

SERVICE TO DEDICATE NOVEMBER AS A MONTH OF
PRAYER AND REMEMBRANCE FOR THE DEAD AND THE
BEREAVED



SUNDAY 1ST NOVEMBER, 2020

“This year, the month of November, in which we traditionally remember the dead and pray for the bereaved, will be particularly poignant. We sense a huge yearning for consolation and hope in the heart of our people. We are especially mindful in 2020 of those grieving families, who, because of restrictions, have been unable to experience the customary spiritual and community supports which are so much part of our Irish tradition. On 1 November at 3.00pm the bishops and priests of Ireland will lead a short service of prayer to dedicate the month of November to ‘Remembrance of the Dead and Prayer for the Bereaved’. We invite the whole country to unite in this moment which will be followed by parish liturgies throughout the month of November, reaching out as much as possible to those who cannot be physically present”

(Statement of the Autumn 2020 General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops` Conference)

The service may be used on the afternoon of November 1st, 2020, at 3pm in a Cathedral or a Parish Church. A Cross and/or an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be prominently placed as a focus of devotion. A suitable hymn may be sung by the cantor.

GREETING

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The grace and peace of God our Father, who raised Jesus from the dead, be with you always.

And with your spirit.

The minister, using these or similar words, says:

My dear friends, we gather today to pray for our brothers and sisters who have died. We remember especially those who died during the past eight months, from Covid-19 and from other causes. We pray that they have passed from death to life in the company of the Lord Jesus, who died and rose to new life.

Today, across the country, we dedicate this month of November to their memory and commend them to the love and mercy of God the Father.

We also pray for those who mourn the death of a loved one and whose grieving has been more difficult on account of restrictions. We pray for our healthcare workers and all those who work in essential services especially those who have died as a result of their selfless service during the pandemic.

To begin we will light the Paschal Candle, the symbol of the risen Christ. The lighted candle reminds us that in our grief, and in our darkest moments, the risen Christ is among us to bring us light and hope.

The Paschal Candle is lit.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord of all gentleness, surround us with your care,
And comfort us in our sorrow.

It is our certain faith that your Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross,
was raised from the dead.

Grant, through this mystery, that all who have gone to their rest in Christ
may share in the joy of his resurrection.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Alternative readings may be chosen from the Order of Christian Funerals or from those provided for Masses for the Dead in the Lectionary (Volume III, pp. 849-890).

FIRST READING

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

Brothers and sisters:

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.

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM

Psalm 22

R: 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. **R.**

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. **R.**

You have prepared a banquet for me
In the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil.
My cup is overflowing. **R.**

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. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are those who mourn,
They shall be comforted.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

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

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall

return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place I am going.” Thomas said, “Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

PASTORAL MESSAGE/HOMILY

Notes for a Pastoral Message/Homily to dedicate November as a month of Prayer and Remembrance for the dead and the bereaved.

From earliest times, the Church has honoured the memory of the dead with great respect. The month of November is set aside as a month of prayer and remembrance, particularly for those who have died during the previous year.

This November, our remembering is especially poignant. We are experiencing a period of hardship and sacrifice due to the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to disrupt the lives of so many people. The virus has already taken the lives of ...(*latest figure*)... people across the island of Ireland - mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles... and each death has brought sadness and grief to those who miss their loved ones deeply.

In the midst of such a crisis we might overlook families whose loved ones have died recently from other illnesses or in tragic circumstances. Like the relatives of the victims of COVID-19 they too have been unable to engage fully in the customary rituals that normally mark the death of a loved one in this country. Restrictions have impacted on wakes, gatherings of extended family and friends at the funeral and in some cases, only a committal service attended by a small of mourners has been possible. During November we have another opportunity to acknowledge the pain and hurt that families have endured and to assure

them of the consolation our prayer and our sympathy. As St Paul wrote to the Romans: “Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ”.

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have rightly marked the personal sacrifices of our health workers, carers and many others who provide our essential services. We also recognise the dedication and service of priests, religious and lay people who selflessly reach out as hospital chaplains or in other parish ministry. Their pastoral care is bringing comfort and healing to those who are anxious because of a relative’s illness or who are feeling the loss and pain of bereavement. Their commitment and dedication is greatly appreciated.

