God, the source of all mercies.

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A reader or the minister then continues

Gracious Lord, forgive the sins of those who have died in Christ.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Remember all the good they have done.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Welcome them into eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who mourn. Comfort them in their grief.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Lighten their sense of loss with your presence.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Increase their faith and strengthen their hope.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Let us pray also for ourselves on our pilgrimage through life. Keep us
faithful in your service.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

Kindle in our hearts a longing for heaven.

Lord, in your mercy:

R. Hear our prayer.

C

The minister begins

Dear friends, our Lord comes to raise the dead and comforts us with the solace of his love. Let us praise the Lord Jesus Christ.

A reader or the minister then continues:

Word of God, Creator of the earth to which N. now returns: in baptism you called him/her to eternal life to praise your Father for ever:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy

Son of God, you raise up the just and clothe them with the glory of your kingdom:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Crucified Lord, you protect the soul of N. by the power of your cross, and on the day of your coming you will show mercy to all the faithful departed:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Judge of the living and the dead, at your voice the tombs will open and all the just who sleep in your peace will rise and sing the glory of God:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

All praise to you, Jesus our Saviour, death is in your hands and all the living depend on you alone:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

248 Using one of the following invitations, or in similar words, the minister invites those present to pray the Lord's Prayer.

- A Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:
- B With longing for the coming of God's kingdom, let us offer our prayer to the Father:
- C As sons and daughters of a loving God, we pray in the confident words of his Son:
- D When Jesus gathered his disciples around him, he taught them to pray:

All say.
Our Father...

CONCLUDING PRAYER

249 The minister says one of the following prayers or one of those provided in no. 580, p. 117

- A God of holiness and power, 56
accept our prayers on behalf of your servant N.;
do not count his/her deeds against him/her,
for in his/her heart he/she desired to do your will.
As his/her faith united him/her to your people on earth,
so may your mercy join him/her to the angels in heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R Amen.
- B Almighty God, 199
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 for ever in the joy of heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.
- C Listen, O God, to the prayers of your Church 196
on behalf of the faithful departed,
and grant to your servant N.,
whose funeral we have celebrated today,
the inheritance promised to all your saints.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen

D Loving God, from whom all life proceeds
and by whose hand the dead are raised again,
though we are sinners, you wish always to hear us.
Accept the prayers we offer in sadness for your servant N.:
deliver his/her soul from death,
number him/her among your saints
and clothe him/her with the robe of salvation
to enjoy for ever the delights of your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

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E 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, perfected in love.
And when our earthly journey is ended,
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,
where you live for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

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PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

250 The assisting minister or the minister says:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

All pray silently. The minister, with hands outstretched over the people, says the following prayer.

Merciful Lord,
you know the anguish of the sorrowful,
you are attentive to the prayers of the humble.
Hear your people
who cry out to you in their need,
and strengthen their hope in your lasting goodness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.

The minister then says the following:
Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.
R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.
R. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
R. Amen.

A A minister who is a priest or deacon says
May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

B A minister who is a priest or deacon says:
May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
console you
and gently wipe every tear from your eyes.
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

C A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs himself or herself with the sign of
the cross, saying:
May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
bless and console us
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
R. Amen.

The minister then concludes
Go in the peace of Christ.
R. Thanks be to God.

A hymn or song may conclude the rite. Some sign or gesture of leave-taking may
be made

This text has been made available for printing and placing in a 'presentation' folder for use in cemeteries.

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