

REMEMBERING OUR DEAD: A NOVEMBER LITURGY

(This Liturgy was prepared in conjunction with a group from the Críocha Callan Cluster.)



Ní imithe uainn atá said, ach imithe romhainn.
They are not gone from us, but gone before us.

“The ritual of consciously remembering loved ones who have passed is an important spiritual practice in all our lives. It brings death into the context of our daily experience and reminds us that dying is not the end”. (Mary Ann Brussat)

November is a time for remembering and praying for the loved ones who have gone before us and whose loss we feel. It's a time when we are particularly conscious of those in the parish who are grieving and families who have lost loved ones in the past year.

We mark this time of year by parish events such as

- The blessing of graves at the local graveyards
- The celebration of the Feast of All Souls on November 2nd.
- A special Eucharist to remember those who have died in the past year and all parishioners who have died.

The Liturgy which follows worked in conjunction with a group from the *Críocha Callan* Cluster may be used on the Feast of All Souls or as a special Remembrance Liturgy during November.

THE SACRED SPACE: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REMEMBRANCE AND PRAYER

A suitable sacred space is created in the sanctuary area which may be left in place for the whole month of November. Ideas for the Sacred Place include:

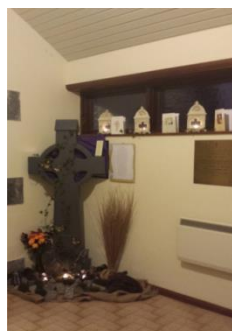
A Remembrance Tree - A bare tree is placed in the sacred place with a basket of tags alongside. People are invited to write the names of loved ones they wish to remember on the tags and hang them on the tree.

Remembrance Stones - There is a Jewish custom of leaving stones on the grave to mark a visit to remember a loved one. A container of stones is left in the sacred space. People may be invited to add their 'prayer stone' to a *cairn* of stones.

Create a suitable **Book of Remembrance** where people are invited to inscribe the names of loved ones whom they are remembering and praying for during November. In rural parishes include a place where people can write the townland to which the deceased belonged.

Leave some **appropriate reflections** at the back of the Church where people can find them when they visit the Church - some reflections are attached to this document.

Use autumn leaves in the sacred space as they reflect the sense of dying and letting go.



Kilnamona Parish made a Celtic Cross which is used as part of the Sacred Place during November. A piece of calico is placed on the ground on which lit candles may be placed as part of a Remembrance Liturgy.

(Photo of Kilnamona Celtic Cross taken at the Killaloe Diocesan Faith Gathering, September 2013)

PRIOR TO THE REMEMBRANCE LITURGY - PRE-PLANNING

Candles may be delivered to families/houses of those who have been bereaved with an invitation to attend the Liturgy of Remembrance and bring the candle along with them.

Create a half-light effect in the Church, using lanterns, candles etc. Discreet, delicate, Christmas tree lights may be put on the Remembrance Tree.

Where a graveyard adjoins the Church, battery operated tea-lights may be placed on each grave to create a visual effect as people come in.

A Mass booklet with an outline of the Liturgy of Remembrance, reflections and the names of those who have died during the year is prepared. (An adaptation of this idea is to include a photo of each person who died during the year. Some thought will need to be given to collecting these photos - perhaps making a file of them during the year. Ennis Parish produce a lovely booklet each year along these lines.)

Music for the Liturgy: The following suggested by the Críocha Callan group are just some of the repertoire of liturgical music available:

- Lord of All Hopefulness
- Christ Be Near at Either Hand
- Shepherd Me O God (M. Haugen)
- The Lord's My Shepherd (Veritas Hymnal)
- The Lord's My Shepherd (Psalm Tom Egan or Liam Lawton)
- The Lord Will Heal the Broken Heart (Liam Lawton)
- My Soul Is Longing for Your Peace
- Quietly, Peacefully¹ - (Music by Dvorak, as for Going Home; words by Lori True);
- Remember Them (In Caelo, 103)
- I'm On a Journey (same tune as As Mhuire Mhathair)²
- The Cloud's Veil (L. Lawton)
- There Is A Place (L. Lawton)
- Eagles Wings (Ps 91, MI. Joncas)
- You Are Mine (David Hass)
- Be Still for the Presence (Evans)
- How Great Thou Art
- O Comfort My People
- Taize Chants - O Christe Domine Jesu, Jesus Remember Me etc.

¹ Music available from the Pastoral Office Clarecastle
mkelly@killaloeocese.ie

² Music available from Pastoral Office Clarecastle
mkelly@killaloeocese.ie

1. GATHERING RITES

i) Entrance Procession

Entrance Procession to include the Book of the Gospels opened at the page of the Gospel to be proclaimed at this liturgy. A **Book of Remembrance** may be brought in procession as part of the entrance procession (without commentary). Or a basket of stones - later to be used as prayer-stones - may be brought and placed in front to the altar.

ii) Opening Greeting

At this opening moment, words of welcome are extended to all who have gathered. Acknowledge that each person present is here to remember a mother, a father, a wife or husband, a son or daughter, brother or sister, or a friend. We come bringing our own memories and carry with us what they mean to us in our hearts. In a moment of silence, an invitation is extended to the gathered community to bring to mind those we are remembering and to gather our memories of them.

iii) Lighting of the Paschal Candle:

The Presider now calls on someone (who has already agreed to do so), to light the paschal candle with these or similar words:

The Paschal candle reminds us that Christ our Light is with us even in our darkest moments. It expresses our faith that those who have gone before us are now at home with Christ forever and that one day we will be reunited with them.

iv) Ritual of Naming and Remembering

A ritual of naming and remembering those in the parish who have died in the past year may take place at this point. These are some rituals which parishes have used:

- A member of each family bereaved during the year comes forward, bringing the candle which has previously been dropped off to their home. The candles are placed in a designated prepared and safe place in the sanctuary.
(Note - a variation here is to have the candles lit from the paschal candle as they reach the top of the Church emphasising our belief that those we remember are joined with Christ in resurrection.)
- Where there is a large number of bereaved families it may be more feasible to invite representatives from each family to walk in procession from the end of the Church, each carrying a candle, as the names of those who died during the year are read out.
- Another form of this ritual is simply to have the candles in place in the sanctuary and have one person light them from the paschal candle as the names of those who have died during the year are read out.

Penitential Rite (based on psalm for November 2nd - Psalm 26)

Lord, you are our light and our help,
You are the stronghold of our lives
You hear our voices when we call

*Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy.*

Opening Prayer

If the Remembrance Liturgy is held on November 2nd the Collect of the day is used. If celebrated at another time the Collect of Masses for the Dead may be prayed.

2. LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings of the day on All Souls

or Lectionary Vol. IV, (for Masses for the Dead)
for Remembrance Liturgies.



Prayer of the Faithful

The Psalmist assures us that we will experience the goodness of God 'in the land of the living'. We offer our prayer now confident that God will hear us.

Response: God who comforts us hear our prayer.

1. We pray for those we remember today [tonight]. We thank you for the love and joy they brought into our lives. We pray that we will continue to draw strength from their goodness to us. **Lord hear us**
2. We pray for all the young people in our locality who have died. We remember in those who have died suddenly, those who have died in tragedy or by accident. May the Lord bring them to a place of light, peace and healing. **Lord hear us**
3. We pray for those whose hearts are heavy with loss, those experiencing grief, shock, anger or fear because of the death of a loved one. We pray for peace and consolation for them. **Lord hear us**
4. We pray for those whose memories are of sadness, pain, hurt, regret. We pray for healing of their pain, that they may come to know the God who weeps along with us. **Lord hear us**
5. We pray for places in our world where people face death on a daily basis because of violence, war, hunger or disease - we think especially of those who have died as a result of the Ebola epidemic. We pray for an end to violence and that God may turn our hearts in compassion towards those in need. **Lord hear us.**
6. We bring before God those who are sick and close to death and for family members who keep vigil with them. We pray especially for anyone who fears death. May they know the closeness of God at this time. **Lord hear us.**
7. We pray for those whose work brings them in contact with the dying and the bereaved. We pray that they may be sustained in their ministry of comforting and consoling minds and hearts. **Lord hear us.**

In silence we bring before God the prayers of our own hearts.... **Pause**

Prsider: Gracious God, you tell us to hope in your love, to hold firm and take heart. Hear the prayers we bring before you and grant what we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

3. LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Preparation of the Gifts

As we bring the gifts of bread and wine, we present also the gifts of memory, of love and affection, of nurture and support, we have received from those gone before us.