As bishops we are dedicating this month of November as a time of remembrance and prayer for all those who have died since this time last year, whatever the cause. We encourage parishes to set aside a period of time during November to remind the bereaved that they are not forgotten and that their loved ones remain close in our hearts and prayers. We suggest that parishes dedicate a sacred space inside church buildings with symbols of remembrance, including perhaps a remembrance tree, prayer, lectionary and candle.

This pandemic, unfortunately, has not gone away and will most likely be with us for the foreseeable future. With faith, hope and love, we are called to support one another so that we will emerge stronger and more resilient from this testing time. In difficult times of the past our ancestors looked to their faith in Christ for light in the darkness, for hope against despair. We do so again, confident that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that God brings comfort to those who are anxious, healing to the sick and eternal rest and peace to the dead.

After the Homily a suitable sacred song may be sung by the cantor, or music played. Incense may be used at this time to incense the Cross, the Paschal Candle, and image of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

THE THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY OF THE ROSARY – THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT *(Offered for Those who are Bereaved)*

LITANY

The following litany is sung or recited.

Lord, have mercy	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>
Christ, have mercy	<i>Christ, have mercy</i>
Lord, have mercy	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>
Holy Mary, Mother of God	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Michael	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint John the Baptist	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Joseph	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Peter	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Paul	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Andrew	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Stephen	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Anne	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Teresa	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Catherine	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Patrick	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Brigid	<i>Pray for them</i>
Saint Columcille	<i>Pray for them</i>

The names of other saints may be added.

All holy men and women	<i>Pray for them</i>
Christ, pardon all their faults	<i>Lord, hear our prayer</i>
Christ, remember the good they have done	<i>Lord, hear our prayer</i>
Christ, receive them into eternal life	<i>Lord, hear our prayer</i>
Christ, comfort all those who mourn	<i>Lord, hear our prayer</i>
Lord, have mercy	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>
Christ, have mercy	<i>Christ, have mercy</i>
Lord, have mercy	<i>Lord, have mercy</i>

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Dear friends, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father, where he intercedes for all God's people. Confident that God hears the voices of those who trust in the Lord Jesus, we join our prayers to his.

In baptism our loved ones received the light of Christ. Scatter the darkness now and lead them into eternal light. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

Our brothers and sisters shared with us in the celebration of the Eucharist and were nourished with the Body of Christ. May they be welcomed with joy to the eternal feast in the heavenly kingdom. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

We pray for consolation for all who are grieving. Heal their pain, strengthen their hope and comfort their hearts. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

We pray for all who are anxious, afraid or isolated. May we be attentive to their needs, and may all find courage and hope through the care and support of others. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

We pray for a cure or a vaccine for COVID-19 and for the cooperation of all in fighting its transmission. We pray for patience and an end of fear for all of us. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

We pray in gratitude for those who cared for our deceased loved ones and especially for those who accompanied them in their last hours when family members could not be present. Lord hear us. *Lord graciously hear us.*

With Christ there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF KNOCK FOR LIBERATION FROM THE EPIDEMIC

The prayer is adapted from the prayer Pope Francis prayed during the extraordinary moment of prayer before Saint Peter's Basilica on 27 March 2020

O Mary, Our Lady of Knock,
You shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who, at the cross, united with Jesus' pain,
remained strong in faith.
You, Queen of Ireland,
know what we need,
and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that,
as at Cana of Galilee,
joy and celebration may return
after this moment of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the will of the Father
and to do what Jesus tells us.
May He, who took our sufferings upon Himself
and burdened Himself with our sorrows,
bring us, through the Cross,
to the joy of Resurrection. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

The minister says:

Let us pray.

O Lord, we thank you for the gift of our loved ones who have died and who we are remembering during this month of November. We remember especially all those who have died during the past eight months; those who died from COVID-19, those who died from other natural causes and those who died tragically.

We thank you, compassionate God for walking with us in all the dark moments of our grief and loneliness. Even when we find it hard to see you, we know and trust that you are beside us, and in the resurrection of Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, you give us a reason for living; a reason for hoping.

Lord, continue to be a light for us, giving us direction and courage in this difficult time.

May we live our lives treasuring the memories of those special people we have known and loved and may you help us, Lord, to bring light and hope to others. We make this our prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

The minister adds:

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.

Amen

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen

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.

Amen.

Then he blesses all present.

And may almighty God bless you all,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen