

## ***Life is a Journey.***

Birth is a beginning  
and death a destination  
And life is a journey:  
From childhood to maturity  
and youth to age;  
From innocence to awareness  
and ignorance to knowing;  
From foolishness to desecration  
and then perhaps to wisdom.  
From weakness to strength or  
from strength to weakness  
and often back again;  
From health to sickness  
and we pray to health again.  
From offence to forgiveness  
from loneliness to love  
from joy to gratitude  
from pain to compassion.  
From grief to understanding  
from fear to faith.  
From defeat to defeat to defeat  
until looking backwards or ahead.  
We see that victory lies not  
at some high point along the way  
but in having made the journey  
step by step,  
a sacred pilgrimage.  
Birth is a beginning  
and death a destination  
and life is a journey.  
A Sacred Journey  
to life everlasting.

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATIONS**

*During the season of Lent, please omit the Alleluia.  
Simply recite the lines in between*

1.  
Alleluia, Alleluia!,  
Your words are spirit Lord and they are life,  
You have the message of eternal life,  
Alleluia.
2.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
It is my Father's will, says the Lord,  
that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me,  
and that I should raise it up on the last day.  
Alleluia!

## **Gospel**

## **HOMILY**

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL.**



## *Prayer of the Faithful*

### *Selection 1.*

**Priest:** My friends, since God has loved us so much, we too must love one another. No one has seen God, but as long as we love one another God will live in us and his love will be complete in us, and we know that love is stronger than death. so let us pray to the God who first loved us.

**Reader:** *N...* lived Christ's commandment of love; may he/she now hear those words, "Come, O Blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

**Lord hear us**

**Reader:** *N...* showed much love for others in this life, may he/she now experience the loving mercy of God.

**Lord hear us**

**Reader:** From his/her place in the kingdom of the Father may he/she intercede for us and continue to help us.

**Lord hear us**

**Reader:** For those who nursed *N...* in his/her illness, that all of them will be rewarded for their gentleness and care.

**Lord hear us**

**Reader:** For all who mourn today. That they will receive strength to assist them in their sadness and grief.

**Lord hear us**

**Reader:** We remember all who have died. Today may they enjoy the promise of eternal happiness.

**Lord hear us**

## **Grief**

Grief cannot be shared, for it is mine alone.  
Grief is a dying within me,  
A great emptiness, a frightening void.  
It is loneliness, a terrible dread.  
Another's words do not help.  
A reasoned argument explains little  
For having tried too much.

Silence is the best response to another's grief.  
Not the silence that is a pause in speech,  
Awkward and unwanted,  
But one that unites heart to heart.  
Love, speaking in silence, is the way into  
The void of another's grief.

The best of all loves comes silently,  
And slowly too, to soften the pain of grief,  
And begin to dispel the sadness.  
It is the love of God, warm and true  
Which will touch the grieving heart and heal it.  
He looks at the grieving person and has pity,  
For grief is a great pain.

He came among us to learn about grief,  
And much else too, this Man of Sorrows.  
He knows. He understands.  
Grief will yield to peace in time.

Cardinal Basil Hume

## *A Psalm for the dying.*

Relatives and friends, I am about to leave:  
My last breath does not say “goodbye,”  
For my love for you is truly timeless,  
Beyond the touch of boney death.  
I leave myself not to the undertaker,  
For decoration in his house of the dead,  
But to your memory, with love.  
I leave my thoughts, my laughter, my dreams  
To you whom I have treasured beyond gold and precious gems.  
I give you what no thief can steal,  
The memories of our times together:  
The tender, love filled moments,  
The successes we have shared,  
The hard times that brought us closer together  
And the roads we have walked side by side.

I also leave you a solemn promise  
That after I am home in the bosom of God,  
I will still be present,  
Whenever and wherever you call on me.

My energy will be drawn to you by the magnet of my love.  
Whenever you are in need, call me;  
I will come to you, with my arms full of wisdom and light  
To open up your blocked paths,  
To untangle your knots and to be your avenue to God.

And all I take with me as I leave is your love  
And the millions of memories of all that we shared.  
So I truly enter my new life as a millionaire.  
Fear not nor grieve at my departure,  
You whom I have loved so much,  
For my roots and yours are forever intertwined.

## Selection 2.

**Priest:** In confidence we approach the throne of God’s grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

**Reader:** We pray for those who care for the sick and housebound. We give thanks for the skills and the commitment of doctors, nurse and carers. May they continue to reflect the compassion and healing of God who is made known to us in Christ. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** We pray for all who mourn. May their tears be wiped away, and may their mourning be turned into joy. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** We remember and pray for those who do not have access to basic health care, adequate food or shelter. We give thanks for our blessings and pray that the ways of justice and peace may prevail throughout the world. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** We pray for N... May God receive him/her kindly, with generosity and forgiveness, and the rewards of his/her faith. May he/she continue to inspire us, to intercede for us, and be there at the end to welcome us, in our turn, into eternal life. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** We give thanks for the love which N... showed during his/her life. May he/she know the perfection and fulfilment of that love in heaven. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** Lord, you are life and the enemy of death. Rescue us and the faithful departed from eternal darkness. **Lord hear us**

**Reader:** Bring all the dead into the light that no darkness can over power. May we all meet in joy with you. **Lord hear us**

**Priest:** Father, all those who love others, after the example of Christ your Son, are truly blessed by you in this life, but what they receive here is only a shadow compared with the good things you have prepared for them in the next life. We make all our prayers through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

## **GRIEF**

The shortest verse in the scriptures reads simply, 'Jesus wept' (Jn 11:35). Confronted by the death of his friend Lazarus and the grieving of Lazarus' family and neighbours, Jesus wept.

He was troubled in spirit and obviously in distress. Jesus was fully human and divine. His humanity shines through in his reaction to death, in his obvious grief. His divinity shows itself in his raising Lazarus and others from the dead, and in his own victory over death at the resurrection.

It is human to grieve. Death is one of the great challenges of living. It brings us to face the inevitability of loss. We only live fully when we have faced this and integrated the reality of loss into the fabric of our lives.

Some of the common reactions to death, even to the smaller deaths of our lives, like the end of a relationship or leave-taking are:

**Denial:** At first we may refuse to believe bad news or to allow it to sink in. This, when it is temporary, helps us to absorb bad news slowly and at a pace which will not overwhelm us.

**Anger** is common and may be misdirected if it is not acknowledged and expressed constructively.

**Depression** is a natural phase in grief. Feelings of emptiness and futility may sink in, especially if anger is present but not expressed.

**Guilt** is commonly expressed by those who are left behind, the bereaved. 'If only...' becomes a constant, nagging thought. Guilt can be appropriate or not appropriate, justified or not justified. It is a natural reaction, but like any of the others, it ought to be seen through and left behind.

## **Anyone is capable of going to Heaven**

Heaven is our home.

People ask me about death and whether I look forward to it and I answer, "of course", because I am going home.

Dying is not the end, it is the beginning.

Death is continuation of life.

This is the meaning of eternal life;

it is where our soul goes to God, to speak to God,

to continue loving him with greater love

because in Heaven we shall be able to love him

with our whole heart and our soul

because we only surrender our body in death.

Our heart and our soul live for ever.

When we die we are going to be with God,

and with all those we have known who have gone before us:

Our family and our friends will be there waiting for us.

Heaven must be a beautiful place.

Every religion has an eternity, another life.

People who fear death are the ones who believe this is the end.

I have not known anyone die in fear

If they have witnessed the love of God.

They have to make their peace with God, as do we all.

People die suddenly all the time

so it could happen to us too at any moment.

Yesterday is gone and tomorrow has not yet come,

so we must live each day as if it were our last,

So that when God calls us we are ready,

and prepared to die with a clean heart.

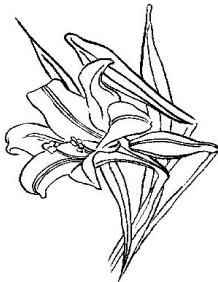
Mother Teresa of Calcutta  
(With permission)

## Remembering

Everyone loves to be remembered,  
But if we want to be remembered we have a duty also to  
remember.

Memory is a powerful thing.  
Wrongly used it can bring death rather than life.  
Rightly used it is a form of immortality  
It keeps the past alive.  
Those we remember never die.  
They continue to walk and talk with us.  
Their influence is still felt among us.  
There is nothing stronger or more helpful than a good  
remembrance.

N. our brother/sister, we want you to know  
That we haven't forgotten you.  
We remember you.  
And your memory most definitely brings life to us today.  
May it also assure us of life for you,  
That eternal life, Christ came on earth to give us.



## Trust in God

Lord, I have no idea where I'm going,  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself.  
And the fact that I think I am doing your will,  
Does not mean that I am actually doing it.  
But I believe that the desire to please you,  
Does in fact please you,  
And I hope that I have that desire.

I know that if I do this,  
You will lead me by the right road,  
Though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore I trust you always.

Though I may seem to be lost  
And in the shadow of death,  
I will not fear, for you are with me,  
And you will never leave me face my perils alone.

(Thomas Merton)

## *When death will knock at your door.*

On the day when death will knock at your door  
What will you offer to him?

Oh, I will set before my guest  
The full vessel of my life.  
I will never let him go with empty hands.

All the sweet vintage  
Of all my autumn days and summer nights,  
All the earnings and gleanings of my busy life  
Will I place before him  
At the close of my days  
When death will knock at my door.

(Tagore)

## *Footprints in the Sand.*

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, other times there were one set of footprints.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat, I could only see only one set of footprints.

So I said to the Lord

“You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there have only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?”

The lord replied, “The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, is when I carried you”.

Mary T. Stevenson  
© 1984



## *Gone only from our sight*

I am standing on the seashore.  
Suddenly a ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze,  
And starts out for the blue ocean.  
She is an object of beauty and strength,  
And I stand and watch her until at length she is only a ribbon of white cloud  
Just above where sea and sky mingle with each other.  
Then someone at my side says:  
“There! She’s gone!”

Gone where?  
Gone from my sight—that is all.  
She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side,  
And just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of her destination.  
Her diminished size is in me, not in her,  
And just at that moment when someone at my side says;  
“There! She’s gone!”  
There are other voices ready to take the glad shout,  
“There! She comes!”  
And that is dying.

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Death is not extinguishing the Light.  
It is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come.

## *A Simple life but Close to God.*

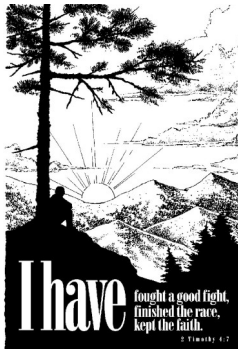
It is a simple life we lived here,  
but nobody could say that it was comfortable.  
Often during life I have known God's holy help,  
because I was often in the grip of sorrow  
from which I could not escape.

When the need was greatest,  
God would lay his merciful eye on me,  
and the clouds of sorrow would be gone without trace.  
In their place would be a spiritual joy  
whose sweetness I cannot describe here.

There are people who think this island is a lonely place,  
but the peace of the Lord is here.

We helped each other,  
and lived in the shelter of each other.  
But now my life is spent, like a candle,  
and my hope is rising every day  
that I'll be called into the eternal kingdom.

May God guide me on this long road  
I have not travelled before.  
I think everything is folly except for loving God.  
(Peig Sayers)



## *One's Daily Work*

When God's Son became man  
he didn't become a king or a great political  
leader.

He became a workingman.

The Gospels show us Christ  
as a healer, teacher and wonder worker.  
But these activities lasted only three years.

For the rest of his life on earth  
He worked as a village carpenter.

There was nothing spectacular about his work.  
He didn't make benches and tables by means of miracles,  
but by the hammer and the saw.

And, as far as we know,  
nothing he made ever became a collector's item.

Our daily tasks may be dull and insignificant,  
but we must not underestimate their importance.

In the long run,  
the only thing that ripens and bears fruit  
is the meagre work of every day

