ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI FUNERAL READINGS

Our parish of St. Francis of Assisi considers that the selection of passages from the Bible is an important part of planning a funeral ceremony, as we want to turn to God's word for wisdom and comfort in this time of loss.

The Word of God is at the heart of our Christian celebration of faith in this funeral rite in anticipation of the resurrection of the body. To make this easier for the family, the Catholic Church has pre-selected several Biblical passages which are appropriate for the occasion of a funeral. Please look over these passages as part of your funeral preparations and find those words which speak to your heart.

The Word of God and Funeral Services.

- How many readings are there at a Funeral?
- There are a variety of forms of funeral service.
- These include
- Vigil for the Deceased (which can include the reception of the body at
- The principal funeral service - which maybe the Funeral Mass or a
- The rite of Committal (at the cemetery or crematorium)
- (When the Committal was at a crematorium) the Rite for the Burial of
- the church)

Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass

- Ashes
- At most of these there can be as few as one reading - almost always a
- gospel reading. At the principal funeral service there will always be two
- or three, including a gospel reading.
- If there is only one reading, that reading is always a Gospel reading.
- If there are two then one is from the first or second section, and the
- If there are three readings then one reading is taken from each of the
- third is the Gospel reading

three sections.

The priest who is conducting the funeral will agree with you which forms of service will take place, and which readings will be used. He will want to ensure that those decisions are taken which will best meet your needs and respect the tradition of the Church.

Instructions:

1. The first reading is taken from the Old Testament. Each reading also has an accompanying psalm, and together they form a "package deal".
2. The second reading is taken from the New Testament.
3. The gospel reading is also taken from the New Testament, and it may be chosen either by the priest or by the family. This may be discussed by the family with the priest who will preside the funeral liturgy.
4. The family is invited to designate two persons to read the first two readings, one reading each. If the psalm is to be read, not sung, then the family may pick a third person to read it. The psalm may be sung by a cantor, who may lead the congregation to sing a response.
5. The priest or an assisting deacon will proclaim the gospel.
6. Once you have selected your readings, please let the priest know the reading numbers, as well as the names of those who will be doing the readings.

FIRST READINGS (OLD TESTAMENT)

[1] A reading from the book of Job

Then Job answered, "O that my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

The Word of the Lord.

[2] A reading from the book of Wisdom

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

[3] A reading from the book of Wisdom

The righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time or measured by number of years; but understanding is grey hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up. (4:7-15) They were caught up so that evil might not change their understanding or guile deceive their souls. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones.

The Word of the Lord.

[4] A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

The Word of the Lord.

[5] A reading from the book of Lamentations

My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so, I say, "Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for from the Lord." The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

[6] A reading from the book of the prophet Daniel

At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, (12:1-3) such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

The Word of the Lord.

[7] A reading from the second book of Maccabees

The noble Judas Maccabeus took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen asleep would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore, he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.

The Word of the Lord.

PSALMS

PSALM 27

[1] Response: The Lord is my Light and my Salvation

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid? (Response.)

One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple. (Response.)

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!
"Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"
Your face, Lord, do I seek.
Do not hide your face from me. (Response.)

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord! (Response.)

Responsorial psalm (Psalm 23)

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

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul. (Response.)

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff--
they comfort me. (Response.)

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. (Response.)

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long. (Response.)

Responsorial psalm (Psalm 42)

Reader: My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life.

As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God. (Response.)

My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and behold
the face of God? (Response.)

These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng,
and led them in procession to the house of God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival. (Response.)

Responsorial psalm (Psalm 103)

Reader: The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever. (Response.)

As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust. (Response.)

As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more. (Response.)

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him,
and his righteousness to children's children,
to those who keep his covenant
and remember to do his commandments. (Response.)

READINGS NEW TESTAMENT

[1]A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man — though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die — but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger?
When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely, we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.
The Word of the Lord.

[2] A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

However great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater.
If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Word of the Lord.

[3]A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

All men will be brought to life in Christ. Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet. —Though when it is said that everything is subjected, this clearly cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

The Word of the Lord.

[4] A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

He will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the savior we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

The Word of the Lord.

[5]A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with 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 of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So, we shall stay with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

The Word of the Lord.

[6] A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy

Remember the Good News that I carry, 'Jesus Christ risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David'; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal —but they cannot chain up God's news. So, I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.

Here is a saying that you can rely on: If we have died with him, then we shall live with him. If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him. If we disown him, then he will disown us. We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, for he cannot disown his own self.

The Word of the Lord.

[7] A reading from the first letter of St John

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. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, Therefore, it does not acknowledge us. 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.

The Word of the Lord.

[8] A reading from the first letter of St John

We have passed out of death and into life because we love our brothers.

We have passed out of death and into life, and of this we can be sure because we love our brothers.

If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; to hate your brother is to be a murderer, and murderers, as you know, do not have eternal life in them.

This has taught us love — that he gave up his life for us; and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL READINGS

[1] A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. 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 sons 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.'

[2] A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
'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.'

[3]A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 15:33–39
When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, My God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah.' Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink saying, 'Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down.' But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died and he said, 'In truth this man was a son of God.'

[4] A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople were with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her. 'Do not cry,' he said. Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you to get up'. And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, 'A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people'. And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

[5] A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

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, he will grant you'. 'Your brother,' said Jesus to her, '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 he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this? 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

[6] A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the Ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am my servant will he there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honor him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!' A voice came from heaven, I have glorified it, and I will glorifyit again.'

[7] A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
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 a place for you, 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.'

[8] A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: 'Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me.
I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.