

PASTORAL OFFICES FOR DEACONS

Introduction

The Church has a particular responsibility to care for those of its members who are sick, frail, in any kind of distress, or near death. This responsibility falls primarily to the priest inducted to the cure of souls in the particular congregation. Deacons have since earliest times shared in the care of the sick, the weak, and the marginalised. Family, friends, and neighbours have always formed a community around those in need, and the Church recognises and needs to support their role. Lay people have increasingly shared in the ministry traditionally exercised by deacons, and those who exercise particular responsibilities in our congregations are authorised by the bishop of the diocese to exercise their ministry in the name of the Church. This ministry is exercised alongside that of the priest who exercises the cure of souls, and of any assisting priest who may be available, and not a substitute for the ministry of the ordained. Nevertheless, in many of our scattered and remote congregations there is no resident priest, and lay ministers are accordingly often called upon to act on their own. This book is provided as a resource for their ministry, and is to be used under the oversight of the priest inducted to the cure of souls, and in conjunction with any guidance issued by the bishop of the diocese.

Baptism is the sacrament of incorporation into the Church, the Body of Christ. As such it is normally administered in public worship, at the celebration of the Eucharist. In principle, the rite is normally presided over by the bishop. In practice, this function is delegated to the priest inducted to the cure of souls in the particular congregation, who are gathered for a celebration of the Eucharist. In cases of sickness, particularly where life is threatened, it may be necessary for Baptism to be administered privately, in the home or in a hospital. Where a priest is not available, this solemn duty may fall to a deacon or lay minister, but the rector of the charge should always be consulted, or in their absence, the bishop of the diocese. When the rite provided here is used, and the person lives to attend the public worship of the congregation, they should always be formally welcomed on that occasion.

The Church has always offered prayers for the sick, which have traditionally been accompanied by imposition of hands. An ordained priest may also anoint a sick person with the oil of the sick, consecrated by the bishop for this purpose. The prayers offered by a deacon or lay person are no less valid than those of a priest, and may where appropriate be accompanied by the imposition of hands. Great sensitivity is needed in touching a sick or vulnerable person, even if the minister has been known to them for a long time. A hand should be laid gently upon the top the head or forehead, or the shoulder or hand, as appropriate in the circumstances. Affected body parts should not be touched, unless the person specifically requests this, and only if doing so would not cause pain or compromise medical care.

Deacons have since the earliest days of the Church carried consecrated eucharistic elements to Christians unable to attend public worship through illness or imprisonment. This role is now shared by authorised lay ministers, who always act as representatives of the congregation, so that the sick and frail remain integral to the eucharistic community. Care must be taken to ensure the security of the elements at all times. Consecrated elements may be carried in both kinds, if means are available for transportation of the wine without spillage. However, the use of wafers which have been intincted (dipped) in consecrated wine, and allowed to dry before being enclosed in the pyx, may both be more convenient and more appropriate where wine may react to medication being administered to the communicant.

Care for the dying is a solemn obligation of the Church, as the transition to death and resurrection is a quite fundamental fulfilment of our faith. It is right that the priest who exercises the cure of souls in the congregation attend the dying wherever possible, but deacons and lay people continue to have a role in support of the person, and of their family, at times of death. The rite provided here is intended particularly for occasions when the priest is unable to be present, but in no way diminishes the assurance offered to those about to die, and to their families, of the resurrection anticipated by the faithful.

Care for the dying, while in many ways intimate and personal, also extends to their loved ones, and continues after death. Resources for use with family, friends, and carers as they face their bereavement are accordingly provided.

Baptism outside Public Worship

This rite is intended for use with those who are critically ill as well as those who are evidently approaching death; it is also available for persons so chronically sick or infirm as to be incapable of submitting to public Baptism. If used with Ministry with the Dying, it should be interpolated between the Readings and the Laying on of Hands.

This rite is to be used for adults and children who have been preparing for Baptism, or have expressed a clear wish to be baptised. If they have ceased to be able to verbalise the responses, sponsors who know their wishes may speak on their behalf.

This rite may be used for infants and children unable to express their faith if their parents request it, and for adults similarly inhibited if their legal guardian consents to this. Sponsors or godparents may speak on behalf of any candidate, as appropriate in the circumstances.

When this rite is to be administered by a deacon, the prior consent of the rector of the congregation in which the person to be baptised has been living, or in the case of absence or vacancy, the bishop should be obtained if possible. Failing this, they should be notified as soon as possible thereafter, and the details entered in the Register of Baptisms of the congregation.

If circumstances permit, it is appropriate that representative members of the congregation accompany the officiant. It may be appropriate that these withdraw after the Baptism, or after the Communion, allowing privacy to the candidate and their family while the minister offers any further pastoral care, including the rite of Commendation.

The reading from *Romans* 6. 3–4, 8–11 (p. 53 below) should be used before the Gospel if Communion from the Reserved Sacrament is to be administered.

In an emergency Baptism, no prayer over the water is required. In circumstances of less urgency, water from the font, if available, may be used. If blessed water is conveyed, a bottle with a narrow neck is the most appropriate vessel, as it would allow water to be poured in controlled quantities.

If for any reason the name of the sick person is not known, baptism may be administered without naming; or by conferring a further name, such as the saint of the day; but in recording the baptism the identity of the baptised person must be made clear.

