

Liturgy of the Word

The reading of the word of God is an essential element of the celebration of the funeral liturgy. The readings proclaim the paschal mystery, teach remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together again in God's kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life. Above all, the readings tell of God's design for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own.

There may be either two or three scripture readings. The first is from the Old Testament, the second from the New Testament and the third from one of the Gospels, except during the Easter Season when both readings should be from the New Testament. If only two readings are chosen, one is always the Gospel. When there is a first and second reading before the gospel, it is preferable to have a different reader for each.

Though any scripture readings are acceptable, customary funeral readings are listed on the following pages

Family members are encouraged, but not required to help prepare the funeral Mass. If it is not possible for the family to choose the readings, either the Presider or the bereavement minister will select appropriate readings.

Old Testament Readings

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season
And a time for every matter under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to seek, and a time to lose;
A time to keep, and a time to throw away;
A time to tear, and a time to sew:
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate,
A time for war, and a time for peace

Job 19:1, 23-27

Job answered and said:
Oh, would that my words were written down!
Would that they were inscribed in a record:
That with an iron chisel and with lead
they were cut in the rock forever!
But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives,
and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;
Whom I myself shall see:
My own eyes, not another's, shall behold him,
And from my flesh I shall see God;
My inmost being is consumed with longing.

Wisdom 3: 1-6

The souls of the just are in the hand of God.
and no torment shall touch them.
They seemed in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.
But they are in peace.
For if before men, indeed, they be punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;
Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them
and found them worthy of himself.
As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings, he took them to himself.

Wisdom 4:7-15

The just man, though he die early, shall be at rest.
For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time,
nor can it be measured in terms of years.
Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men,
and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.
He who pleased God was loved;
he who lived among sinners was transported-
Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind
or deceit beguile his soul;
For the witchery of paltry things
obscures what is right
and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind.
Having become perfect in a short while,
he reached the fullness of a long career;
for his soul was pleasing to the Lord,
therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness.
But the people saw and did not understand,
nor did they take this into account.

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9 (shorter form)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts
will provide for all the peoples.
On this mountain he will destroy the
veil that veils all peoples,
The web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord God will wipe away
the tears from all faces;
The reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the lord has spoken.
On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the Lord for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

Isaiah 25:6-9 (longer form)

On this mountain the Lord of hosts
will provide for all the peoples.
A feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy the
veil that veils all peoples,
The web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord God will wipe away
the tears from all faces;
The reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the lord has spoken.
On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the Lord for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

Lamentations 3:17-26

My soul is deprived of peace,
I have forgotten what happiness is;
I tell myself my fortune is lost,
all that I hoped for from the Lord.
The thought of my homeless poverty
is wormwood and gall;
Remembering it over and over
leaves my soul downcast within me.
But I will call this to mind,
as my reason to have hope:
The favors of the Lord are not exhausted,
his mercies are not spent;
They are renewed each morning,
so great is his faithfulness.
My portion is the Lord, says my soul;
therefore will I hope in him.
Good is the Lord to one who waits for him,
To the soul that seeks him;
It is good to hope in silence
for the saving help of the Lord.

Daniel 12:1-3

[I, Daniel, mourned and I heard this word of the Lord:]

“At that time there shall arise Michael,
the great prince,
guardian of your people;
It shall be a time unsurpassed in distress
since nations began until that time.
At that time your people shall escape,
everyone who is found written in the book.
Many of those who sleep
in the dust of the earth shall awake;
Some shall live forever,
others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.
But the wise shall shine brightly

like the splendor of the firmament
And those who lead the many to justice
shall be like the stars forever.”

Maccabees 12: 43-46

Judas [the ruler of Israel] then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, in as much as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.