



PRAYERS FOR THE PANDEMIC

An Interfaith Response
to COVID-19
May 2020

OneSpirit
learning alliance

1spirit.org

We began the **One Spirit Blessings Project** as a resource of **interfaith prayers, blessings, and passages** to honor those who have died during the Covid-19 pandemic. We offer this collection to whomever can use it... from chaplains and religious leaders honoring those buried at NYC's Potter's Field on Hart Island to family members and friends of the deceased who may be leading memorial services online. If you are in need of inspiration, this guide is for you.

As a worldwide educational organization based in New York City, our community has been at the forefront of responding to this pandemic. One Spirit graduates have offered spiritual care and various disaster services to those most affected as the virus spread throughout hard-hit areas.

When we learned of the opportunity to deliver interfaith prayers and blessings to the Center for Faith and Community Partnerships at the NYC Mayor's Office, we knew we had found the spot that theologian Frederick Buechner described as *the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet*.

Please feel free to use these blessings with attribution, where provided. All original work is copyrighted by the authors cited.

With open hearts, we wish you comfort and courage during this time.

Blessings,

Rev. Barbara Becker

Dean, One Spirit Interfaith Seminary

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Interfaith / Interspiritual Prayers and Blessings

Prayer for Burial in the Time of Coronavirus, Hart Island, New York City

Rev. Melissa Stewart

Where we stand now is holy ground.

Birth and death, miraculous and mysterious, we honor them both, and we call them sacred.

We are all travelers in this wild world, here for only a brief time, among the ancient planets and stars.

In times of shared loss and grief we are reminded of what we all have in common, how small we truly are, just as we remember the qualities that makes each one of us unique. How significant each to their own!

On this day we remember that each one we lay to rest was born of a womb, and over the course of their years, we can imagine that each one had loved and was loving, each one suffered disappointments and celebrated achievements, each one had endured hurts and delighted in celebration of life's gifts, simple and grand.

All of the experiences of a human life were embodied, here.

Today we call to mind the uniqueness of each one of you and the special place you claimed as your own in this world.

And we are here, now, to say goodbye and farewell.

Mystery has proven Herself most powerful in this strange time.

To those who have succumbed in these recent days, may your life's journey be remembered with gratitude for what was.

May your leave-taking be blessed with an unreasonable hope for what has yet to be.

You are remembered by the ones you leave behind.

May you rest in infinite peace within this bless'ed earth, loved beyond the limits of the body.

May those in sorrow be soothed by kindness.

May those with heartbreak be comforted among the mourners of the Earth. And so it is.

Holy One, Great Spirit

Rev. Jennifer Bailey

We commit these beings in witness of sand, soil, and stone, so that they may rejoin the Earth's holy ground.

Named and nameless, Your children all...

We commit these beings in witness of water, so that our tears in this unspeakable loss form a vast ocean of healing.

Named and nameless, Your children all...

We commit these beings in witness of sky, so that they may be carried on the winds and walk with their ancestors.

Named and nameless, Your children all...

We commit these beings in witness of fire, that the flame of their memory kindle in our hearts.

Named and nameless, Your children all...

Daughter, son, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, our brothers and sisters, Your children all...

Holy One, surround your messengers here today with infinite love and care, as they offer blessing in this time of heartbreak, for they too, are Yours.

We commit these beings to the Great Mystery and into Your loving sustaining Heart.

Amen

Blessed Be*Rev. Marama Winder*

Blessed be the hearts of those who are walking in the midst of uncertainty

May they be find their center of groundedness.

Blessed be those who have no shelter to shelter themselves.

May their spirits be filled with the love of the Beloved.

Blessed be those who labour in the halls of hospitals

May their sacrifices bring comfort to the weary.

Blessed be those who have recovered from the corona virus

May their lights shine on in the darkness.

Blessed be those who have crossed to the other side

May they be welcomed by family, friends and a host of angels.

Blessed be those who carry the dead to their resting places

May their burdens be laid at the feet of the Divine.

Blessed be all life on our home planet.

May we rise into kindness, compassion, and love.