Water should be poured or sprinkled on the candidate in a controlled manner, appropriate to the circumstances, avoiding any unnecessary discomfort to the candidate and inconvenience to those caring for them. The pouring or sprinkling of water may be by hand or (if, for example, the sick person is in an oxygen tent) from a spoon, and not necessarily on the head.

Baptised sick persons who recover should come or be brought at an appropriate time to an act of public worship, at which they should be welcomed into the congregation, using the form provided below (p. 9, below).

Emergency Baptism

In cases of extreme urgency, when death is expected imminently, the deacon pours water on the person to be baptised and says

(N.) I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer is said.

Prayers with the Dying and with Relatives at the time of bereavement may follow, as appropriate. Alternatively, the deacon may say

May the God of all grace and mercy bless, preserve and keep you.
Amen.

Where possible, those baptised should receive Communion, either from the reserved Sacrament (p. xx) following the conclusion of this rite, or at a celebration of the Eucharist when a priest is available.

1 Introduction

The minister says

Blessed be God,

All **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

by whose great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope

All **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

2 God's Call

The minister addresses the candidate, or those who are presenting the candidate.

God is love. God gives us life.

In Christ God reaches out to us.

In baptism God calls us to respond.

Do you accept this call?

Candidate I hear and accept God's call. I ask for baptism.

Sponsors We hear and accept God's call to N. We ask for baptism.

3 Turning to Christ

The minister addresses the candidate.

The Christian life means turning from evil, and turning to Christ.

Standing now with Christ, do you renounce evil?

Answer *I renounce evil.*

Seeking now to follow him, do you turn to Christ?

Answer *I turn to Christ.*

Will you follow Christ?

Answer *I will follow Christ.*

Do you surrender your life to God, that God's loving purpose may be fulfilled in you?

Answer *I do.*

4 Profession of Faith

The minister addresses the candidate.

Do you believe in God the Father, who made the world?

Answer I believe.

Do you believe in God the Son, who redeemed humanity?

Answer I believe.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to God's people?

Answer I believe.

This is the faith of the Church.

Answer This is my faith. I believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

5 The Baptismal Prayer

In baptism we are united with Christ in his death.
May this water be a sign of your new life in Christ.

6 The Baptism

The minister pours the water upon the candidate, saying:

N., I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

N., God has received you by baptism into the Church.

*All In the name of all Christ's Church,
the living and the departed,
we welcome you.*

Welcome into the Congregation of Persons baptised outside Public Worship

Baptism is normally administered in public worship, according to Holy Baptism 2006. Provision is made for Baptism outside public worship in cases of sickness or infirmity. While this rite is complete in every way, it is nonetheless important that the congregation acknowledge and welcome those so baptised, should they subsequently gain the health and strength needed to attend public worship. This rite should take place at the beginning of the Eucharist, Service of the Word, or Morning or Evening Prayer. The normal officiant is the bishop of the diocese, or the priest inducted to the cure of souls.

The rite should be administered at the font, before the altar, or at the chancel step, but not in the porch: the person is already baptised, and is therefore not being admitted to membership of the church. If possible, the minister who administered the sacrament, or a witness to the Baptism, should make the presentation. Account should be taken of any physical infirmity which may inhibit the person's mobility or ability to stand. If the person is unable to speak, godparents or sponsors may speak on their behalf.

(a) If the officiant had administered the Baptism, the congregation is addressed in these words:

N. has been baptised during a time of sickness. We now give thanks for his/her recovery, and welcome him/her into the fellowship of God's people.

or

(b) The minister who had administered the Baptism, or a witness, addresses the officiant:

I present to you N., who has been baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, during a time of sickness.

The officiant addresses the person presented:

N., we welcome you, and we give thanks for your recovery from sickness. I invite you to affirm before God and this congregation the promises you made when you were baptised.

Do you believe in God the Father, who made the world?

I believe.

Do you believe in God the Son, who redeemed humanity?

I believe.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to God's people?

I believe.

This is the faith of the Church.

All **This is our faith. We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

N., as a disciple of Christ, will you continue in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim the good news by word and deed, serving Christ in all people?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you work for justice and peace, honouring God in all Creation?

With the help of God, I will.

This is the mission of the Church.

All **This is our mission: to live and work for the kingdom of God.**

If Anointing with the Oil of Chrism had not been administered at the time of Baptism, the president, if a priest, anoints the baptised upon the forehead, making the sign of the Cross with the Oil of Chrism, and saying

N., you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and marked as Christ's own for ever.

All Amen.

The president lays hands on the head of the baptised, saying

May the Spirit of God be in you,
wisdom and understanding keep you,
the power of God encircle you,
and God's truth lead you into freedom.

All Amen.

A candle, if possible lit from the Paschal Candle, is given to the baptised, and the president says:

N., the light of Christ scatter the darkness from your heart and mind.

All Christ go before you to guide your steps.

Christ be within you to kindle your vision.

Christ shine from you to give joy to the world.

N., God has received you by baptism into the Church. In the name of all God's Church,

All We welcome you.

We will care for you.

We will share our faith with you.

Holy Communion

*from the Reserved Sacrament
outside Public Worship*

Laying-on of Hands of the Sick

Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship

These forms are intended for the administration of Holy Communion to the Sick and Housebound.

