

Scripture readings suitable for a funeral

First readings: old testament

A1: A reading from the book of Wisdom (3:1-6,9)

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God,
no torment shall ever touch them.
In the eyes of the unenlightened they did appear to die,
their going looked like a disaster,
their leaving us like annihilation –
but they are at peace.
If they experienced suffering as humans see it,
their hope was rich with immortality;
slight were their afflictions,
great will their blessings be.
God has tested them like gold in the furnace,
and accepted them as a perfect offering.
They who trust in God will understand the truth;
those who are faithful will live with Him in love;
for grace and mercy await those He has chosen.
This is the Word of the Lord

A2: A reading from the book of Wisdom (4:7-15)

Though the upright die before their time, they will find rest.
Length of days is not what makes age honourable,
nor number of years the true measure of life.
Understanding, this is grey hairs;
untarnished life, this is ripe old age.
In seeking to please God,
God has loved them and taken them up.
In coming to perfection, they achieved long life.
Their souls being pleasing to the Lord,
God has taken them to Himself.
People look on without understanding;
it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen ones of God.
This is the Word of the Lord

A3: A reading from the book of Numbers: (6:22-27)

The Lord spoke to Moses and said,
'Say this to Aaron and his children:
"This is how you are to bless the children of Israel.
You shall say to them:
"May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord let His grace shine on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord uncover His face to you and bring you peace."
This is how they are to call down my name on the children of Israel,
And I will bless them.'
This is the Word of the Lord.

A4: 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,
a banquet of fine wines.

On this mountain
He has removed the mourning veil covering all peoples
and the shroud enwrapping all nations.
He has destroyed Death forever.
The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek.
On that day it will be said:
“See, this is our God in whom we hoped.
We exult and rejoice that He has saved us.”
This is the Word of the Lord

A5: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (43:1-3)

Thus says the Lord:
“Who created you, Jacob?
Who formed you, Israel?
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name, you are mine.
Should you pass through raging waters, I will be with you;
Or through rivers, they will not swallow you up.
Should you walk through fire,
you will not be scorched,
and the flames will not burn you.
For I am Yahweh your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
your Saviour.”
This is the Word of the Lord

A6: A reading from the book of Ruth (1:16-17)

Wherever you go, I will go.
Wherever you live, I will live.
Your people shall be my people,
and your God will be my God too.
Wherever you die, I shall die
and there be buried beside you.
May Yahweh see that this be done,
so that death will never come between us.
This is the Word of the Lord

A7: A reading from the book of Job (19:23-27)

Job spoke next.
He said:
“Will no one let my words be recorded,
inscribed on some monument with iron chisel and engraving tool, cut into the rock forever?
I know that my Redeemer lives
and that He, the Last,
will take His stand on earth.
After my awaking,
He will set me close to Him
and I shall look on God.
He whom I shall see will take my part;
my eyes will be gazing on Him and find Him close.
This is the Word of the Lord

A8: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (35:1-2,5-6,10.)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom:

it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
And we, God's people,
shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
The tongue of the speechless shall sing for joy
and the lame leap like a deer.
The ransomed of the Lord shall enter the heavenly city singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their
heads.
Sorrow and lament shall be far away.
This is the Word of the Lord

A9: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (49:13-16,26)

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the Lord has comforted His people,
He has compassion on His suffering ones.
You ask, "Has the Lord forsaken me?"
Can a mother forget the child in her arms,
show no compassion for the child of her womb?
Yet even if she may forget...
I will never forget you, my child.
I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands.
I am your Saviour, your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Jacob.
This is the Word of the Lord

A10: A reading from the book of Ecclesiastes (3:1-6)

For everything there is a season, and a time for every occupation under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to reap;
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 be apart;
a time to tear and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence and a time to speak;
a time for war and a time for peace.
God has made everything suitable for its time.
Nothing can be added to it; nothing taken away from it.
All must stand in awe before our God.
This is the Word of the Lord

SECOND READINGS: NEW TESTAMENT

B1: A reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans (8:14-18)

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a beloved child of God.
The spirit you have received is not a spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of
beloved children and makes us cry out, "Abba, Father!"
The Spirit of God and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God.
And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, sharing His
sufferings so as to share His glory. What we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory
which is waiting for us.
This is the Word of the Lord

B2: A reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans: (8:37-39)

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ.

Even if we are troubled or worried,
persecuted or lacking food and clothes,
being threatened or attacked.

These are the trials through which we triumph,
by the power of Him who loved us.

For I am certain of this:

neither death nor life,
no angel or prince,
nothing that exists,
nothing still to come,
nor any power, or height or depth,
nor any created thing can ever come between us
and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus, our Lord.
This is the Word of the Lord

B3: A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (5:1,6)

We are well aware that when the tent that houses us on earth is folded up, there is a house for us to live in, given to us by God: not made by human hands, but everlasting, in the heavens.