Traditional Prayers and Blessings

Indigenous Traditions

Hart Island: Native American Land Acknowledgement

Rev. Barbara Becker

Hart Island is situated at the western edge of the Long Island Sound on land originally inhabited by the Siwanoy tribe of the Wappinger Peoples. We pay respect to them, and to the many nations, tribes and bands that traveled in and made use of this land and water.

We give thanks to Mother Earth for embracing her children who are being returned to this sacred ground. She receives them all equally, regardless of where they were from or the circumstances that brought them here.

With all of our intention, we commit ourselves to upholding the values of Relationship, Responsibility, Respect, and Reciprocity, ever-mindful of the past, the present, and of the generations yet to come.

And, in the Algonquian tongue spoken throughout this area, we now say *Wanishi* – thank you.

Note for those offering the Land Acknowledgement if physically present at the site:

Please offer a pinch of tobacco for each person after burial. If several are present, give each a pinch of tobacco in advance to offer at the end of the burial. Offer it Upwards to Creator...Downwards to the Earth...Around their Heads in a circle and then Place the offering on the Earth. Our elders tell us to then touch the Earth ...She will feel your touch and accept your honoring

Prayer to Create Sacred Space for Healing: Shamanic Tradition, High Andes

Rev. Dr. Ed O'Malley

To the winds of the South
Great serpent, Wrap your coils of light around us,
Teach us to shed the past the way you shed your skin,
To walk softly on the Earth. Teach us the Beauty Way.

To the winds of the West
Mother sister Jaguar, Protect our medicine space.
Teach us the way of peace, to live impeccably. Show us the way beyond death.

To the winds of the North.
Hummingbird, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Ancient Ones
Come and warm your hands by our fires, Whisper to us in the wind.
We honor you who have come before us,
And you who will come after us, our children's children.

To the winds of the East.
Great eagle, condor, Come to us from the place of the rising Sun.
Keep us under your wing. Show us the mountains we only dare to dream of.
Teach us to fly wing to wing with Great Spirit.

Mother Earth.
We've gathered for the healing of all your children. The Stone People, the Plant People. The
four-legged, the two-legged, the creeper-crawlers. The finned, the furred, and the winged ones.
All our relations.

Father Sun, Grandmother Moon, to the Star nations. Great Spirit, you who are known by a
thousand names And you who are the unnamable One. Thank you for bringing us together.

Yoruba Tradition ~ Ancestor Prayers

Although these are provided in Yoruba and English, it is only acceptable for chaplains to read them in English.

Yoruba Prayer

Iba ase gbogbo agba orun

Praise be to all of the elders in heaven

Iba ase gbogbo egungun

Praise be to all of the guiding ancestors.

Ase, Ase, Ase ~ And so it is.

Yoruba Libation

Omi Tutu, omi tutu, omi tutu

Fresh water, fresh water, fresh water

Ona tutu, Ile tutu

To freshen the path, to freshen the house

Tutu Babanla, tutu Ori, tutu Emi

To freshen the ancestors, to freshen the godhead, to freshen the soul

Tutu Aiye, tutu Laroye

To freshen the world (universe), to freshen Esu.

Kosi ku, kosi rudrudu, kosi idina

May death be no more, may evil be no more, may obstructions be no more

Kosi akoba fitibo ariku Babawo.

So that worries and trouble are no more. Let us not see death and hardship anymore

Mojuba Oluawoodeorun Eledaa Olodumare, orisa gbogbo gbogbo taji wa Eledumare.

We pay homage to God who is beyond all creation, The creator and owner of superlative power God, who comes into the world as all, all, all the orisa.

Mojuba Gbogbo Orisa, mojuba gbogbo orun

We pay homage to all the Orisa, we pay homage to all of heaven

Mojuba Egungun kiki Egungun, mojuba Babanla, Iyanla, Ara Orun

We pay homage to the ancestors, the great fathers and great mothers who are citizens of heaven.

Ase, Ase, Ase ~ And so it is.

