

USCCB* PRAYERS FOR THE DYING



“The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the Paschal Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope. The Christian who dies in Christ Jesus is ‘away from the body and at home with the Lord’ (2 Corinthians 5:8).”

~ *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1681*

The following prayers may be recited with the dying person, alternating with times of silence. Sometimes, the same prayer should be repeated many times. The Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be are also appropriate. The dying person may be signed on the forehead with the cross, as was done at Baptism.



Short Texts

What will separate us from the love of Christ? ~ Romans 8:35

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ~ Romans 14:8

We shall always be with the Lord. ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:17

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ~ Psalm 25:1

Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death, no evil would I fear, for you are with me. ~ Psalm 23:4

Into your hands I commend my spirit. ~ Psalm 31:6a

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. ~ Luke 23:42

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. ~ Acts 7:59

Holy Mary, pray for me.

Saint Joseph, pray for me.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.



Scripture Readings

Among many appropriate Scripture readings are the following:

Job 19:23–27

Psalm 23

Psalm 91

Psalm 121

1 John 4:16

Revelation 21:1–7

Matthew 25:1–13

Luke 22:39–46

Luke 23:44–49

Luke 24:1–8

John 6:37–40

John 14:16, 23, 27

Those gathered might take turns reading these passages from the family Bible.

Prayer of Commendation

As the time of death approaches, this prayer may be said.

Go Forth, Christian soul, from this world
in the name of God the almighty Father,
who created you;
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who suffered for you;
in the name of the Holy Spirit,
who was poured out upon you;
go forth, faithful Christian.

May you live in peace this day;
may your home be with God in Zion,
with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God;
with Joseph, and all the angels and saints.



Gathering in the Presence of the Body

When the family first gathers around the body, before or after it is prepared for burial, all or some of the following prayers may be used.
It is most fitting that, where possible, family members take part in preparing the body for burial.

All make the Sign of the Cross. Then one member of the family reads:

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened,
and I will give you rest.

Shoulder my yoke and learn from me,

for I am gentle and humble in heart,

and you will find rest for your souls.

Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.”

The body may then be sprinkled with holy water:

The Lord God lives in his holy temple yet abides in our midst.

Since in Baptism, N. became God’s temple

and the Spirit of God lived in him/her,

with reverence we bless his/her mortal body.

Then one member of the family may say:

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption;

let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father . . .

Then this prayer is said:

Into your hands, O Lord,

we humbly entrust our brother/sister N.

In this life you embraced him/her with your tender love;

Deliver him/her now from every evil

and bid him/her enter eternal rest.

The old order has passed away:

welcome him/her then into paradise,

where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,

but the fullness of peace and joy

with your Son and the Holy Spirit

forever and ever. Amen.

All may sign the forehead of the deceased with the Sign of the Cross.

One member of the family says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;

let them rest from their labors

for their good deeds go with them.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,

through the mercy of God,

rest in peace. Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Then one member of the family says:

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. Amen.

Prayer at Graveside

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, N., 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 splendor of God,

for you live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

