

A Guide for Planning the Catholic Funeral Mass

*St. Margaret Mary
Milwaukee, WI*

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INTRODUCTION

Death is inevitable for all of us.

Often, we act as if we, and those we love, will live forever.

All die - and we don't know when this will happen.

Here in America, we tend to avoid the subject of death.

This is unfortunate. Death is a normal and necessary part of life.

Until we learn to accept death and face it honestly, we are not living at our best.

*There is a time for everything, and a season for
every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die....
Ecclesiastes 3:1,2*

Christians are not immune to the fear of death.

By virtue of the power and promises of our baptism, we live each day as an Easter people. Because of our baptism, we believe that we will rise up like him to resurrection glory and eternal life.

This is the sign and seal of being Christians!

Faith proclaims that life, not death, has the final word.

“In today's fast-paced society, there is a tendency to rush even the sacred time that surrounds the death of a loved one. This becomes increasingly easy in a culture that sees death as the final end of everything rather than the beginning of a new stage in our relationship with a loved one.

As Christians we know better, and the Church offers, even insists, that we accept a time of prayer and faith-filled reflection both for our own good and for the spiritual benefit of our beloved one who has gone before us.”

Most Reverend Robert J. Banks
Bishop Emeritus, Green Bay Diocese

PRE~PLANNING

What are the “Sacraments for The Sick and Dying”?

With the revisions accorded by Vatican II and the National Council of Bishops, there are three opportunities for prayer and ritual in the final days of one’s life:

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

can occur at anytime during a person’s illness. Its administration is not meant strictly for the time prior to death, but rather at any of those times when the visitation of the priest, the sharing of God’s word, prayer, and anointing with Oil of the Sick would prove to be helpful to the ailing individual and the family. A call to the rectory to secure a time for the priest to come to the home or hospital is necessary. In some cases, the hospital chaplain will administer this sacrament when requested.

VIATICUM

which means “bread for the journey” is the reception of communion by the individual and family at home or in the hospital. After a request is made, the priest or deacon, or bereavement minister trained for this ministry will come and share a brief liturgy of scripture, prayer, and then communion.

PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

is a short service or prayer, scripture and blessing which acknowledges that death has occurred, and in the midst of sorrow, God is present. The service is meant to comfort the mourners in a quiet and prayerful response to death (OCF 102). It is the final rite of all the rituals in the Catholic funeral process and is led by the priest or deacon, or a bereavement minister that is trained for this ministry. A call to the rectory will make this possible.

Should the body be present for the services?

The church assumes that unless there are specific circumstances which prohibit it, the body will be present; open casket or closed. The presence of the body serves as a reminder of the reality of death. Also, during the funeral, the body is honored as the sacred vessel which has held the spirit of life, the Holy gift of God.

A Mass in which the body is not present is regarded as a Memorial Mass, not a Funeral Mass.

If cremation is to occur, we ask that it take place **after** the Funeral Mass has been celebrated. Local funeral homes offer the option of renting a casket for use during the funeral liturgy. However, **for pastoral reasons, it is also acceptable for the cremated remains (cremains) to be present in an urn during the Funeral Mass.** In either case, the **Rite of Committal** may follow the Funeral Mass directly, allowing for the cremains to be interred at the usual time, in keeping with the Church's respect for the body and the hope of resurrection.

Can family members and friends be included in the services?

Definitely! We always encourage those who wish to participate in special ways. Numerous options are:

Words of Remembrance may be shared by family or friends of the deceased. These are typically offered during the **Vigil service**. However, here at **St. Margaret Mary**, they may also be shared **briefly—10 to 15 minutes before the start of the Funeral Mass.**

Those offering Words of Remembrance may choose to speak, read a meaningful selection, or offer a musical piece that reflects the life and faith of the deceased.

Immediate family members to **place the pall on** the casket.

Readers for the two scripture readings and prayer intercessions at the funeral service.

If there is a Mass, people to **present the gifts** of bread and wine, serve as **altar servers**, and serve as **communion ministers**.