This has been a ministry exercised by deacons since the earliest days of the Church. Justin Martyr, a Palestinian Christian and one of the first apologists for Christianity in the language of Greek philosophy, writing in Rome towards the middle of the second century AD, reports that deacons not only administered the bread and wine to the people at the Eucharist, but carried elements to members of the church unable to be present (*First Apologia* 65). The reasons for their absence are not explained, but we may assume that this included the sick and infirm, as well as slaves unable to leave their duties and Christians imprisoned for their faith.

Justin seems to suggest that these visits followed immediately upon the conclusion of the Eucharist. While this would demonstrate very powerfully that those to whom Communion is taken are part of the congregation, and included in its celebration of the Eucharist, such an arrangement is not always feasible. Most churches are equipped with an Aumbry for safe and reverend storage of consecrated elements. When it is necessary to keep elements elsewhere, it is important to ensure that they are kept securely.

Seasonal or Sunday provision may be used in place of the readings provided here. At Christmas, Easter and Pentecost some at least of the seasonal provision for the Festival should be used.

Holy Communion should ordinarily be received in both kinds, but where necessary may be received in one kind, whether of bread or, where the communicant cannot receive solid food, wine. Alternatively, the use of wafers

which have been intincted (dipped) in consecrated wine, and allowed to dry before being enclosed in the pyx, may both be more convenient and more appropriate where alcohol may react to medication being administered to the communicant.

The baptised who cannot physically receive the sacrament are to be assured that they are partakers by faith of the body and blood of Christ and of the benefits he conveys to us by them with the use of the prayer provided.

These forms may be used in residential homes where pastorally appropriate.

Laying-on of Hands of the Sick

The Church has always offered prayers for the sick, which have traditionally been accompanied by the laying-on of hands. An ordained priest may also anoint a sick person with the oil of the sick, consecrated by the bishop for this purpose. Great sensitivity is needed in touching a sick or vulnerable person, even if the minister has been known to them for a long time. A hand should be laid gently upon the top the head or forehead, or the shoulder or hand, as appropriate in the circumstances. Affected body parts should not be touched, unless the person specifically requests this, and only if doing so would not cause pain or compromise medical care.

Shorter form

Sections marked † may be omitted.

1 Greeting

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

or

Peace be to this place and to all who dwell here. **Amen.**

2 Penitence and Forgiveness

If Laying-on of Hands is to be administered, Penitence and Forgiveness takes place at section 5.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to you
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.**

We are truly sorry.

**Forgive us our sins,
and deliver us from the power of evil.**

**For the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

The minister says

May God, who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by the Holy Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

3 Gospel Reading or Sentence

A reading or appropriate sentence from the Gospels is used, or

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11. 28

4 Intercessions †

Any intercessions should include prayer for those who celebrate the Eucharist at the church where the elements were consecrated, in these or similar words:

For those who celebrate the Eucharist at ... (*here naming the church where the elements were consecrated*), with whom we now share in communion through this consecrated bread and wine.

5 Penitence and Forgiveness with Laying on of Hands †

A Prayers of Penitence and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to you
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.**

We are truly sorry.

**Forgive us our sins,
and deliver us from the power of evil.**

**For the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

The minister says

May God, who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by the Holy Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

B Laying-on of Hands

N., I lay my hands upon you
in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
asking him to uphold you and fill you with his grace,
that you may know the healing power of his love. **Amen.**

6 Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the time of trial but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Communion Song †

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

8 The Communion

At the giving of the bread:

The Body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**

At the giving of the cup:

The Blood of Christ shed for you. **Amen.**

At the giving of both kinds together (when the bread is intincted in the wine):

The Body and Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

If a communicant is unable to eat and drink, the minister may pray, using these or similar words.

God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour, who feeds us and gives us eternal life. Though *N.* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine, we thank you that *s/he has* received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Saviour, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

9 Prayer

This or another appropriate prayer may be said.

Father, your steadfast purpose is the completion of all things in your Son: may we who have received the pledges of the kingdom, live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love, until the world reflects your glory and you are all in all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

10 The Grace

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Longer form

Sections marked † may be omitted.

1 Greeting

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

or

Peace be to this place and to all who dwell here. **Amen.**

2 Collect for Purity †

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

3 Penitence and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to you
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.**

We are truly sorry.

**Forgive us our sins,
and deliver us from the power of evil.**

**For the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

The minister says

May God, who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by the Holy Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

4 Kyrie †

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

5 The Collect of the Day

6 Gospel Reading

If specific readings for healing and reconciliation are desired, the following may be used (see Appendix, pp. 28–9, for texts):

1. Matthew 9. 2–8 (Penitence)
2. Matthew 11. 25, 27–30 (Comfort)
3. Mark 6.7, 12–13 (Anointing)
4. Luke 8. 43–48 (Healing)
5. John 6. 35–40 ('I am the bread of life')

7 Intercessions

Prayer is offered for the world and its people, for those who suffer and those in need, for the Church and its members.

The intercessions should include prayer for those who celebrate the Eucharist at the church where the elements were consecrated, in these or similar words:

We pray for those who celebrate the Eucharist at ... (*here naming the church where the elements were consecrated*), with whom we now share in communion through this consecrated bread and wine.

The intercessions may end with the following prayer.

O Lord our God, Source of all goodness and love: accept the prayers of your people; and in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion upon all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, world without end.