Hindu Tradition

Submitted by Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus, Dr. Anantanand Rambachan and Dr. Raja Gopal Bhattar

Peace Prayer/ Shanti Mantra

Unto Heaven be Peace,
Unto the Sky and the Earth be Peace.

Peace be unto the Water,
Unto the Herbs and Trees be Peace.

Unto all the Gods be Peace,
Unto Brahma and unto All be Peace.

And may We realize that Peace.
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti - Peace Peace Peace

*Om Dyau Shanti Rantariksha Gwam
Shanti Prithvi Shanti Rapah
Shanti Roshadhayah Shanti Vanas Patayah
Shanti Vishwed Devah Shanti Brahma
Sarvag Wam
Shanti Shanti Reva Shanti Sa Ma Shanti Redhi
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti*

May there be peace in the skies and on earth
May there be peace in the waters and in the forests
May there be peace everywhere
And may that peace, true peace, be ours.

*Aum dyau Shanti/Antariksham Shantih
Prthivi Shantih/Apah Shantih
Oshadhayah Shanti/Vanaspatayah Shanti
Visvedevah Shanthi/Brahma Shantih
Sarvam Shantih/Shantireva Shantih
Sama Shantiredhi/Aum Shantih Shantih Shantih*

~

Asatoma Sadgamaya Mantra

Lead us from Untruth to Truth,
Lead us from the Darkness to Light,
Lead us from Death to Life Eternal.
Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

*Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya
Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih*

~

Tan Man Shaant

My mind and body are calm and tranquil; the disease has been cured, and now I sleep in peace.

Fan man shānti hoi adhikāi rog kātai sūkh savījai.

~

Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra

We worship the effulgent Lord Shiva, who is fragrant and nourishes all beings. May He liberate us from death and grant us immortality even as a ripe fruit separates from its vine.

*Om Tryambakam Yajamahe Sugandhim Pushtivardhanam/urvarukamiva bandhanan
mrityormuksheya mamritat*

Understanding Death and Loss

Paramahansa Yogananda (excerpts)

Our real self, the soul, is immortal. We may sleep for a little while in that change called death, but we can never be destroyed. We exist, and that existence is eternal. The wave comes to the shore, and then goes back to the sea; it is not lost. It becomes one with the ocean, or returns again in the form of another wave. This body has come, and it will vanish; but the soul essence within it will never cease to exist. Nothing can terminate that eternal consciousness.

The body is only a garment. How many times you have changed your clothing in this life, yet because of this you would not say that you have changed. Similarly, when you give up this bodily dress at death you do not change. You are just the same, an immortal soul, a child of God.

Muslim / Sufi Tradition

Sufi-inspired prayer

Rev. Eileen Fisher

To the One of Boundless Mercy and Endless Compassion,

Grant this precious Soul respite and welcome him into the Realm of Eternal Beauty. Forgive him all that needs to be forgiven, and forgive humanity for any failures associated with his life and passing. May he rest now in peace eternal, free from suffering. Light his way home and lift him gently into the arms of Love.

Amen.

Muslim Sample Announcement of death (see note below)

Respectfully submitted by Dr. Khadijah Matin, One Spirit Interfaith Alliance

With deep gratitude to Imam Khalid Latif, The Islamic Center at NYU

May Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* forgive our brother/sister [or brothers and sisters] for any of their shortcomings and mistakes in this world.

May He grant them peace in the grave, expanding it for them and protecting them from its trials and tribulations.

May He raise them amongst those who are righteous, those who are patient, those who are truthful, and those who believe.

May He grant them shade on that day when there is no shade but that of His throne.

May He grant them entrance into *jannah* without any judgment?

May they dwell therein in the company of all those whom they love and the company of His most beloved, *salallahu 'alayhi was'salaam*, and may He guide and bless us all.

Ameen. Ameen ya rabbal'aalameen.

Sample announcement of serious illness or injury:

May Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* grant our brother/sister [or brothers and sisters] a quick and easy recovery.

May He make this affliction a means of purification in this world and a means of elevation in the next.

May He make them stronger physically, sounder mentally, firmer emotionally, and more steadfast spiritually from it.