Special music at the funeral provided by the family or friends may be used, and should be coordinated with the choir director.

Music for the Service

Music is a powerful part of the Funeral Mass, offering comfort, expressing faith, and honoring the life of the one who has passed. It lifts hearts in grief and draws attention to the hope we share in Christ's resurrection.

Below is a list of suggested hymns and where they may fit within the liturgy. Choices may vary based on the family's wishes, the preferences of the deceased, or themes in the Scripture readings. While used only once during the Mass, some hymns may be appropriate in more than one place.

Whether it's a favorite song of your loved one, a piece that brings you comfort, or a hymn that reflects the Gospel message, your music selections can be a meaningful part of this celebration of life and faith. Final choices are typically confirmed with the presider or parish staff to ensure they are liturgically appropriate and pastorally sensitive.

1) Gathering (Processional)

- Amazing Grace
- Be Not Afraid
- Christ, Be Our Light
- City of God
- Come to the Water
- For All the Saints
- Here I Am, Lord
- Holy God we praise thy Name
- How Great Thou Art
- I Heard the Voice of Jesus
- Jerusalem, My Happy Home
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- On Eagle's Wings
- Sing to the Mountains
- Sing with all the saints in Glory
- The King of Love my Shepherd is
- The Lord is My Light
- This day God Gives me
- We Walk by Faith
- We will Rise Again
- Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

2) Offertory

- Amazing Grace
- Be Still, My Soul
- Blest Are They
- Center of my life
- Come to Me
- Gift of Finest Wheat
- Here I am, Lord
- Hosea
- How can I keep from Singing
- I Have Loved You
- I know that my Redeemer Lives
- In Every Age
- Lead Me, Lord
- Lord of All Hopefulness
- O Breathe on me, O breath of God
- Only a Shadow
- Prayer of St. Francis
- Precious Lord, Take my Hand
- The King of Love my Shepherd Is
- The Old Rugged Cross
- We will rise again
- You are Mine
- You Are Near

3) Communion

- Blest are They
- Bread for the World
- Center of My life
- Gentle Shepherd
- Gift of Finest Wheat
- I Am the Bread of Life
- In Christ Alone
- Now we Remain
- One Bread, One Body
- Only a Shadow
- Shelter Me, O God
- Shepherd Me, O God
- Turn to Me
- Unless a Grain of Wheat
- We will Rise Again
- Whatsoever You Do

4) Communion Meditation (Reflective, optional)

- Ave Maria (choir)
- Ave Maria (solo)
- Dona Nobis Pacem
- Fly Like a Bird
- Hosea
- Isaiah 49
- Eye Has Not Seen
- I, the Lord
- Maranatha (I)
- Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling
- You Are Mine
- Panis Angelicus (Frank)
- Salve Regina
-

5) Commendation

- Song of Farewell (Old 100th)
- Song of Farewell – “May Choirs of Angels”
- O Loving God (O Danny Boy tune)
- Jesus, Remember Me
- In Paradisum

6) Closing (Recessional)

- Amazing Grace
- Be Not afraid
- Canticle of the Sun
- Christ, Be Our Light
- City of God
- For all the Saints
- Holy God, We Praise thy Name
- How Great thou art
- How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place
- I know that My redeemer Lives
- In the Garden
- Jerusalem, My Happy Home
- Let there be peace on Earth
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
- On Eagle’s Wings
- Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- Sing a new Song
- Sing with all the Saints in Glory
- The Old Rugged Cross
- We walk by Faith
- Ye watchers and Ye Holy Ones
- You Are Mine

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

1.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JOB (Job 19: 1, 23-26)

Job answered and said: Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever! But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust; Whom I myself shall see: My own eyes, not another's, shall behold him, and from my flesh I shall see God; My inmost being is consumed with longing.

2.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM (Wisdom 3:1-6, 9)

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

3.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM (Wisdom 4:7-15)

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest. For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age. He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported - or deceit beguile his soul; for the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind. Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness. But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account. Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

4.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH (Isaiah 25: 6a, 7-9)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces; the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the Lord has spoken. On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the Lord for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

5.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS (Lamentations 3: 17-26)

My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the Lord. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall; remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me. But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: the favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; it is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

6.) A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF MACCABEES (2 Maccabees 12: 43-46)

Judas [the ruler of Israel] then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

7.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES (Ecclesiastes 3:1-13)

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have considered the task which God has appointed people to be busied about. God has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into hearts, without people ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work God has done. I recognize that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life. For every person, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of their labor is a gift of God.

8.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS (Proverbs 31: 10-15, 25-31)

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize. She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands. Like merchant ships, she secures provisions from afar. She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel. She watches the conduct of her household, and eats not

her food in idleness. Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her: “Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all.” Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; they shall judge nations and rule over peoples and the Lord shall be their King forever.

RESPONSORIAL PSALMS Choose 1

PSALM 23

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil;
for you are at my side with your rod and your staff that give me courage.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

PSALM 25

RESPONSE: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Remember that your compassion, O Lord,
and your kindness are from of old.
In your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord.

RESPONSE: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Relieve the troubles of my heart, and bring me out of my distress.
Put an end to my affliction and my suffering, and take away all my sins.

RESPONSE: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Preserve my life, and rescue me;
let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,
because I wait for you, O Lord.

RESPONSE: To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

PSALM 27

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The Lord is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek:
To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord
and contemplate his temple.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Hear, O Lord, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.
Your presence, O Lord, I seek.
Hide not your face from me.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for
the Lord with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my light and my salvation.

PSALM 42 and 43

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

As the hind longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God. A thirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

When I went with the throng and led them in procession to the house of God, amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival.

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

Send forth your light and your fidelity; they shall lead me on and bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling place.

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

Then will I go in to the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy;
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp, O God, my God!

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why do you sigh within me?
Hope in God! For I shall again be thanking him, in the presence of my savior and my God.

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

PSALM 130

RESPONSE: Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive
to my voice in supplication.

RESPONSE: Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

If you, O Lord, mark iniquities,
Lord, who can stand?
But with you is forgiveness,
that you may be revered.

RESPONSE: Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word.
My soul waits for the Lord more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

RESPONSE: Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

More than sentinels wait for the dawn, let Israel wait for the Lord.
For with the Lord is kindness and with him is plenteous redemption;
And he will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

RESPONSE: Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

NEW TESTAMENT READINGS Choose 1

1.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS (Romans 5:17-21)

If, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one-person Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous. The law entered in so that transgression might increase but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS (Romans 6:3-4, 8-9)

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

3.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS (Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39)

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS (Romans 14:7-9, 10b-12)

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why then do you judge your brother or sister? Or

you, why do you look down on your brother or sister? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God.

5.) A READING FROM PAUL’S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

(1 Corinthians 15:20-28)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ, shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ, the first fruits: then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ; then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death, for “he subjected everything under his feet.” But when it says that everything has been subjected, it is clear that it excludes the one who subjected everything to him. When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

6.) A READING FROM PAUL’S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

(1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: “Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

7.) A READING FROM PAUL’S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

(2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10)

We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. So we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous,

and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

8.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS (Philippians 3:20-21)

Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

9.) A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus, we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.

10.) A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN (1 John 3:1-2)

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

11.) A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN (1 John 3:14-16)

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know was that Jesus laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

12.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 14:13)

I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” said the Spirit, “let them find rest from their labors, for their works accompany them.”

13.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 20:11 - 21:1)

I saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it. The earth and the sky fled from his presence and there was no place for them. I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne, and the scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. The sea gave up its dead; then Death and Hades gave up their dead. All the dead were judged according to their deeds. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire. (This pool of fire is the second death.) Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the pool of fire. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

14.) A READING FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7)

I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.” The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.”

GOSPEL READINGS

The presider here at St. Margaret Mary will typically meet with the family to learn more about their loved one and the family's journey. Based on that conversation, along with the chosen readings and psalms, the presider will select a Gospel passage that speaks to the life of the deceased and the needs of the family.