We are full of confidence and long to be at home with the Lord.

And thus we make it our ambition to please Him in all that we do.

This is the Word of the Lord

B4: A reading from St Paul's letter to the Philippians (3:20-21)

For us, our homeland is in heaven;
and from heaven comes the Saviour we are waiting for,
the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will transfigure our humble bodies into copies of His own glorious body.

He will do that by the same power with which he is able to subdue the whole Universe.

This is the Word of the Lord

B5 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 you do not grieve about them like people who have no hope.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and that it is the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them to 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 who are still alive will be taken up into the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord. And we shall be with the Lord forever.

With such thoughts you should comfort one another.

This is the Word of the Lord

B6: A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy 4:6-8

My life is already being poured away as a libation,
and the time has come for me to be gone.

I have fought the good fight to the end.

I have run the race to the finish.

I have kept the Faith.

All there is to come now is the crown of righteousness reserved for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day. And not only to me but to all who have longed for His appearing.
This is the Word of the Lord

B7: A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 3:14-21

This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name:

Out of His infinite glory, may He give you the power through His Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith; and then, planted in love and built on love, you may with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

This is the Word of the Lord

B8: A reading from the book of Revelation (14:13)

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me:

“Write this down:

Happy are those who die in the Lord!

Happy indeed, the Spirit says;

now they can rest forever after their work,

since their good deeds go with them.”

This is the Word of the Lord

B9: A reading from the book of Revelation (21:1-7)

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed up for her husband.

Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne:

“You see this city? Here God lives among His people. They are His people and He is their God. His name is God-with-them. He will wipe 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. I will give water from the well of life to anyone who is thirsty; it is the rightful inheritance of all who prove victorious. I will be their God and they will be my beloved sons and daughters.”

This is the Word of the Lord

B10: A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (15:51-57)

Now I am going to tell you a mystery: we are all going to be changed instantly, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet is going to sound and then the dead will be raised imperishable; and we shall all be changed because this perishable nature of ours must put on imperishability; this mortal nature of ours must put on immortality. And after this perishable nature has put on imperishability and this mortal nature has put on immortality, then will the words of Scripture come true:

Death is swallowed up in victory.

Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

The sting of death is sin and the power of sin comes from the Law.

Thank God, then, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord

B11: A reading from St Paul's letter to the Philippians (1:3-11)

I thank my God each time I think of you, and when I pray for you, I pray with joy, remembering with joy how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present.

I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes.

God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best.

This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ when you will reach the perfect goodness, which Christ Jesus produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

This is the Word of the Lord

B12: A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (14:7-9,10c-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.

We shall all have to stand before the judgment 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

B13: A reading from the first Letter of Saint John (3:1a-2)

Beloved –

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.

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.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL READINGS

(The Gospel reading is read by the deacon or priest.)

G1: Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. And when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He began to speak. This is what He taught them:

How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G2: Matthew 11:25-26, 28-30.

Jesus exclaimed:

“I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do.

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G3: John 14: 1-6

Jesus said:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God; trust also in me.

There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I am going 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 where 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.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G4: John 20:11-18

Meanwhile Mary stayed outside the tomb, weeping. Then still weeping she stooped to look inside and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been; one at the head, the other at the foot. They said, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put Him.”

As she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise Him.

Jesus said, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?”

Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will go and remove Him.”

Jesus said, “Mary!”

She knew Him then and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabbuni!” which means “Master!”

Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go and find the brothers and sisters and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

So Mary went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had said these things to her.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G5: John 16:20-22

Jesus said:

“A woman in childbirth suffers because her time has come but when she gives birth to the child she forgets the suffering in her joy that a human being has been born into the world.

So it is with you: you are sad now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G6: Luke 24:1-6

On the first day of the week at the first sign of dawn, the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb and on entering discovered that the body of Jesus was not there. As they stood there, not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, “Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; He has risen.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G7: John 11:17-21

On arriving at Bethany, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Many people had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet Him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died; but I know that even now whatever you ask of God will be granted."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said, "I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. If anyone believes in me, even though they die, they will live. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," Martha said, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the One who was to come into this world."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G8: Matthew 25:31-39

Jesus said to His disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in all His glory, escorted by all the angels, then He will take His seat on the throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before Him, and He will separate people from one another, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left.

Then the king will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me.'

Then the upright will say to Him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothed you; sick or in prison and go to see you?'

And the king will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G9: 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

G10: Luke 4:13-16, 28-35

That very day, the first day of the week, two of the disciples of Jesus were going to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.