Amen.

8 Penitence and Forgiveness with Laying on of Hands†

A Prayers of Penitence and Forgiveness

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

**God our Father, we confess to you
and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and in what we have failed to do.**

We are truly sorry.

**Forgive us our sins,
and deliver us from the power of evil.**

**For the sake of your Son who died for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

The minister says

May God, who is both power and love,
forgive us and free us from your sins,
heal and strengthen us by the Holy Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

B Laying-on of Hands

N., I lay my hands upon you
in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
asking him to uphold you and fill you with his grace,
that you may know the healing power of his love. **Amen.**

9 Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the time of trial but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

10 Communion Song †

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

11 The Communion

At the giving of the bread:

The Body of Christ given for you. **Amen.**

At the giving of the cup:

The Blood of Christ shed for you. **Amen.**

At the giving of both kinds together (when the bread is intincted in the wine):

The Body and Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

If a communicant is unable to eat and drink, the minister may pray, using these or similar words.

God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our Saviour, who feeds us and gives us eternal life. Though *N.* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine, we thank you that *s/he has* received the sacrament of Christ's presence, the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Saviour, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

12 Sentence

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is gracious:
And his mercy endures for ever.

(Psalm 118. 1)

13 Prayers

One of the following, or another appropriate prayer, is said.

(a) Holy and life-giving God, we have broken the bread which is Christ's body, we have tasted the wine of his new life: we thank you for these gifts by which we are made one in him and drawn into that new creation which is your will for all the world; through him who died for us and rose again, your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

(b) Father of all, we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home; dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory: may we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(c) Loving God, your steadfast purpose is the completion of all things in your Son: may we who have received the pledges of the kingdom, live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love, until the world reflects your glory and you are all in all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

14 The Grace

The grace of Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Appendix: Gospel passages

1. *Matthew* 9:2–8 (Penitence)

Some people were carrying a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' Then some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming.' But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he then said to the paralytic—'Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.' And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

2. *Matthew* 11:25, 27–30 (Comfort)

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

3. *Mark* 6:7,12–13 (Anointing)

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

4. *Luke* 8:43–48 (Healing)

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her haemorrhage stopped. Then Jesus asked, 'Who touched me?' When all denied it, Peter said, 'Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.' But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.' When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'

5. *John* 6:35–40 ('I am the bread of life')

Jesus said to the crowd, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

A Theological Introduction to Ministry with the Dying

Christian Ministry to the Dying is a natural continuation of ministry to all care for God's people. Since the increasingly medicalised concept of dying from the nineteenth century, death has been regarded as a defeat, the final loss in the battle for life which is sustained with some degree of quality of life until the bitter end. Little remains of what the deeply interrelated tasks of holy living and holy dying, and we have largely chosen to forget that dying might be considered an art to be learned throughout life. Nor, on a careful reading of scripture, is death to be perceived as a defeat; indeed a Christian death might even be considered the culmination of earthly life, and transition to a greater life in God's eternal presence.

Thus ministry to the dying takes place throughout all pastoral care, and is exercised in the life of prayer, confession and devotion. In confession and absolution we die to the pride of the old self, in love we die to fear, and in generosity we die to possessiveness. In the Christian life such deaths begin in baptism, when we die and rise again with Christ – so that our physical death is mirrored in our baptism and is thus the very opposite of defeat

Care for the dying and preparation for death will normally have two points of focus, and they are deeply interrelated. There is the care for the dying person and the preparation of that person for the journey from one world into the next. There is also the care for those who watch and experience a sense of loss, often felt with a deadly and agonizing kind of desperate hope against hope that the death may be averted. Mourning frequently does not begin after the actual death, but starts long before, for example, in the case of dementia where normal human recognition and contact has long been lost. The "loss" of the loved one might long precede actual death.

In *The Rule and Practice of Holy Dying*, a work of profound pastoral insight and spiritual wisdom, Bishop Jeremy Taylor writes at length of the pastoral need for "an exercise against despair in the day of our death." Very often the fear surrounding an impending death relates not so much to the terror of the unknown as to the workings of a conscience seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Ministry to the dying should therefore be exercised in profound and loving honesty – which can be very hard. It is better to be frank when death is close (and the dying person

frequently knows when this is better than anyone) and to allow space and make invitation for confession, using the structures of liturgical provision for absolution. Structuring – at what can be a very confused, messy, and emotionally charged time – is important and reassuring, and listening is often the most important component, even more than anything actually said.

In dying, each case is different and there can be no set pattern in the end, which is not to say that there should be no structure to the process. At the hour of death the concern is with healing of pain – physical, emotional, social, and spiritual – rather than cure (the pursuit of which may be a fruitless and even destructive distraction), and healing is possible even in death, consonant with the Christian hope of transformation at the moment of the journey from this world into the next.

The role of silence, as in all worship, may be crucial. Simply to be present, patiently, may be the most important role of the minister, and to give time after the event of a death for the family and friends to absorb the new situation. Mourning often begins long before a bereavement and may continue long afterwards, but to allow it a proper course is a crucial element in healing.

To conclude with the closing words of Bishop Taylor in his work on *Holy Dying*, that no judgments be made:

Let us lay our hands upon our mouth, and adore the mysteries of the Divine wisdom and providence, and pray to God to give the dying man rest and pardon, and to ourselves grace to live well, and the blessing of a holy and happy death.