He will then offer a homily that reflects on the Scriptures, honors the life of the departed, and points to the hope we have in Christ. The Church teaches that our true home is in heaven, and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are all called to share in eternal life with our Heavenly Father. In the face of loss, the homily seeks to bring comfort, reminding us of God's mercy and the promise that those who die in Christ will rise with Him in glory. These are some examples of what may be chosen.

1.) Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:1-12a

When he saw the crowds, Jesus went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

2.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:25-30

On one occasion Jesus spoke thus: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one

knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

3.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least people of mine, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

4.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-6 (Longer Form)

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you for-saken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they say that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him."

5.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 7:11-17

Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst," and "God has visited his people." This report about him spread through the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region.

6.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 22:33, 39-43

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified Jesus and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left.

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

7.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried.

8.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke 24:13-16,28-35

Now that very day the first day of the week two of the disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

9.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 5:24-29

Jesus said to the Jews:

"Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life. Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of

life in himself. And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation."

10.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:37-40

Jesus said to the crowd:

"Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

11.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 6:51-58

Jesus said to the crowd:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever."

12.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 11:17-27

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother

would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

13.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 11:32-45

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

14.) A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John 14:1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way."

General Intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful

You may use one of the following formulas, combine parts of several together or compose one of your own. If you choose to write your own, those given here can serve as helpful models. The various intentions should express the parish's prayerful concern for others throughout the world. This naturally includes the deceased and bereaved, but also might reach out to persons in the community, the nation and beyond our shores to those who need support.

To invite the people's response, an invitation at the end of each petition needs to be added like "We pray to the Lord." Please choose 5—7 intercessions.

- A. For N, that he/she may now rejoice in the glory of God, celebrating with all the saints the fullness of life.
- B. For N's family and friends. May their tears of sorrow turn to tears of joy when we are all united with Christ in heaven.
- C. For those who cared for N, in his/her time of illness, may they come to realize how much they are appreciated for the kindness shown to him/her.
- D. For those who died with no one to weep for them, may their presence be missed on earth as they are received into the warm embrace of Jesus in Heaven.
- E. For those who died after a long and painful illness, may the suffering they endured win them forgiveness of sins and a place at the Banquet in Heaven.
- F. For all of us here today, may we be Blessed with the grace of a peaceful death at the end of our days.
- G. For the family and friends of N, may their faith in the Resurrection give them the peace first promised at Baptism, and be now, their consolation in grief
- H. For all of us here today, may we give thanks to God for the life now given to us and offer daily praise for the strength to endure life's temptations.
- I. For those, everywhere, who may die today, that our compassionate Lord may console and calm any fears or anxieties as they contemplate eternal life.
- J. In Baptism, N received the Holy Spirit and became a member of the Body

of Christ, may Our Lord now gather her/him into the reward first promised at Baptism.

- K. Our Brother/Sister was nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ, may N be gathered into heaven and seated at the Heavenly Banquet.
- L. For the many family members and friends that await us in heaven, may Jesus Christ prepare a place for all those were faithful to His Name on Earth.
- M. For those who die by violence, may the Merciful Lord show compassion and cleanse the hearts of those who sin against the law of Love.
- N. For those who trusted in the Lord, may they now share in the peace of God's Kingdom, where all are given refreshment and peace.
- O. For the family and friends of N who seek comfort in sorrow, may Christ heal their pain and dispel the gloom of doubts that come from grief
- P. For all of us assembled here, who weep in faith, may God gather us together in the peace of His kingdom.

Planning Guide

Words of Remembrance (optional-to be shared a few minutes before Mass and be brief)

Placing Pall _____

Placing Book of Gospels _____

1st Reading _____

(choose 1)

Lector _____

Psalm _____

(choose 1)

2nd Reading _____

(choose 1)

Lector _____

Gospel _____

(consult presider)

Intercessions _____

Lector _____

Gift Bearers _____

(choose 2-4)

Music

Gathering (Processional)_____

Offertory_____

Communion_____

Communion Meditation (Reflective, optional)_____

Commendation (Typically Chosen by the Music Director) _____

Closing (Recessional)_____