Traditional slow airs are very suitable to accompany the gifts.

It is appropriate to pause at the point in the Eucharistic Prayer where we remember our dead so that each can add their own silent prayer.

Post-Communion Reflection

*A slide show with images to accompany *There Is A Place* by Liam Lawton is available.³*

A number of suitable reflection pieces follow which may be accompanied by soft music.

a) Resurrection (Vladimir Holan)

Is it true that after this life of ours
we shall one day be awakened by a
terrifying clamour of trumpets?

Forgive me, God,
but I console myself that the beginning
and resurrection of all of us dead
will simply be announced
by the crowing of a cock

After that we will remain
lying down a while
The first to get up
will be mother

We'll hear her, quietly
laying the fire, quietly putting
the kettle on the stove and
cosily taking the teapot out of the cupboard.

We'll be home once more.



³ A powerpoint presentation with suitable and beautiful images to accompany *There Is A Place* by Liam Lawton has been developed by (Sr.) Mary Lillis, Killnamona Parish. Our thanks to Mary for making this presentation available. Contact mkelly@killaloediocese.ie

b) When Great Trees Fall

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid, promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened. Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance, fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance
of dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

c) From John O' Donohue ... (Anamcara)

When John O'Donohue was small, he heard a neighbouring woman ask his father: "Paddy, I wonder if there's grass in heaven". John immediately began to visualise a great big sweep of after-grass growing in heaven.

"If we were to imagine heaven, we could say that heaven is as near as God and there is nothing as close as God. In the same way, the dead are not distant or absent. They are alongside us. When someone dies, their physical form disappears. But because we can't see them doesn't mean that they are not there. An easy way to explain this is to look at the journey of the larva to become a butterfly. Once it is a butterfly it can't go back to being larva. As larva, it was bound to earth, as butterfly it inhabits the air. It can fly, look down and remember where and who it has been but it can never go back to its original form.

Changed into a different form, the dead can't re-enter their old form. However, they continue to be near us. When we ourselves come to die and see our lives on earth in a full view, we may be surprised at the enormous support our departed loved ones have given us during our life's journey. In their new state, their compassion, understanding and love take on a divine depth, enabling them to become secret angels guiding and sheltering us".

Concluding Prayer

Lord we have come together in your name
to gather up the treasures of memory and of love
of the lives of our brothers and sisters.
We place them in your care.
Hold them in your embrace.
For nothing can diminish or destroy
what is held in Your graciousness.
Be with us as we leave this place,
especially with those who are grieving
the loss of loved ones.
Let your love and your comfort be with them.
This we ask in Jesus name. Amen.



4. SENT FORTH TO LOVE AND SERVE

In this Eucharist we have been nourished in body, mind and spirit. But Eucharist also calls us to reach out, to extend the gifts we have received from God to other people. We take a moment now to think about how we will bring what we have celebrated here to our lives outside. Two suggestions came in our planning meeting which flow from our celebration of this Liturgy of Remembrance:

1. We have a long tradition of visiting the graves of our loved ones during November. In the Jewish tradition there's a practice of leaving a stone on the grave as a marker of a visit made. We invite you before you leave the Church to take a stone from the container in front of the altar and to bring it with you as you visit the grave of your loved ones as a mark of your prayer for the person remembered.
2. November is often a sad and lonely month for those who are grieving. Perhaps we could take on during this month to drop a note or a card to someone of whom we are aware who is grieving at this time.

Final Blessing

*May God our Father, Source of Life,
Who supports those who suffer
And heals the broken-hearted
Bless you with strength.*

*May Christ Jesus, Light of our lives,
Who wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus
Brighten your darkness and bless you with new seeing.*

*May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
Whose presence is full of consolation,
Bless you with God's presence
when you feel the absence of loved ones.*

And may our gracious God bless us Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



All: Amen

All: Amen

All: Amen

All: Amen