
PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD¹

The Church prays for the dead, and this prayer says much about the reality of the Church itself. It says that the Church continues to live in the *hope of eternal life*. Prayer for the dead is almost a battle with the reality of death and destruction that weighs down upon the earthly existence of man. This is and remains a particular *revelation of the Resurrection*. In this prayer Christ himself bears witness to the life and immortality to which God calls every human being.²

PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

The following prayers may be recited immediately after the person's death and may be repeated in the hours that follow.

Saints of God, come to his (her) aid!

Come to meet him (her), angels of the Lord!

R. Receive his (her) soul and present him (her) to God, the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself; may angels lead you to Abraham's side. **R.**

Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord, and may your light shine on him (her) for ever. **R.**

Let us pray.

All-powerful and merciful God,
we commend to you **N.**, your servant.

1. CHBP, 1988.

2. CTH, 25.

In your mercy and love,
blot out the sins he (she) has committed
through human weakness.
In this world he (she) has died:
let him (her) live with you for ever.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

These verses may also be used:

V. Eternal rest grant unto him (her), O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him (her).

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

**V. May his (her) soul
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

R. Amen.

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 family members take part in preparing the body for burial.

All make the Sign of the Cross:

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

R. Amen.

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 of 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 or pain,
but the fullness of peace and joy
with your Son and the Holy Spirit
for ever and ever.

R. 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.

Y. Eternal rest grant unto him (her), O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him (her).

Y. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Y. May his (her) soul
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross as 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.

R. Amen.

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,
you willingly gave yourself up to death,
so that all people might be saved
and pass from death into a new life.
Listen to our prayers;
look with love on your people
who mourn and pray for their brother (sister).

Lord Jesus, holy and compassionate,
forgive **N.** his (her) sins.

By dying you opened the gates of life
for those who believe in you:

do not let our brother (sister) be parted from you,
but by your glorious power
give him (her) light, joy, and peace in heaven,
where you live for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

PRAYERS AT THE GRAVESIDE

Aside from the time of mourning, the month of November, including especially All Saints' day and All Souls' day, is a traditional time for visiting graves, as is the anniversary of death. Some or all of the following prayers may be used at the graveside of a family member or friend.

All make the Sign of the Cross. The leader begins:

Praise be to God our Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Blessed be God for ever.

All respond:

Blessed be God for ever.

The following Scripture text may be read:

2 Cor 5:1

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.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession, or in one of the litanies or other prayers. All then join in the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father.

Then the leader prays:

Lord God,
whose days are without end
and whose mercies are beyond counting,
keep us mindful
that life is short and the hour of death is unknown.
Let your Spirit guide our days on earth
in the ways of holiness and justice,
that we may serve you
in union with the whole Church,
sure in faith, strong in hope, perfected in love.
And when our earthly journey is ended,
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,
where you live for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

or:

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 for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

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

R. Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross as the leader concludes:

May the peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

V. Do not remember my sins, O Lord,

R. When you come to judge the world by fire.

V. Direct my way in your sight, O Lord, my God,

R. When you come to judge the world by fire.

V. Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord,
and may your light shine on him (her) for ever,

R. When you come to judge the world by fire,

V. Lord, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

All :

Our Father... trespass against us.

V. And lead us not into temptation,

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. From the gates of hell,

R. Deliver his (her) soul, O Lord.

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. Lord, hear my prayer,

R. And let my cry come to you.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, welcome into your presence

your son (daughter) N.,
whom you have called from this life.

Release him (her) from all his (her) sins;

bless him (her) with eternal light and peace;

raise him (her) up to live for ever

with all your saints
in the glory of the Resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

For a parent:

Let us pray.
Almighty God,
you command us to honor father and mother.
In your mercy forgive the sins of my (our) parents
and let me (us) one day see him (her) again
in the radiance of eternal joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

For a brother or sister:

Let us pray.
God, our Maker and Redeemer,
in your mercy hear my (our) prayer.
Grant forgiveness and peace
to my (our) brother (sister) N. and N.,
who longed for your mercy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. Give him (her) eternal rest, O Lord.

R. And may your light shine on him (her) for ever.

V. May he (she) rest in peace.

R. Amen.

**V. May his (her) soul
and the souls of all the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

R. Amen.