May He grant ease of heart and peace of mind to all those who love them and all those whom he loves, and may He guide and bless us all. *Ameen. Ameen ya rabbal'aalameen.*

Definition of Arabic terms:

Ameen	Amen
Ameen ya rabbal'aalameen	Amen O' Lord of the worlds
Subhanahu wa ta'ala	May He (God) be gloried and exalted
Salallahu 'alayhi was'salaam	Peace be upon him
Takbir	The Arabic name for the phrase, Allahu Akbar; Allah is great

Note:

This information is offered as an example in announcing the names of the deceased or ill within a Muslim community. There are many variations available, and when at all possible it is best to seek the advice of an Islamic scholar (a *Shaykh* or *Shaykha*) or an *Imam*.

The Muslims of the community gather to offer their collective prayers for the forgiveness of the dead. This prayer has been generally termed as the *Salat a-Janazah* (*Janazah* prayer).

Beginning with *Takbirs*, the Arabic name for the phrase *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is great) – there is no bowing and prostrating.

The Supplication for the deceased and mankind is recited the prayer is usually led by at least one adult male Muslim, in most instances an *Imam*.

Prayers for the deceased are offered for any age, including infants who may have lived only for a few minutes or seconds.

Jewish Tradition

We Remember Them

In the rising sun and in its going down,
We remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
We remember them.

In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,
We remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of the summer,
We remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,
We remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it end,
We remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,
We remember them.

When we re lost and sick at heart,
We remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share,
We remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us,
As we remember them.

Buddhist Tradition

Zen Memorial Words

Roshi Enkyo O'Hara

Our lives are like waves on the ocean of this one boundlessness.

Each wave on the ocean has a certain shape, its own direction and its own uniqueness.

It lasts for a time and then crashes down onto the beach and passes away.

At the same time, it goes nowhere because it was never anything other than the ocean and the ocean is not in any way diminished by this wave returning to itself.

So it is with our everyday lives and our true nature.

Because of the ceaseless action of cause and effect, reality appears in all its many forms.

To know this liberates all those who suffer.

All beings appear from One,
and pass away, after a few flickering moment or years of life,
back to One.

Truly our lives are, indeed, waves on the vast ocean of True Nature,
which is not born and does not pass away.

At this time we remember and we express our love and support for(close relatives)
and..... ..and all those who loved/knew her/him/them/

The Dhammapada

From Infinite Freedom, Chapter Seven of The Dhammapada

The traveler has reached the end of the journey. In the freedom of the Infinite, she is free from all sorrows, the fetters that found her are thrown away, and the burning fever of life is no more. She is calm like the earth that endures; she is steady like a column that is firm; she is pure like a lake that is clear. In the light of her vision, she has found her freedom; her thoughts are peace, her words are peace, and her work is peace.

~

Christian Tradition

A Christian Prayer (*Christian Inspired*)

Rev. Martha Doran

Mother-Father God, the gentle ever-present Presence, we give thanks for your eternal love.
Help us feel and lean into the arms of love holding each of your creation, knowing we are never
separate from You, from Love, from Life.

Help us remember that our brothers and sisters who have walked through the death valley, have
seen and felt your ever- presence in a way we do not yet know or understand.

Yet we can have full faith in knowing that just as each of these dear ones are with You always,
so we are also.

No one, no thing, no happening, can pluck anyone out of Your hand.

We pray to let Jesus' message, given to all mankind, wash over us all...

"lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Matthew 28:20

~

May the Divine bless you and keep you;

May the Divine shine its face upon you
and be gracious unto you; and

May the Divine uplift its countenance
within you and give you peace.

(This blessings is a universalization from the Book of Numbers, VI: 24-26 by Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Ayers)

~

Prayer for Peace and Calm*Teresa of Avila*

May today there be peace within.

May you trust your highest power that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance.

It is there for each and every one of you.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Gospel of St Matthew 5:3-10

Franciscan Blessing*Father Maximillian Mizzi O.F.M.*

May the Lord bless you and keep you
 May He turn His face on you and give you His peace
 And His joy, and His love, and His protection
 May He be with you now at this hour, and every moment of your life
 At the moment when you close your eyes
 In order to open them to Him, to His Glory
 May He be with you, May He bless you.
 The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Our Father, Who Art in Heaven
 Hallowed by Thy Name
 Thy kingdom come, Thy Will be done,
 On earth as it is in heaven
 Give us this day 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, amen.*

Help us Lord, bless us Lord, thank you Lord.
 Amen

~

A Course In Miracles

Deliverance

Helen Schucman

Lead me, my Lord, to where my stillness is.
I seek my father's everlasting arms,
Which I alone can never hope to find,
For I am frail in seeking and in love.

Idols will come to hold their halting hands
Before me on my lonely journeying,
Which will forever bar the way to me,
And I will faint in an illusion's grasp.

But come You with me and I cannot fail
To find my Father's house. As we approach
The holy gate, illusions shudder back
And angels come to offer us their wings.

I am the least and yet the greatest. I
Who hold your hand have Heaven's might with me.
I go in glory, for you walk with me.
Deliver me into my Father's arms.

The Resting Place

Helen Schucman

My arms are open. Come, my Lord, to me
And rest upon my heart. It beats for you
And sings in joyous welcome. What am I
Except your resting place and your repose?

Your rest is mine. Without you I am lost
In senseless wanderings that have no end,
No goal, no meaning, on a road that goes
In twisted byways down to nothingness.

Come now, my Love, and save me from despair.
The Way, the Truth, the Life are with me then.
The journey is forgotten in the joy
Of endless quiet and your kiss of peace.

The Egyptian Book of the Dead

Column of Gold

Awakening Osiris: The Egyptian Book of the Dead, Chapter 57 translated by Normandi Ellis

Beside the well the sycamore rises.
 Beside the well bright cornflowers grow.
 Do they rise on their tender stalks by will or does some force of love mold them,
 drive them up?
 In the seed lies the will to become and the greater will gives form.
 The power of the green shoot parts the earth.
 The water in the well is nourishing.
 I rise.
 My spine is of bone, sinew and flesh.
 I am a man desirous of life.
 I will dance, harvest corn and make children.
 I will make my peace with earth.
 I shine.
 The power of gods courses through me and makes of my backbone a column of gold.
 I am the flower on its stalk, the budding of sycamore branches.
 I am the pillar on which the balance of life is weighed.
 Oh! my heart beats with joy; my life is golden as the humming of bees.
 I live for a time and pass away, but the column of gold will stand.
 The powers of gods shape us, and those who give themselves not to its will, grow twisted, bent
 and stunted.
 It is easier to live in the light of the great will,
 to love than to grow in the shadows of the self-imaginings.
 As the gods will, so grows the universe.
 I rise.
 I am a column of gold, eternal, at peace, in harmony.

Taoist Tradition

I bow to the All-Creating Power from which I came and to which I am returning.

Returning is the motion of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The 10,000 things are born of being.
Being is born of nonbeing.

Source: *Living the Wisdom of the Tao*, Chapter 40, Wayne W. Dyer

Blessings, Meditations and Prayers for Death and Grief

Parting Words at Departure

May you be free of fear, and know you are cared for.

May you be free of concern, and rest in peacefulness.

May your body and mind be free of pain, and may your spirit find comfort.

Know you are a precious child/son/mother/etc

Blessed Soul

Rev. Lillianna Murphy

Blessed Soul,

You were never alone.

Wherever you are, God is and all is as it should be.

God knows your earthly name and will receive you lovingly into the arms of all that is.

No matter your circumstances you are deeply loved and perfect.

~

A Blessing at the Graveside*Rev Mary Ellen Lucas*

(Insert name) _____, you may have felt alone and frightened

but you have never been forgotten for God has *always* been with you.

Now no longer bound by struggle or illness,

your spirit is free to merge fully into the Presence of Love.

May God bless those who skillfully tried to mend you back to health...

courageous attempts made on your behalf,

compassionate care given and kindnesses offered.

May God's healing Spirit comfort the hearts of the caregivers.

Despite their best efforts, God will be the One to restore you to wholeness.

Bless those who prepared your body for burial and recognized you

not just as another statistic of COVID-19 but as a being created by God

deserving the utmost care and respect.

Bless those who shepherded you to your final resting place.

We ask the sacred earth to hold your body with reverence

for your holiness has blessed this world.

Amen.

~

No Life Uncounted*Rev. Carol Takacs*

Upon your first breath we counted you among the souls who reached the earth.

Whatever your path had been we pray in reverence for your precious time once here.

Your soul released from our sight, now free to journey on.

Upon your last breath we counted you in our hearts forever.

Funeral Meditations

Rev. Susan Turchin

Take a moment to close your eyes.

Feel your feet firmly on the floor and feel your breath as it enters and leaves your body.

Quiet yourself and allow a mental picture of _____ to come to your mind.

Hold it and cherish it.

See her smile, feel her touch.

Surround your picture in pick light.

Send it love.

Now surround it in white light.

Fill it with so much light that the picture grows lighter and brighter – so bright that the white light turns golden.

Feel the love that has filled the picture and your body.

Embrace this love for this is the love that _____ had for you.

Let it embrace you.

Know that this love is always there for you.

Know you can come back to it anytime anywhere.

~

Dear God, (Beloved, Universal Source, Mystery, Eternal One) We pray to you today with gratitude for the lives of these souls who are now with you. Please help their transition to the next reality be swift and easy. Guide them and embrace them.

And please help comfort their loved ones. Hold them in our loving support as they cannot be here to say goodbye to their dear one. Help them to find the strength they need today and in the weeks ahead.

With love in our hearts we say, Amen.

~

Eternal Mystery, that which sparks each of us with life.

When the days of a loved one on earth are ended,

Let them be welcomed home to the heart of the Beloved.

Where time is eternal and days are not numbered.

Like a friend returning from a long journey.

Giving rest to their souls.

Please anoint them with the balm of peace.

O Beloved, let the grace and gentleness of the Shekinah, the Holy Spirit be upon us their loved ones as they face this loss.

Increase the Light within them

O' Beloved hear our prayer.

Amen

Blessing for Those Who Lost Someone*Rev. Lynn Manuel*

We are never alone
 We may be physically apart but our hearts are forever tied
 To those who have lost someone in this time of COVID solitude
 We see you enwrapped in a cloak of love sent to you from Those who no longer walk with us here.
 We know that our love will stay with their spirits always.
 When we return to the outside there may be one less hand to hold - so we will instead hold our memories safe in our hearts.
 We will heal - together.

Thank you God and so it is.

~

Beautiful One*Rev. Malia T. Blake*

Dear Beautiful One. We miss you. We miss your tears and your smile.
 We miss your kindness and your frailty.
 We miss hearing your voice.
 We long to hug you. We long to share the sky with you.

Thank you Beautiful One.
 Thank you for your generosity and your gifts of creativity.
 Thank you for being perfectly you.
 Thank you for loving us. Thank you for letting us love you.

Now as your soul rests we will hear you when the wind blows.
 We will see you in the Sun and Sky.
 We will know you are with us when we see the oceans, trees and flowers.
 We will think of you when we hear birdsong.
 We will even think of you and smile when we hear a car horn or a door slam.
 We will remember your sweetness as we love our friends, family and beloved pets.

Thank you Beautiful One for leaving us with so much love.
 We are blessed because of you.

May the Universe keep you in peaceful rest.

And so it is.

~

Ceremony/Ritual to Remember a Person Who Has Died in a Medical Setting

Rev. Victoria DellaSperanza

Four steps:

1 Gathering: A moment of pause to gather themselves.

”We pause now to recognize the life of N and how our lives were impacted by N.”

2 Remembering: “What are your remembrances of N in a few words?” A moment of remembering where the medical staff can voice out loud a sentence or two of the things they observed about the person positively. (To possibly tell the family later.)

3 Paying respect/ honoring the life:

“This person’s life was unique and special. A singular example of the diversity of humanity. They died due to covid-19/related symptoms. They were not a statistic. They had a name which we will use again now: (speak full name).

