

Commendation of the Dying

When a person is near death, the pastor should be notified so that the ministry of the church may be provided. A person approaching death may be offered the opportunity for confession and forgiveness.

Commendation of the Dying may be shortened or extended as appropriate. When the pastor is not available, another person may lead this order. The prayers may be adapted as needed.

Scripture Readings

One or more of the following or other suitable brief texts may be said with the dying person. Each may be repeated several times.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. (*Psalm 23:1*)

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? (*Psalm 27:1*)

Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O LORD, God of truth. (*Psalm 31:5*)

I thirst for God, for the living God. (*Psalm 42:2*)

Jesus said, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (*Matthew 25:34*)

Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." (*Luke 23:43*)

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (*John 3:16*)

Jesus said, "This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day." (*John 6:40*)

Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." (*John 14:2*)

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (*Acts 7:59*)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (*Romans 8:35*)

Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (*Romans 14:8*)

We know that we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (*2 Corinthians 5:1*)

We will be with the Lord forever. (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*)

Other scripture readings, especially if a longer selection is desired, may include one or more of the following or other appropriate passages.

Psalm 23 *The LORD is my shepherd*

Psalm 61:1-5 *Hear my cry, O God*

Psalm 103:8-13 *LORD, you are full of compassion*

Psalm 130 *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD*

Psalm 139:1-12 *You have searched me out and known me*

Isaiah 49:13b-16a *God will not forget you*

Isaiah 65:17-20 *A new heaven and a new earth*

Matthew 11:28-30 *I will give you rest*

John 14:1-3 *I prepare a place for you*

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11 *Death no longer has dominion*

Greeting and Prayer

At an appropriate time, the leader greets those present with one or both of the following sentences or in similar words.

We are gathered in the name in which we are baptized,
in the name of the Father,
and of the ✚ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

OR

We are gathered for prayer to commend name to God,
who is faithful and compassionate.

The leader continues with one or more of the following or another appropriate prayer.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look on name, whom you made your child in baptism. Comfort *her/him* with the promise of life with all your saints, the promise made sure by the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR

Holy God, whose peace surpasses all understanding, we pray that you will free name from all earthly cares, pardon *her/his* sins, release *her/him* from pain, and grant that *she/he* may come to dwell with all your saints in everlasting glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

OR *(for a child who is dying)*

God our creator, you called into being this fragile life,
which had seemed to us so full of promise.

Give to name, whom we commit to your care, abundant life in your presence,
and to us who grieve, courage to bear our loss;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Litany

The following litany or other appropriate prayers may be prayed.

Let us pray for name [saying, "Deliver your servant."].

Holy God, creator of heaven and earth,

deliver your servant.

Holy and Mighty, redeemer of the world,

deliver your servant.

Holy and Immortal, sanctifier of the faithful,

deliver your servant.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, one God,

deliver your servant.

By your holy incarnation,

deliver your servant.

By your cross and passion,

deliver your servant.

By your precious death and burial,

deliver your servant.

By your glorious resurrection and ascension,

deliver your servant.

By the coming of the Holy Spirit,

deliver your servant.

From all evil, all sin, and all tribulation,

deliver your servant.

From eternal death,

deliver your servant.

By the forgiveness of all *her/his* sins,

deliver your servant.

Into a place of refreshment at your heavenly banquet,

deliver your servant.

Into joy and gladness with your saints in light,

deliver your servant.

Jesus, Lamb of God,

deliver your servant.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

deliver your servant.

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

deliver your servant.

The leader may say:

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer is prayed by all. The leader may introduce the prayer with these or similar words.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

OR

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.

Commendation

The leader continues.

Let us commend our *sister/brother* name to the mercy of God.

The leader and others who are present may lay a hand on the head of the dying person as the leader says one or more of the following. The leader may also trace a cross on the person's forehead as a reminder of the gift of baptism.

Name, child of God,
go forth in the name of God the Father Almighty who created you;
in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who redeemed you;
in the name of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon you.
May you rest in peace and dwell forever in the paradise of God.

Amen.

OR

Name, our *sister/brother* in the faith, we entrust you to God who created you.
May you return to the one who formed us out of the dust of the earth.
Surrounded by the angels and triumphant saints,
may Christ come to meet you as you go forth from this life.
Christ, the Lord of glory, who was crucified for you,
bring you freedom and peace.
Christ, the High Priest, who has forgiven all your sins,
keep you among his people.
Christ, the Son of God, who died for you,
show you the glories of his eternal kingdom.
Christ, the Good Shepherd, enfold you with his tender care.
May you see your redeemer face to face and rejoice in God's presence forever.

Amen.

OR

Name, our companion in faith and *sister/brother* in Christ,
we entrust you to God.
Go forth from this world in the love of God who created you;
in the mercy of Jesus Christ who died for you;
in the power of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you,
at one with all the faithful, living and departed.

May you rest in peace and rise in the glory of your eternal home,
where grief and misery are banished, and light and joy abide.

Amen.

When death seems near, the leader continues.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant name.
Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming.
Receive *her/him* into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

Amen.

The following may be sung or spoken.

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

After death, the leader may say:

Lord Jesus Christ, through water and the Spirit
you brought name into your family;
receive *her/him* and present *her/him* to God Most High.

Amen.

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayers may be included for the family and other bereaved. Those present may be invited to offer prayers.

Blessing

The leader says one or both of the following.

May name and all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

OR

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

Amen.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

The resources provided here are flexible and may be adapted to accommodate the variety of circumstances in which they may be used. For example, a simple order might consist of the opening sentence and prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and appropriate elements from the Commendation section.

However, it is often the case that the time spent with a dying person unfolds over many hours or days. The resources provided here may be interspersed with silence, scripture and other readings,

singing and other music, conversation, the sharing of stories, and the like. Some of the elements, including the commendation, may be repeated as desired. This service, unlike many others that have a relatively predictable duration, may be best understood as a vigil, a time of waiting and watching with the one who is dying, punctuated with resources from the Christian tradition as well as elements of human presence and communication.

Also, the resources provided here may be combined with those of other orders in this volume and elsewhere. After the prayers within this service, the Meal section of Sending of Holy Communion (p. 86) or of Holy Communion in Special Circumstances may be inserted. The service may then conclude with the Sending provided here. Laying On of Hands may be included after the prayers, whether or not holy communion is included in the service.

A litany is provided as one form for the prayers. If participants do not have the service before them, the leader may cue the response as part of the invitation to prayer. For other prayers that may be used in place of or in addition to the litany, see the Readings and Prayers in this section and in the previous section.

When the leader arrives after the person has died, the order begins with the commendation section.

In many circumstances, singing or other music may be an important element in supporting this time of prayer. Hymns may be sung, either by all gathered, or by one or several from among those present. Hymns may include the following.

- 565 All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night
- 618 Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer
- 619 I Know That My Redeemer Lives!
- 621 Jesus Lives, My Sure Defense
- 623 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
- 627 O Day Full of Grace
- 629 Abide with Me
- 750 Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart
- 765 Lord of All Hopefulness
- 767 Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me
- 773 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
- 776 What God Ordains Is Good Indeed
- 781 Children of the Heavenly Father
- 790 Day by Day

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