Some suggested reading

Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, *The Art of Dying Well*, Grosvenor Essay.No. 9 (Edinburgh 2013)

Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Death. The Classic History of Western Attitudes toward Death over the Last One Thousand Years* (New York 1981)

Geoffrey Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* (London 1977)

The rite may be shortened or extended as seems appropriate, and the prayers adapted as needed. The different sections may happen at different times, according to pastoral need.

If the person nearing death is not yet baptised, Baptism should be administered after the Greeting.

1 Greeting

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

or

Peace be to this place and to all who dwell here. **Amen.**

2 Collect

Let us pray.

Gracious God, lover of souls, we give you thanks for the life of *N.*, for what you have accomplished in this world through *her/him*, and the ways in which *she/he* has enriched our lives; we hold *N.* before you now, lying in great weakness, that *she/he* may be comforted by your promise of everlasting life, given in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

or

God of mercy, [we give you thanks for the life of *N.*, for what you have accomplished in this world through *her/him*, and the ways in which *she/he* has enriched our lives;] look kindly on *N.* as death comes near; release *him/her*, and set *him/her* free by your grace to enter into the company of the saints in light; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

or for a child

(a) Heavenly Father, whose face the angels of the little ones always behold in heaven: look upon your child *N.*, lying in great weakness, and welcome *him/her* into the safekeeping of

(b) Lord Jesus Christ, who took little children into your arms and blessed them: look upon your child *N.*, enfold *him/her* in your loving arms, and bestow upon *him/her* the blessings of your gracious favour; for you live and

your eternal love; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

reign with the Father and the Holy
Spirit, one God, world without end.
Amen.

Suitable for use when the child has been recently baptised

We give you heartfelt thanks, most merciful Father, that you have been pleased to give your child *N.* new birth with your Holy Spirit, to receive *him/her* for your own by adoption, and to incorporate *him/her* into your holy Church: grant that, as *s/he* is made partaker of the death of your Son, *s/he* may also be partaker of his resurrection; so that finally, *s/he* may be an inheritor of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

3 Psalm

One of the following psalms may be appropriate. See Appendix I, pp. 45–9, for full texts.

Psalm 23

Psalm 61. 1–5

Psalm 121

Psalm 130

Psalm 139. 1–17

One or more of the following verses of scripture may also be used here.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? *Rom 8. 35*

Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. *Rom 14.8*

Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. *Rom 14. 9*

We will be with the Lord for ever. *1 Thess 4. 17*

We will see God as he is. *1 Jn 3. 2*

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *Mt 25. 34*

The Lord Jesus says, 'Today you will be with me in Paradise.' *Lk 23. 43*

This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day. *Jn 6. 40*

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. *Jn 14. 2*

I go and prepare a place for you. And I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. *Jn 14. 3*

'I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory,' says the Lord Jesus. *Jn 17. 24*

4 Prayers

A litany may be used, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

God the Father:

have mercy upon us.

God the Son:

have mercy upon us.

God the Holy Spirit:

have mercy upon us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity:

have mercy upon us.

By your holy incarnation, by your cross and passion,

by your precious death and burial:

have mercy upon us.

By your glorious resurrection and ascension,

and by the coming of the Holy Spirit:

have mercy upon us.

Graciously hear us, Lord Jesus Christ,

that it may please you to deliver your servant *N* from all evil
and from eternal death:

hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you mercifully to pardon all *N*'s sins:

hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you to give *N* peace, rest and gladness,
raising *him/her* to new life in your kingdom:

hear us, good Lord.

That it may please you to bring us, with *N* and all your saints,
to a joyful resurrection:

hear us, good Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:

have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:

have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
grant us peace.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not bring us to the time of trial but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us, O God, to trust your love, to seek your purpose, and to praise your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Other Prayers may be used.

For the dying

(a) Blessed Jesus, in your last agony you commended your spirit to your Father. We seek your mercy for *N.*, and all who are dying. May death become for them, as it was for you, a birth to everlasting life. Receive those whom we commend to you with the blessed assurance that whether we wake or sleep, we remain with you, one God, for ever. **Amen.**

(b) Deliver your servant, *N.*, O Sovereign Lord Christ, from all evil, and set *him* free from every bond; that *he* may rest with all your saints in your

eternal kingdom; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

For one who is unconscious

Merciful God, in your love and wisdom you know the needs and fears of your people before we can name them. Grant that *N.* and we who watch with *her/him* may be enabled to surrender all *her/his* cares to you, as you care for *her/him*. Give *her/him* peace of mind and unshakable trust in you; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

For protection

Christ, light of light, brightness indescribable, the Wisdom, power and glory of God, the Word made flesh: you overcame the forces of Satan, redeemed the world, then ascended again to the Father. Grant *N.*, we pray, in this tarnished world, the shining of your splendour. Send your Archangel Michael to defend *her/him*, to guard *her/his* going out and coming in, and to bring *her/him* safely to your presence, where you reign in the one holy and undivided Trinity, to ages of ages. **Amen.**

For those who fear losing hope

God of Love, inspire by your Holy Spirit those who are afraid of losing hope, especially *N.* for whom we now pray: give *her/him* a fresh vision of your love, that *s/he* may find again what *s/he* fears *s/he* has lost; and grant *her/him* your powerful deliverance; through the One who makes all things new, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