We now pause to give thanks for the life of N (Quiet pause for individual thoughts/prayer/meditation)

4) Departing: “We are thankful that we were able to use our skill and best professional means to care for them. We left nothing undone. May we take the encounter with this person into our next moments of working towards preserving and sustaining life.

May we all return to a moment of calm peace within us - as we now move forward into the next moments of our day. (Pause)

Thank you.”

(Dismissal. A small hand bell- if appropriate- can be used to signal the start and completion of the ritual.)

~

Eternal Connection*Rev. Shobha Diane Hughes*

Beloved Souls, Beloved Beings,
 May you be held in the Splendorous Healing Light of God.

May we be comforted through the knowledge that we will meet again one day by the eternal connection of love that is living in our hearts.

We are so grateful and so blessed by the time we had together.

You are forever precious in our sight and we deeply honor you

~

Prayer for After Death*Rev. Olivia Bareham, submitted by Rev. Catharine DeLong*

Blessed Ones, your life's work is complete and all is forgiven and released
 The purity of love from those gathered here today knows no bounds,
 We are here to support you on your way.
 Thank you for your gifts of love and service.
 Thank you for assisting humanity in the endless evolution toward Love.
 We are profoundly grateful.
 Go now in peace without hesitation,
 You will be loved for always and will never be forgotten.
 We call upon all guardian angels, guides and ancestors of these dear souls
 Please take them on your wings and guide them safely into the embrace of eternal Love.
 Holy Father, Holy Mother, Great Architect of the Universe,
 we humbly beseech you to open the gates of heaven
 and receive our brothers and sisters back into your tender, loving embrace,
 until we meet again.
 Amen.

~

Additional Words of Comfort and Peace

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

Attributed to Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep
 I am not there. I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand winds that blow.
 I am the diamond glints on snow.
 I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
 I am the gentle autumn rain.
 When you awaken in the morning's hush
 I am the swift uplifting rush
 Of quiet birds in circled flight.
 I am the soft stars that shine at night.
 Do not stand at my grave and cry;
 I am not there. I do not die.

~

A Reflection on Grief

Jamie Anderson

Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, the lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go.

Make Me Brave for Life

Author Unknown

God, make me brave for life: oh, braver than this.
 Let me straighten after pain, as a tree straightens after the rain,
 Shining and lovely again.
 God, make me brave for life; much braver than this.
 As the blown grass lifts, let me rise
 From sorrow with quiet eyes,
 Knowing Thy way is wise.
 God, make me brave, life brings
 Such blinding things.
 Help me to keep my sight;
 Help me to see aright
 That out of dark comes light.

Eulogy for Martyred Children *(adapted)**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Now I say to you, life is hard,
 at times as hard as crucible steel.
 It has its bleak and difficult moments.
 Like the ever-flowing waters of the river,
 life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood.
 Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons,
 life has the soothing warmth of its summers
 and the piercing chill of its winters.
 But if one will hold on,
 he will discover that God walks with him,
 and that God is able to lift you from the fatigue of despair
 to the buoyancy of hope
 and transform dark and desolate valleys
 into sunlit paths of inner peace.

~

Man's Search for Meaning *(excerpt)**Viktor Frankl*

Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in the spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still alive at all, ceases to be of importance.

~

Prayer*Maya Angelou*

Father, Mother, God,
 Thank you for your presence
 during the hard and mean days.
 For then we have you to lean upon.
 Thank you for your presence
 during the bright and sunny days,
 for then we can share that which we have
 with those who have less.

And thank you for your presence
during the Holy Days, for then we are able
to celebrate you and our families
and our friends.

For those who have no voice,
we ask you to speak.

For those who feel unworthy,
we ask you to pour your love out
in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain,
we ask you to bathe them
in the river of your healing.

For those who are lonely, we ask
you to keep them company.

For those who are depressed,
we ask you to shower upon them
the light of hope.

Dear Creator, You, the borderless
sea of substance, we ask you to give to all the
world that which we need most—Peace.

~

The Invitation

Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your
Heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like
A fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.
It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.

I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow,
If you have been opened by life's betrayals, or have become shriveled and closed from fear of
further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own,
Without moving to hide or fade it or fix it.
I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own;
If you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips
Of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful,
Be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being a human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you're telling me is true.
 I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself;
 If you can hear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.
 I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore be trustworthy.
 I want to know if you can see the beauty even when it is not pretty every day,
 And if you can source your life from its presence.
 I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine,
 And still stand on the edge of a lake and shout
 To the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have.
 I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair,
 Weary and bruised to the bone,
 And do what needs to be done for the children.
 It doesn't interest me who you are, or how you came to be here.
 I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me
 And not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.
 I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.
 I want to know if you can be alone with yourself,
 And if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

~

Beannacht

John O'Donohue

On the day when
 The weight deadens
 On your shoulders
 And you stumble,
 May the clay dance
 To balance you.

And when your eyes
 Freeze behind
 The grey window
 And the ghost of loss
 Gets into you
 May a flock of colours,
 Indigo, red, green,
 And azure blue
 Come to awaken in you
 A meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
 In the currach of thought
 And a stain of ocean
 Blackens beneath you,
 May there come across the waters
 A path of yellow moonlight
 To bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
 May the clarity of light be yours,
 May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
 May the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
 Wind work these words
 Of love around you
 An invisible cloak
 To mind your life.

~

Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom

John O'Donohue

Death is a lonely visitor. After it visits your home, nothing is ever the same again. There is an empty place at the table; there is an absence in the house. Having someone close to you die is an incredibly strange and desolate experience. Something breaks within you then that will never come together again. Gone is the person whom you loved, whose face and hands and body you knew so well. This body, for the first time, is completely empty. This is very frightening and strange. After the death many questions come into your mind concerning where the person has gone, what they see and feel now. The death of a loved one is bitterly lonely. When you really love someone, you would be willing to die in their place. Yet no one can take another's place when that time comes. Each one of us has to go alone.

It is so strange that when someone dies, they literally disappear. Human experience includes all kinds of continuity and discontinuity, closeness and distance. In death, experience reaches the ultimate frontier. The deceased literally falls out of the visible world of form and presence. At birth you appear out of nowhere, at death you disappear to nowhere. . . . The terrible moment of loneliness in grief comes when you realize that you will never see the deceased again. The absence of their life, the absence of their voice, face, and presence become something that, as Sylvia Plath says, begins to grow beside you like a tree.

If you really live your life to the full, death will never have power over you. It will never seem like a destructive, negative event. It can become, for you, the moment of release into the deepest treasures of your own nature; it can be your full entry into the temple of your soul. If you are able let go of things, you learn to die spiritually in little ways during your life. When you learn to let go of things, a greater generosity, openness, and breath comes into your life. Imagine this letting go multiplied a thousand times at the moment of your death. That release can bring you a completely new divine belonging.

~

Peace My Heart

Rabindranath Tagore

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.
 Let it not be a death but completeness.
 Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.
 Let the flight through the sky end in the folding of the wings over the nest.
 Let the last touch of your hands be gentle like the flower of the night.
 Stand still, o beautiful end, for a moment, and say your last words in silence.
 I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.

~

A Prayer for the World

Rabbi Harold Kushner

Let the rain come and wash away
 The ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds
 Held and nurtured over generations
 Let the rain wash away the memory
 Of the hurt, the neglect.
 Then let the sun come out and
 Fill the sky with rainbows
 Let the warmth of the sun heal us
 Wherever we are broken.
 Let it burn away the fog
 So that
 We can see each other clearly.
 So that we can see beyond labels,
 Beyond accents, gender or skin color.
 Let the warmth and brightness
 Of the sun melt our selfishness,
 So that we can share the joys and
 Feel the sorrows of our neighbors.

And let the light of the sun
Be so strong that we will see all
People as our neighbors.
Let the earth, nourished by rain,
Bring forth flowers
To surround us with beauty.
And let the mountains teach our hearts
To reach upward to heaven.
Amen.

~

**In Gratitude,
One Spirit Learning Alliance**