

Funeral Liturgy for a Young Person who died by Suicide

WORDS OF WELCOME:

Friends, we gather here in the protective shelter of God's healing love. We are free to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness, and know that God cares.

We gather to comfort and support one another in our common loss; especially remembering N..... we gather to hear God's word of hope that can drive away our despair and move us to offer praise to God. We commend N..... to God's care and keeping as we celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection. For whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ, who is Lord both of the dead and of the living.

PRAYER:

Loving God, your embrace supports us in life, your spirit watches over us in death. We bless you for the joy shown by Jesus in children, and for the assurance that to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. Even in our sorrow allow us to commit ourselves and those we love into your care and keeping. Forgive us when we take your gifts for granted, lift our guilt from us and bring us to trust in the love you offer us. In our confusion help us to trust where we cannot understand. In our aching loneliness may we remember N..... in love, trusting him/her into your keeping until that eternal morning breaks; through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

God of comfort and peace, help us to hear the words and the encouragement of the scriptures that we may hold fast to the assurance of your love and the hope of life eternal through Jesus Christ, our risen Saviour. Amen.

GOSPEL:

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (Jn 14: 1-7)

Jesus said to his disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust 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. And you know that way to the place where I Am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

HOMILY

The death of a loved one can shake us to our very foundations. When the person is so young and so full of potential and hope ---- the feelings of grief and loss can be even more overwhelming.

At times such as this we turn to our friends and family for support, for a shoulder to cry on and for someone to walk that road of pain and anguish with us.

At times such as this we turn to our faith, to the scriptures and to the church community for the assurance that we are not alone, that someone greater than us watches over us and that our loved one has found the peace in death that must have so eluded him in the last hours of his life.

The words of the Psalm 23 are so very familiar to all of us here. They have been uttered so many times in situations of trouble and grief and sadness. They speak to the reality of a God who cares for each one of us like a shepherd cares for sheep. They speak to the reality of a God who, like a shepherd, goes out of the way to save a little one from danger. These verses speak to the reality of a God who cares even when the people have gone in the other direction. This is a love that never ends. This is a love that surrounded N..... in life, a love that surrounds him (her) in death and in the new life to which he (she) has been raised and surrounds us and carried us in our grief.

The gospel speaks to a time when Jesus was preparing to journey to Jerusalem. He knew that the journey to Jerusalem would mean that he had to face suffering and death. Beginning to realize this, the disciples were afraid of being left alone, they were afraid that they would never see Jesus again. Jesus assures them that they will see each other again. Jesus assures them that they will come to know the love of a God who has room for everyone, a God whose love knows no limits. This love gave Jesus the strength to walk the way to the cross. This love strengthened the disciples in the terrible aftermath of his death and this love can give us the strength and the hope and the courage that we need to go on from this terrible week and into the future.

N's..... life and death has changed you and you will never be the same again, but God will help you find new ways of carrying on. God will give us the strength to go on without N..... God's embracing love and consolation can deliver you to a new day.

Remember N..... as he (she) was. Remember the good times, his (her) love and his (Her) care for you. Also, in your grief please remember the living: care for one another for you have all been through a terrible tragedy. Do not forget to give thanks to God, for N's..... life was a precious gift to all of you. Lean on God, for God is strong and is able to carry you through this to the light and peace of a new day.

SENDING FORTH AND BLESSING:

Into your hands o merciful Saviour, we commend your servant N.....
Acknowledge, we humbly pray you, a sheep of your fold, a lamb of your flock, and a child of your redeeming.

Receive N..... into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace and joy, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

May the God of yesterday, today and tomorrow bring you from this place of mourning to the light and peace of a new day where you may remember what once was and have hope in what is yet to be. Amen

PRAYER:

Compassionate and loving God, you love us with an everlasting love and you alone can turn the shadow of death into the light of a new day. As we gather to commend N..... into your merciful and loving embrace, help us to wait upon you with penitent and believing hearts, trusting in your great promise to us through Jesus Christ our Lord - he who died that we might live, and who rose from the dead that we might never die. Lift us, we pray, into the joy and peace of your presence - we ask it in Jesus' name - Amen.

INTRODUCTION: Today we do one of the most difficult of all things to do - we gather to mourn the passing of a young man - a son, a brother, and a friend - and to commend him into God's care.

Grief is never an easy burden to bear - and never more so when it comes to us in what we can only regard as an untimely fashion. It causes to arise within us many questions - questions about ourselves and what we might or might not have done to make things different - questions about the one we loved and just what it was that he experienced during all his days - and questions about God and God's goodness.

We gather in such grief today - carrying a burden that not only seems to be, but in fact is, overwhelming. Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, knew such grief when he walked among us, he understood and took upon himself our pain and our sorrow, our sin and our guilt, our fear and our anger, and - in the end he died our death. But then something special happened - something that he believed would happen, hoped would happen, trusted would happen. He rose to life again - a new and glorious life - a life which he said, before he died - that he would share with all who came to him. It was with such a faith in God and what God would accomplish through him, that he said to his disciples before his death and his resurrection:

"Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, 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."

We come today, in our grief, in our pain, in our anger, in our doubt and in our confusion. We come to ask God to take our burden from us and give us in its place, the burden Christ spoke of. We come in the hope that the shadow of death might be turned into the light of a new day. We come to ask God to be merciful to us - and to N..... - and grant us new life, new life here - and the new life Jesus spoke of in the

heavenly places above.

PRAYER: Gracious God, in your love you have fathomed the depth of human suffering in the cross of Jesus Christ, and in all our afflictions you are afflicted. To your steadfast love and care we commend N....., who was overcome by the chaos of the world without and the agony of soul within. Where wrong has been done by anyone, where responsibility has been evaded, and where the ties of affection have been broken, we pray that you in your mercy will judge and in your love forgive - even as you have promised through Jesus - who died that we might live and who lives that we might never die.

Eternal Father - in the midst of our pain and grief we thank you for the good that you granted us to see and experience in and through N.....

We remember the joy that he brought us - the love that he showed - the kindness that he shared as he reached out to help others and we thank you for it. We recall him before you as a dear and precious son - a caring brother - a quiet and trustworthy friend. Bless, we pray, and use our memories of N..... as instruments of your healing grace and set fast in our minds and our hearts the good news of our faith - the news that through Christ death has no dominion - the news that all that is right - all that is beautiful - all that is noble - all that is fine - is not lost to us, but rather brought to full flower in your eternal presence where no torment can ever touch it, where you yourself wipe away every tear from our eyes.

Gracious God - we thank you for your steadfast and life-giving love. Comfort we pray, your servants to whom this trial has come. Be with (*name family members*). Be their stay, their strength and their shield. Grant that they, and all the friends and family of N..... who hold him dear, might be touched by your Spirit and hear your voice. Lighten their darkness and bring them out of all their distress. Indeed, O God, touch all our hearts with your love in this hour, that the springs of compassion may flow. Grant us grace to help and comfort those who find themselves desolate and lead us with them in the paths of quietness and hope through Christ Jesus our Lord - he who taught us to pray together as one family, saying... OUR FATHER... (*all pray the Lord's Prayer*)

BLESSING:

Go in peace - and may the blessings of God Almighty - the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit be with you all - both now and evermore.
Amen

PRAYER:

Let us pray..... O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: make us deeply sensitive to the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and let thy Holy Spirit lead us through this present world in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life, so that when we have served you in our day and generation, we may be received by You our loving Father, We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord, AMEN.

BLESSING:

Go in peace, look to and care for one another - forgive anything that needs forgiving - share all that needs sharing - and may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, give you everything that is good so that you may find comfort and faith in him.
Amen.