For release

Blessed Jesus, Living Water, Solid Rock: uphold your child *N.*; loose the fetters of sickness, break *her/his* yoke of pain, and from this land of affliction, lead *her/him* home. **Amen.**

When treatment is to be discontinued

(a) Holy God, whose peace passes all understanding: we pray that in your good time you will free *N.* from all earthly cares, pardon *his/her* sins, release *him/her* from pain, and grant that *s/he* may come to dwell with all your saints in everlasting glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

(b) O God our Creator and Sustainer, receive our prayers for *N*. We thank you for the love and companionship we have shared with *him/her*. Give us grace now to accept the limits of human healing as we commend *him/her* to your merciful care. Strengthen us, we pray, in this time of trial and help us to continue to serve and care for one another; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

In a time of difficult decision

(a) Lord of all wisdom and source of all life, we come before you as we struggle with decisions about life and death that rightly belong to you alone. We confess that we act with uncertainty now. Give us your help, and guide us, merciful God, in your loving concern for *N*, who lies in grave illness; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

(b) God our Wisdom: bless the decisions we have made in hope, in sorrow, and in love; that as we place our whole trust in you, our choices and our actions may be encompassed by your perfecting will; through Jesus Christ who died and rose for us. **Amen.**

Prayers by a Dying Person

For Serenity

(a) Merciful Jesus, you are my guide, the joy of my heart, the author of my hope, and the object of my love. I come seeking refreshment and peace. Show me your mercy, relieve my fears and anxieties, and grant me a quiet mind and an expectant heart, that by the assurance of your presence I may learn to abide in you, who is my Lord and my God. **Amen.**

(b) Jesus, let your mighty calmness lift me above my fears and frustrations. By your deep patience, give me tranquillity and stillness of soul in you. Make me in this, and in all, more and more like you. **Amen.**

A Prayer of Comfort in God

God, you are my help and comfort; you shelter and surround me in love so tender that I may know your presence with me, now and always. **Amen.**

In desolation

O God, why have you abandoned me? Though you have hidden your face from me, still from this dread and empty place, I cry to you, who have promised me that underneath are your everlasting arms. Amen.

After diagnosis of terminal illness

O God, only you number my days. Help me to look bravely at the end of my life in this world, while trusting in my life in the next. Journey with me toward my unexplored horizon where Jesus my Saviour has gone before. **Amen.**

In pain

As Jesus cried out on the cross, I cry out to you in pain, O God my Creator. Do not forsake me. Grant me relief from this suffering and preserve me in peace; through Jesus Christ my Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The minister may help the person to make an act of faith or commitment, such as

Holy God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I trust you, I believe in you, I love you.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Lord, I believe: help my unbelief.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

5 Reading(s)

One or more of the following passages of scripture may be read. See Appendix II, pp. 50–4, for full texts.

From the Old Testament

Isaiah 49:14-16a (I will not forget you)

Isaiah 65:17-20 (I am about to create new heavens and a new earth)

Psalms 23; 103

From the New Testament

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11 (death no longer has dominion)

Romans 8:35, 38-39 (Who will separate us from the love of Christ?)

1 Corinthians 15:51-58 (I will tell you a mystery!)

From the Gospels

John 14:1-3 (In my father's house)

6 Laying on of Hands

Laying on of hands may be given, using these or similar words.

N., I lay my hands upon you
in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
asking him to uphold you and fill you with his grace,
that you may know the healing power of his love. **Amen.**

If Holy Communion does not follow, the Lord's Prayer should be said.

7 Holy Communion

Communion from the reserved Sacrament may be given.

See the shorter form of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament outside Public Worship above.

The order should begin at the Lord's Prayer.

8 Post-communion

One of the post-communion prayers may be said, or the following

Gracious Father, we give you thanks and praise for this Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of your beloved Son Jesus Christ, the pledge of our redemption; and we pray that it may bring us forgiveness of our sins, strength in our weakness, and everlasting salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

or

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

9 Commendation at the Time of Death

The minister may introduce the commendation in these or similar words

Let us commend our *brother/sister N.* to the mercy of God, our Maker and Redeemer.

(a) *N.*, our companion in faith and *brother/sister* in Christ, we entrust you to God. Go forth from this world: in the love of God who created you; in the mercy of Jesus Christ who died for you; in the power of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you, at one with all the faithful, living and departed. May you rest in peace and rise in the glory of your eternal home, where grief and misery are banished, and light and joy abide. **Amen.**

(b) *N.*, go forth upon your journey from this world, in the name of God the Father almighty who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ who suffered death for you; in the name of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you; in communion with the blessed saints, and aided by angels and archangels, and all the armies of the heavenly host. May your portion this day be in peace, and your dwelling the heavenly Jerusalem. **Amen.**

Then

Holy Lord, almighty and eternal God, hear our prayers as we entrust to you *N.*, as you summon *him/her* out of this world. Forgive *his/her* sins and failings and grant *him/her* a haven of light, and peace. Let *him/her* pass unharmed through the gates of death to dwell with the blessed in light, as you promised to Abraham and his children for ever. Accept *N.* into your safe keeping and on the great day of judgement raise *him/her* up with all the saints to inherit your eternal kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(Common Worship)

After death has occurred, one of the following prayers may be said.

