

KEEPING VIGIL FOR THE DYING

A handbook of prayers and scriptural passages
for family and friends



— Fort Recovery Cluster —

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WHAT DO I DO WHEN A LOVED ONE IS DYING?

Near the time of death, call a priest. You may call the Mary Help of Christians rectory (419-375-4153) at any time in the case of an emergency. Do not wait for the last minute. Whenever possible, the Church seeks to provide three sacraments for the dying: Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Communion. Together, these are often called the “Last Rites.” In immediate danger of death, the priest may also give an Apostolic Pardon—a special indulgence which is given only near the time of death.

Having made sure that a priest will provide the sacraments, family and friends should keep vigil beside the dying person, praying with and for them throughout this difficult time. It is very important that the dying have the prayers and faithful encouragement of their loved ones at this time, and that they be led to pray. Even if the person does not respond, it is very possible that they can hear—all prayers should be made out loud slowly so that they can help the dying person focus on God at this critical moment.

Various forms of prayer can be used at this time, according to the needs and devotions of the dying. In this book are gathered some of these prayers. Generally, the Short Prayers, Psalms, Readings, and general Prayers (pp. 5-19) are used as vigil is being kept, when death does not seem immanent. As the time of death draws near, specific prayers for this time can be recited, commending the person’s soul to God and encouraging them to go forth to meet Him. Other prayers may continue to be used, and prayers near the time of death may be repeated as the condition of the dying person changes.

It is important that prayers be said throughout this time, but it is not necessary to use these particular prayers or passages or to follow any particular order.

If an unbaptized person wishes to be baptized, anybody may do so in case of an emergency (if a priest or deacon is not available). The formula for Baptism can be found on the last page (26).



SHORT PRAYERS OF COMFORT

Can be recited or repeated slowly at different times, encouraging the dying person to dwell on spiritual realities.

Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your heart be troubled or afraid.

I desire that where I am, they also may be.

In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.

Everyone who believes in the Son has eternal life.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life.

Though I walk in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Into Your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.

Holy Mary, pray for me.

Holy Mary, Mother of grace, Mother of mercy,
defend me from the enemy,
and receive me at the hour of my death.

Saint Joseph, obtain for me grace and mercy!

PSALMS

These or other Psalms may be read prayerfully.

Psalm 23



The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil;
For you are at my side with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come.

Psalm 63

O God, you are my God, for you I long,
for you my soul is thirsting.

My body pines for you
like a dry, weary land without water.

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary
to see your strength and your glory.

For your love is better than life,
my lips will speak your praise.

So I will bless you all my life,
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,
my mouth shall praise you with joy.

On my bed I remember you.
On you I muse through the night
for you have been my help;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

My soul clings to you;
your right hand holds me fast.



Psalm 91

You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

For he will rescue you
from the snare of the fowler,
from the destroying pestilence.

With his pinions he will cover you,
and under his wings you shall take refuge;
his faithfulness is a buckler and a shield.

You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day;
not the pestilence that roams in darkness
nor the devastating plague at noon.

Though a thousand fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right side,
near you it shall no come.

Rather with your eyes shall you behold
and see the requital of the wicked,
because you have the Lord for your refuge; you have made the
Most High your stronghold.

No evil shall befall you,
nor shall affliction come near you tent,
for to his angels
he has given command about you,
that they guard you in all your ways.
Upon their hands they shall bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

You shall tread upon the asp and the viper;
you shall trample down
the lion and the dragon.

Because he clings to me,
I will deliver him;
I will set him on high
because he acknowledges my name.
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will deliver him and glorify him;
with length of days I will gratify him
and will show him my salvation.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes toward the mountains;
whence shall help come to me?
My help is from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

May he not suffer your foot to slip;
may he slumber not who guards you:
Indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps,
the guardian of Israel.

The Lord is your guardian;
the Lord is your shade;
he is beside you at your right hand.
The Lord will guard you from all evil;
he will guard your life.

The Lord will guard
your coming and your going,
both now and forever.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness;
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.



READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

These passages may be read as sources of meditation for the dying and others present, or other passages of Scripture may be used according to the devotion of the dying person.



Revelation 21:1-7

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth was gone, and the sea is now no more. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people; and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new. And he said to me: Write, for these words are most faithful and true.

And he said to me: It is done. I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth, I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely. He that shall overcome shall possess these things, and I will be his God; and he shall be my son.

Matthew 25:1-13

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now whilst they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

But at last come also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering said: Amen I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.

Luke 22:39-46

And going out, he went, according to his custom, to the mount of Olives. And his disciples also followed him. And when he was come to the place, he said to them: Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

And he was withdrawn away from them a stone's cast; and kneeling down, he prayed, saying: Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not my will, but thine be done. And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed the longer. And his sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them: Why sleep you? arise, pray, lest you enter into temptation.

John 6:37-40, 46-59

All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will not cast out. Because I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. Now this is the will of the Father who sent me: that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of my Father that sent me: that everyone who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day.

Not that any man hath seen the Father; but he who is of God, he hath seen the Father. Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever.

Other Passages

John chapter 6 (Bread of Life Discourse)
John chapters 14-17 (Teaching and Prayer at the Last Supper)
Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, and John 18-19
(Passion Narratives)

PRAYERS

Litany of the Saints

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

Holy angels of God,

pray for him/her.

pray for him/her.

Abraham, our father in faith,

David, leader of God's people,

All holy patriarchs and prophets,

Saint John the Baptist,

Saint Joseph,

Saint Peter and Saint Paul,

Saint Andrew,

Saint John,

Saint Mary Magdalene,

Saint Stephen,

Saint Ignatius,

Saint Lawrence,

Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity,

Saint Agnes,

Saint Gregory,

Saint Augustine,

Saint Athanasius,

Saint Basil,

Saint Martin,

Saint Benedict,

Saint Francis and Saint Dominic,

Saint Francis Xavier,

Saint John Vianney,

Saint Catherine,

Saint Teresa,

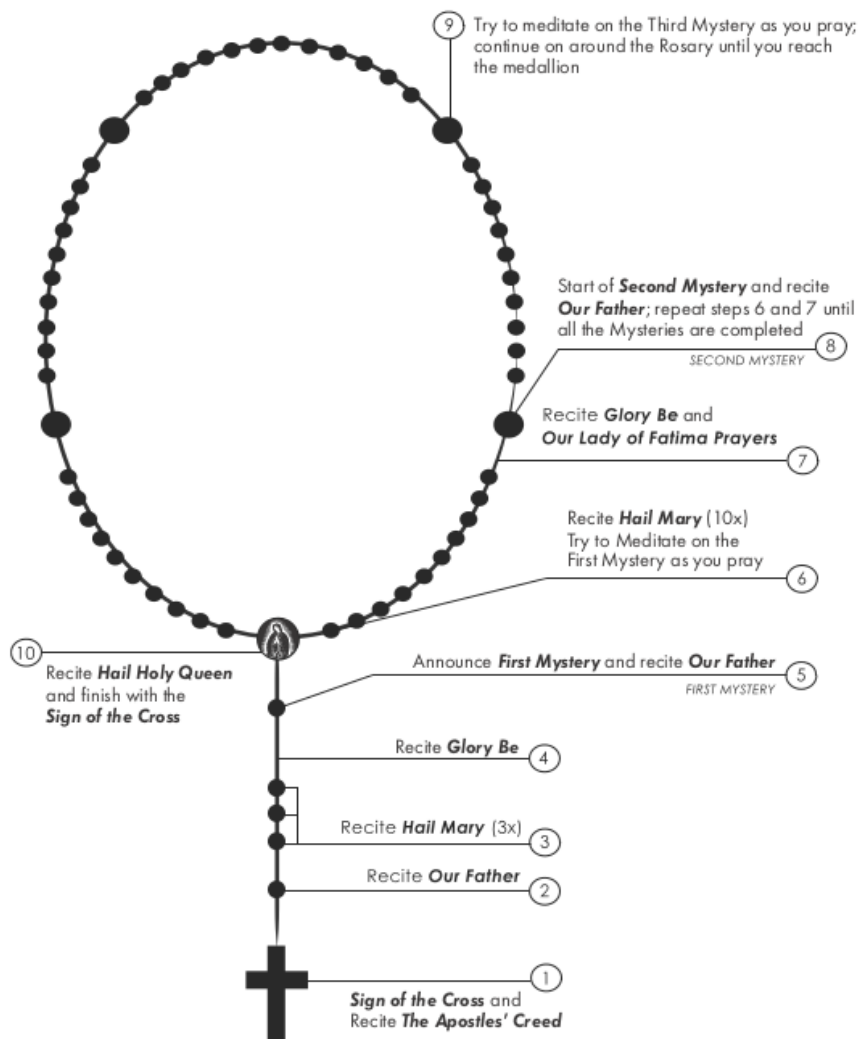
pray for him/her.

etc.

Other saints may be included.

All holy men and women,	<i>pray for him/her.</i>
Lord, be merciful,	<i>Lord, save your people.</i>
From all evil,	<i>Lord, save your people.</i>
From every sin,	<i>Lord, save your people.</i>
From Satan's power,	<i>etc.</i>
At the moment of death,	
From everlasting death,	
On the day of judgment,	
By your coming as man,	
By your suffering and cross,	
By your death and rising to new life,	
By your return in glory to the Father,	
By your gift of the Holy Spirit,	
By your coming again in glory,	
Be merciful to us sinners,	<i>Lord, hear our prayer.</i>
Bring N. to eternal life, first promised to him/her in baptism,	<i>Lord, hear our prayer.</i>
Raise N. on the last day, for he/she has eaten the Bread of Life,	<i>Lord, hear our prayer.</i>
Let N. share in your glory, for he/she has shared in your suffering and death,	<i>Lord, hear our prayer.</i>
Jesus, Son of the Living God,	<i>Lord, hear our prayer.</i>
Christ, hear us.	<i>Christ, hear us.</i>
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.	<i>Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.</i>

The Rosary



Apostle's Creed:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.

Our Lady of Fatima Prayer:

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.

Joyful Mysteries:

The Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation, the Finding in the Temple.

Luminous Mysteries:

The Baptism of Jesus, the Wedding at Cana, the Proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration, the Institution of the Eucharist.

Sorrowful Mysteries:

The Agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion.

Glorious Mysteries:

The Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Assumption of Mary, the Coronation of Mary.

Hail, Holy Queen:

See page 21.

Divine Mercy Chaplet

1. Sign of the Cross

2. Opening Prayers

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in You! (repeat three times)

3. Our Father

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, Amen.

4. Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

5. The Apostles' Creed

See page 16.

6. The Eternal Father

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

7. On the 10 Small Beads of Each Decade

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.

8. Repeat for the remaining decades

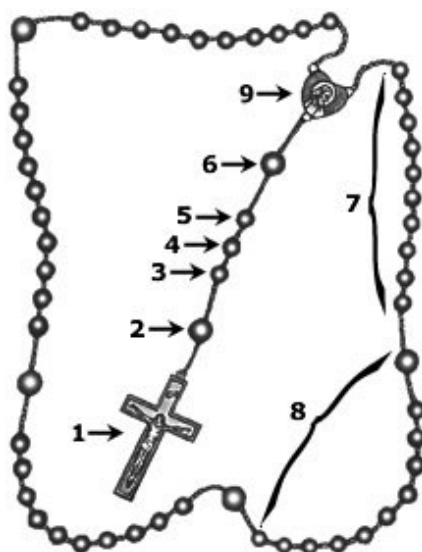
Saying the "Eternal Father" (6) on the "Our Father" bead and then
10 "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion" (7) on the following
"Hail Mary" beads.

9. Conclude with Holy God (Repeat three times)

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on
us and on the whole world.

10. Closing Prayers

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of
compassion — inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase
Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair
nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit
ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself.



PRAYERS NEAR THE TIME OF DEATH

Go Forth, Christian Soul

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world
in the name of God the almighty Father,
who created you,
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who suffered for you,
in the name of the Holy Spirit,
who was poured out upon you,
go forth, faithful Christian.
May you live in peace this day,
may your home be with God,
with Mary, the virgin Mother of God,
with Joseph, and all the angels and saints.
Amen.

Final Commendation

I commend you, my dear brother/sister,
to almighty God,
and entrust you to your Creator.
May you return to him
who formed you from the dust of the earth.
May holy Mary, the angels, and all the saints
come to meet you as you go forth from this life.
May Christ who was crucified for you
bring you freedom and peace.
May Christ who died for you
admit you into his garden of paradise.
May Christ, the true Shepherd,
acknowledge you as one of his flock.
May you see the Redeemer face to face,
and enjoy the vision of God for ever.
Amen.

Welcome your servant, Lord, into the place of salvation which because of your mercy he/she rightly hoped for.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, from every distress.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Noah from the flood.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Job from his sufferings.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Moses from the hand of the Pharaoh.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Daniel from the den of lions.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered the three young men from the fiery furnace.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Susanna from her false accusers.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered David from the attacks of Saul and Goliath.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Peter and Paul from prison.

R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, through Jesus our Savior, who suffered death for us and gave us eternal life. *R. Lord, save your people.*

Commendation to Christ

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world,
we pray for your servant, N.,
and commend him/her to your mercy.
For his/her sake you came down from heaven;
receive him/her now into the joy of your kingdom.
For though he/she has sinned,
he/she has not denied the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
but has believed in God
and has worshipped his/her Creator.
Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen

Sung version on next page

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;
to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping
in this valley of tears.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
thine eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus:
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.



Salve Regina
Hymn: Hail, Holy Queen

V
S Alve Re-gí-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ, Vi-ta, dul-
cé-do, et spes nostra, salve. Ad te clamá-mus, éxsu-
les, fí-li- i Hevæ. Ad te suspi-rá-mus, geméntes et flen-
tes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advo-cá-ta
nostra, illos tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ó-cu-los ad nos con-
vér-te. Et Je-sum, be-ne-díctum fructum ventris tu- i,
no-bis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde. O cle-mens:
O pi-a: O dulcis Virgo Ma-rí-a.

PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

Saints of God

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!

Come to meet him/her, angels of the Lord!

R. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

May Christ, who called you, take you to himself;

may angels lead you to Abraham's side.

R. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

Give him/her eternal rest, O Lord,

and may your light shine upon him/her forever.

R. Receive his/her soul and present him/her to God the Most High.

All-powerful and merciful God,

we commend to you, *N.*, your servant.

In your mercy and love,

blot out the sins

he/she has committed through human weakness.

In the sight of this world he/she has died:

let him live with you forever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.



De Profundis (Ps. 130)

My soul hopes in the Lord.

R. Repeat.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness;
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.

Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.

R. My soul hopes in the Lord.

Let us pray.

God of love, welcome into your presence
your son/daughter *N.*, whom you have called from this life.

Release him/her from all his/her sins
bless him/her with eternal light and peace,
raise him/her up to live forever with all your saints
in the glory of the resurrection.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Prayer for Everlasting Life

Almighty and eternal God,
hear our prayers for your son/daughter N.
whom you have called from this life to yourself.

Grant him/her light, happiness, and peace.
Let him/her pass in safety through the gates of death,
and live forever with all your saints
in the light you promised to Abraham
and to all his descendants in faith.

Guard him/her from all harm
and on that great day of resurrection and reward
raise him/her up with all your saints.
Pardon his/her sins
and give him/her eternal life in your kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord
R. Amen.

Prayer of Entrustment

Loving and merciful God,
we entrust our brother/sister to your mercy.

You loved him/her greatly in this life:
now that he/she is freed from all its cares,
give him/her happiness and peace forever.

The old order has passed away:
welcome him/her now into paradise
where there will be no more sorrow,
no more weeping or pain,
but only peace and joy with Jesus your Son,
and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

FORMULA OF BAPTISM IN EMERGENCY

If a priest or deacon is not available, anyone can baptize in danger of death, providing that it is the desire of the dying person.

In order to validly baptize, a person pours clean water over the crown of the head and says the words: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

If time permits *after the Baptism*, the dying person should be led through the creed and through an act of spiritual Communion.

What about baptized non-Catholics?

If a person is baptized non-Catholic, but wishes to be received into the Church near the time of death and receive the Sacraments, a priest can receive them into the Catholic Church, Confirm them and give them Holy Communion and the Anointing of the Sick. If no priest is available, it would be good to lead the dying person in a profession of faith using the creed and to lead them in an act of spiritual Communion.

Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Indeed I count everything as loss
because of the surpassing worth
of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things,
and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ
and be found in him,
not having a righteousness of my own, based on law,
but that which is through faith in Christ,
the righteousness from God that depends on faith:

That I may know him and the power of his resurrection,
and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:8-11