(a) Merciful Saviour, we commend to you our *brother/sister N.*: acknowledge, we pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming; receive *him/her* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**

(American BCP)

(b) Heavenly Father, into whose hands Jesus Christ commended his spirit at the last hour: into those same hands we now commend your servant *N.*, that death may be for *him/her* the gate to life and to eternal fellowship with you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(Common Worship)

Grant *her/him* eternal rest, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon *her/him*.

May *N.* rest in peace.

And rise in glory. Amen.

and/or Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2. 29–32) may be used.

1 Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled.

2 My own eyes have seen the salvation: which you have prepared in the sight of every people;

3 A light to reveal you to the nations: and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now: and shall be for ever. Amen.

1 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word.

2 For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation;

3 Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people.

4 To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

10 Additional Prayers

For those who mourn

Merciful God, whose Son Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus: look with compassion on all who are bound by sorrow and pain through the death of *N*. Comfort them, grant them the conviction that all things work together for good to those who love you, and help them to find sure trust and confidence in your resurrection power; through Jesus Christ our deliverer. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving for the life of the departed

Merciful Father and Lord of all life, we praise you that we are made in your image and reflect your truth and light. We thank you for the life of your child *N.*, for the love *he/she* received from you and showed among us. Above all, we rejoice at your gracious promise to all your servants, living and departed, that we shall rise again at the coming of Christ. And we ask that in due time we may share with our *brother/sister* that clearer vision, when we shall see your face in the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(Common Worship)

For healing and protection

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

11 Closing Prayer

May the eternal God bless and keep us, guard our bodies, save our souls and bring us safe to the heavenly country, our eternal home, where Father, Son and holy Spirit ever reign, one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Appendix I: Psalms for use at Section 3

Psalm 23

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | The Lord is my shepherd;* I shall not be in want. | The Lord is my shepherd * therefore can I lack nothing. |
| 2 | He makes me lie down in green pastures* and leads me beside still waters. | He shall feed me in a green pasture * and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. |
| 3 | He revives my soul* and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake. | He shall convert my soul * and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake. |
| 4 | Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;* for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. | Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil * for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me. |
| 5 | You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;* you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over. | Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me * thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. |
| 6 | Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,* and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. | But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life* and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. |
| | Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;* As it was in the beginning is now* and shall be for ever. Amen. | Glory be to the Father, and to the Son * and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be * world without end. Amen. |

Psalm 61. 1–5

- 1 Hear my cry, O God,* and listen to my prayer.
- 2 I call upon you from the ends of the earth with heaviness in my heart;* set me upon the rock that is higher than I.
- 3 For you have been my refuge,* a strong tower against the enemy.
- 4 I will dwell in your house for ever;* I will take refuge under the cover of your wings.
- 5 For you, O God, have heard my vows;* you have granted me the heritage of those who fear your name.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;* as it was in the beginning is now* and shall be for ever.
Amen.

Hear my crying, O God * give ear unto my prayer.

From the ends of the earth will I call upon thee * when my heart is in heaviness.

O set me up upon the rock that is higher than I * for thou hast been my hope, and a strong tower for me against the enemy.

I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever * and my trust shall be under the covering of thy wings.

For thou, O Lord, hast heard my desires * and hast given an heritage unto those that fear thy Name.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son * and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be * world without end. Amen.

Psalm 121

- 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills;* from where is my help to come?
- 2 My help comes from the Lord,* the maker of heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not let your foot be moved* and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills * from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh even from the Lord * who hath made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved * and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.

- 4 Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel* shall neither slumber nor sleep;
- 5 The Lord himself watches over you;* the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
- 6 So that the sun shall not strike you by day,* nor the moon by night.
- 7 The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;* it is he who shall keep you safe.
- 8 The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in,* from this time forth for evermore.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;* as it was in the beginning is now* and shall be for ever. Amen.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel * shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord himself is thy keeper * the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;

So that the sun shall not burn thee by day * neither the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil * yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in * from this time forth for evermore.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son * and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be * world without end. Amen.

Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths have I called you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice;* let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, Lord, were to note what is done amiss,* O Lord, who could stand?
- 3 For there is forgiveness with you;* therefore you shall be feared.

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord * Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well * the voice of my complaint.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss * O Lord, who may abide it?

For there is mercy with thee * therefore shalt thou be feared.

4 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;* in his word is my hope.

5 My soul waits for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning,* more than watchmen for the morning.

6 O Israel, wait for the Lord,* for with the Lord there is mercy;

7 With him there is plenteous redemption,* and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;* as it was in the beginning is now* and shall be for ever. Amen.

I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him * in his word is my trust.

My soul fleeth unto the Lord * before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch.

O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy * and with him is plenteous redemption.

And he shall redeem Israel * from all his sins.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son * and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be * world without end. Amen.

Psalm 139. 1–17

1 Lord, you have searched me out and known me;* you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

2 You trace my journeys and my resting-places* and are acquainted with all my ways.

3 Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,* but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

O Lord, thou hast searched me out, and known me * thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts long before.

Thou art about my path, and about my bed * and spiest out all my ways.

For lo, there is not a word in my tongue * but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

- 4 You press upon me behind and before* and lay your hand upon me.
- 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;* it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
- 6 Where can I go then from your Spirit?* where can I flee from your presence?
- 7 If I climb up to heaven, you are there;* if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
- 8 If I take the wings of the morning* and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 9 Even there your hand will lead me* and your right hand hold me fast.
- 10 If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me,* and the light around me turn to night,'
- 11 Darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day;* darkness and light to you are both alike.
- 12 For you yourself created my inmost parts;* you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 13 I will thank you because I am marvellously made;* your works are wonderful, and I know it well.

Thou hast fashioned me behind and before * and laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me * I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit * or whither shall I go then from thy presence?

If I climb up into heaven, thou art there * if I go down to hell, thou art there also.

If I take the wings of the morning * and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there also shall thy hand lead me * and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me * then shall my night be turned to day.

Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day * the darkness and light to thee are both alike.

For my reins are thine * thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made * marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

14 My body was not hidden from you,* while I was being made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.

My bones are not hid from thee * though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth.

15 Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb; all of them were written in your book;* they were fashioned day by day, when as yet there was none of them.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect * and in thy book were all my members written; Which day by day were fashioned * when as yet there was none of them.

16 How deep I find your thoughts, O God!* how great is the sum of them!

How dear are thy counsels unto me, O God * O how great is the sum of them!

17 If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;* to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.

If I tell them, they are more in number than the sand * when I wake up I am present with thee.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;* as it was in the beginning is now* and shall be for ever. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son * and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be * world without end. Amen.

Appendix II: Readings for use at Section 5

From the Old Testament

Isaiah 49. 14–16a (I will not forget you)

But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me,
my Lord has forgotten me.'
Can a woman forget her nursing-child,
or show no compassion for the child of her womb?
Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you.
See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are continually before me.

Isaiah 65. 17–20 (I am about to create new heavens and a new earth)

For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice for ever
in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.

Psalm 103

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,*
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,*
and forget not all his benefits.
- 3 He forgives all your sins*
and heals all your infirmities;
- 4 He redeems your life from the grave*
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;
- 5 He satisfies you with good things,*
and your youth is renewed like an eagle's .
- 6 The Lord executes righteousness*
and judgement for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made his ways known to Moses*
and his works to the children of Israel.
- 8 The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,*
slow to anger and of great kindness.
- 9 He will not always accuse us,*
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,*
nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,*
so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,*
so far has he removed our sins from us.
- 13 As a father cares for his children,*
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.
- 14 For he himself knows whereof we are made,*
he remembers that we are but dust.
- 15 Our days are like the grass;*
we flourish like a flower of the field;
- 16 When the wind goes over it, it is gone,*
and its place shall know it no more.

- 17 But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever
on those who fear him,*
and his righteousness on children's children;
- 18 On those who keep his covenant*
and remember his commandments and do them.
- 19 The Lord has set his throne in heaven,*
and his kingship has dominion over all.
- 20 Bless the Lord, you angels of his,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,*
and hearken to the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless the Lord, all you his hosts,*
you ministers of his who do his will.
- 22 Bless the Lord, all you works of his,
in all places of his dominion;*
bless the Lord, O my soul.

From the New Testament

Romans 6. 3–4, 8–11 (Death no longer has dominion)

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8. 35, 38–39 (Who will separate us from the love of Christ?)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15. 51–58 (I will tell you a mystery!)

Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

From the Gospels

John 14. 1–3 (In my father’s house)

Jesus said, ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.’

Prayers with the Family

at the time of bereavement

Sentence

If we live, we live to the Lord,
and if we die, we die to the Lord;
So then, whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord's.
For to this end Christ died and lived again,
that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14.8f)

Psalm (from Psalm 103)

As a father cares for his children,*
so does the Lord care for those who fear him.
For he himself knows whereof we are made;*
he remembers that we are but dust.
Our days are like the grass;*
we flourish like a flower of the field;
When the wind goes over it, it is gone,*
and its place shall know it no more.
But the merciful goodness of the Lord
endures for ever on those who fear him,*
and his righteousness on children's children.

Reading

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8.3 8f)

Prayer

Lord of life and death
you are with us in the daylight and the dark.
As this our *brother/sister* goes from us,
may your love be with him/her in the shadows
and lead *him/her* to your presence
where the life that began with you
is sustained for ever
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Most loving Father
the death of your Son has opened for us
a new and living way.
Give us hope to overcome our fear;
help us to surrender *N.* into your keeping
and let our sorrow find comfort in your care,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commendation at the time of death

Go forth upon your journey from this world,
dear child of God,
into the hands of the Father who made you,
to find life in Christ who redeemed you,
to rejoice in the Spirit who renews you.
May the heavenly host sustain you
and the company of the redeemed enfold you;
may peace be yours this day,
and the heavenly city your home.

Prayer at the death of a child

God our Creator,
you called into being this fragile life,
which to us had seemed so full of promise:

Give to *N.*, whom we commit to your care,
fulness of life in your presence,
and to us, who grieve over hopes unfulfilled,
courage to bear our loss;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer at the closing of the coffin

Loving God,
your servant's eyes have closed in the final sleep of death,
eyes that laughed, eyes that shed tears.
Let them wake to the full vision of your glory,
and our brother/sister see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer on leaving the house

Loving God,
your servant has begun his/her journey
to the place which you have made ready for him/her.
Hallow all the memories we have of him/her
in this house which no longer is his/her home,
and be yourself close to us in our grief;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen