

# **The Limb of the Redemption**

## **The Practice, the Play, the Love, the Choice and the People in the Afterlife**

Psychic and Out-of-Body States in some Recallment  
An Out-of-Body Travel Book on True Resurrection  
By Marilyn Hughes

**The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation**  
<http://outofbodytravel.org>



The Resurrection, Mormon Painting, 1840's

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## INTRODUCTION

### A Vision of Ascension – The Practice

Hovering before the white and cloudy portal, I inherently knew that the galactic heavens were inside. Colors of Red, Yellow, Blue and Orange swirled in the mists. A voice from within beckoned me to leave such spaces, for I was not allowed to go yet, it was not yet my time to leave the physical embodiment of the earthly sphere.

Suddenly, I stood within a very snowy sphere. It was my own hometown hidden inside the mountain ranges of the continental divide. It was protected from the world in a way that many other places could not be done, and it was reflected to me as divinely guarded by not only beings of light but by the snowy ranges which protected its midst. A huge shadowbox was in the center of the village, a mystical

sign of Our Lady of Perpetual Adoration, a convent which was now silent and alone. Only I remained there to praise God in its shadowy presence.

And my spirit was heralded to the location in the mystic realms of Mother Angelica's tomb, a Poor Clare Nun who had come earlier to consecrate my soul within her order. It was an honor to kneel at the site, knowing that she had taken me under her consecration just two weeks prior.

In the silence, wordless energies of wisdom and knowledge fluttered about and entered within my spirit. Everything about me embodied a very holy stillness. As I took this expression upon myself, I was released into the next phase of my journey.

Suddenly and within an instant, I was certain I had crossed over because I was siphoned into a whirlwind of liturgical history which held such significance and awakens that it seemed impossible to enter it before having parted with the earthly realm.

But as had happened many times before, I was not dead, only exploring the worlds of the living who remain beyond the veil of death.

I found myself walking with some of the most holy men from all of Christian history . . . and yet, some of them were quite notorious.

In a windswell of wisdom, a breeze entered me which filled my soul with the knowledge that everything

goes back to the liturgy . . . everything. In that moment, I knew that all religious history, history itself, and even the answer to the extraterrestrial situation . . . all went back to the liturgy.

My soul was flying through history and walking with those who had followed the many different liturgies which emerged during the time of the early church. Although, I was told, I would always go back to the Catholic Liturgy, it was necessary that I visit some of these others.

First, my spirit was taken into four liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church. With each liturgy, I was to be taken to the historical time frame from which it emerged, meet the writers of those liturgies and witness some of the historically relevant and doctrinally important issues of each one. And then the books themselves would be presented to me in huge and massive volumes which I would hold and carry on with me to the next destination.

Ironically, one of the first that was presented to me were the writings of St. John of the Cross. Although he did not write liturgies, as far as I know, it was clear that his writings were as liturgies in their relevance, holiness and importance to the spiritual progression of the soul.

I acknowledged this and went to the next.

Again, in another irony which defies explanation, Pope Benedict XVI was presented to me as a second

liturgy. And although, again, it is not known to me that he wrote liturgies, it was absolutely clear in the mirror of holiness which emerged from his eminent domain that he was a very holy pope, and his writings also were as liturgies in their relevance, holiness and importance to the spiritual progression of the soul.

I acknowledged this and went to the next.

The third liturgy related to exorcisms, demons and spiritual warfare, and the element of discernment and warfare required for the soul to achieve anything of significance. It was laid out before me as an integral part of the spiritual journey, the liturgy of the soul, so to speak. Without it, progress could not be made in the journey of the soul.

I acknowledged this and went to the next.

The fourth liturgy encompassed me as a holy and living remembrance of death. It was presented to me as a hidden liturgy, one that souls must seek, but cannot be easily grasped in the true and sacred manner in which it demonstrates itself. It was unknown, but knowable; hidden, but with the right prayer and constancy, could be found.

I acknowledged this and went to the next.

Amongst these four liturgies of the church, I felt holiness and held my silence as the white energies of the purity surrounded and enmeshed within me.

And in a millisecond, the actual liturgies of the church came in like a monsoon rainstorm and pelted within my spirit, as I became aware of the fact that many existed in the early church and moved and traveled with the apostles and others who reconciled the world to Our Lord Jesus Christ. (The first liturgy had emerged in Jerusalem, the Liturgy of St. James. Others came such as the Roman Liturgy, the Roman Breviary, the Liturgy of Mari and Adai, the Syrian Daily Office, the Coptic Liturgy, the Armenian, the Old Catholic, the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified of St. Gregory the Dialogist, the Mozarabic, the Ancient Gallican, the Orthodox Liturgies, the Byzantine, the Hieratikon and the Ambrosian Liturgy, among the few.) I vowed to obtain, study and pray every one of these liturgies, and to allow my soul to inhale their breath.

I acknowledged this and turned to find myself in a different space and time.

It was made known to me as my soul travelled at the effervescent speed of liturgical history, that there were two other liturgies of the Roman Catholic tradition which would remain unknown to me this eve. They were hidden in every possible way, for what reason I did not know. But they were extremely holy.

Tsunami's of energy whirled again around me as I heard that I was now going to travel the path of four

heretical liturgies which were very, very sacred despite their status as heresies.

And then I found myself standing before a Nestorian altar. Candles were lit on each side, long golden candlesticks with a single, slim and tall burning edifice. A table with a deep burghundy plush fabric embroidered in gold etchings. The room was dark and I inherently understood that this was an Eastern Liturgy of some kind which was presented to me as very, very holy.

It was not until later that I would find that Nestorian Liturgies are still practiced in some churches today, and that Nestorianism was considered a heresy in its day. One of its primary differences to the Roman Catholic Doctrine appeared to be a Christological doctrine that emphasized a difference between the human and divine natures of Jesus. They also took issue with the title 'Mother of God' for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nestorius lived from 386-450 A.D . . . there was something else that seemed of profound importance.

Present day Nestorians occupied the same part of India where Jesus, Mary and Mary Magdalene have been rumoured to have lived after the crucifixion and resurrection. According to these legends, the Essenes saved Jesus Christ through tunnels in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Eventually, the three joined the Apostle Thomas on his journey to India (The Apostle Thomas's Journey to India is common knowledge.) where tombs of all four of them are known to exist.

He had come to be known as Issa, a great prophet, and there are instances in both Hindu and Buddhist ancient sacred texts which are attributed to having been written and spoken by him. At his tomb, there is a sculpture of his feet which bears the scars of nails that may have been from the crucifixion. He is venerated in that small little town, and the tomb is protected by a long line of 'guardians of the tomb', people who are said to go all the way back to Issa's time.

If the story is true, it is actually possible that Jesus himself had a hand in setting the tradition for the future written Nestorian Liturgy.

The overwhelming and ominous nature of that possibility swept through me like a breath of holiness.

However, it could be equally true that St. Thomas, who was called 'the twin' of Christ because they apparently looked so much alike, could have been mistaken for Christ as the Prophet Issa, because we know that even Church History acknowledges that St. Thomas was sent to India.

This theory would not explain away the tombs of Mary, Mother of God or Mary Magdalene. And there is another tradition relating to Rennes le Chateau in France, indicating the possibility that Mary Magdalene may be buried there. So equal evidence seems to point to both possibilities. So there are many questions, and no completely inerrant answers. We

can only follow the trail of the liturgies, the sacred texts, and the tombs.

I found myself dumbfounded because I knew little of this Nestorian liturgy except of its heretical status. But here in this sphere, I could feel the absolute holiness of the man, Nestorius, and his liturgy. In a glimpse, a curtain was set aside, and behind it he stood. Wearing a long deep but rusty red robe to his feet, golden etchings similar to the altar cloth were above his waist. He was hiding, he had to be careful. But our eyes met and a knowledge was transferred. I bowed and was swept away.

Another time, another man . . . he was in hiding. His name was Marcion. Because he was on the run and had to keep his writings hidden, I followed him on a lengthy journey through what seemed to be ancient alleyways and small rooms made of sandstone or rock. He was wearing the garb of white with a cape that also seemed to have that rusty red appearance. He had long white hair and a gallant beard.

His situation seemed even more dangerous and dire than Nestorius, but yet, despite its obvious heretical status, the energy of its holiness shone through as if by an advent of heavenly light. There was no denying it, even though I had never prior really heard of this heresy or paid it much mind.

When I reached a hidden hovel in the rocks, Marcion handed me his book and what turned out to be the very first New Testament ever written. I had not

known this, and was astonished to hear that there was a pre-nicene New Testament. For some reason, when I held his writings, I began to feel afraid for my safety and tucked them tightly under my garments and sought out an escape from this ancient time. Marcion looked deeply into my eyes and conveyed his unique understanding of the revelation of God. I knew its holiness, but not its content.

And again, as I was swaying in the energetic impulses which surrounded me, the message returned to me. Everything goes back to the liturgy, and somehow it also explains and goes back to the extraterrestrial presence.

*"The main points of Marcion's teaching were the rejection of the Old Testament and a distinction between the Supreme God of goodness and an inferior God of justice, who was the Creator and God of the Jews. He regarded Christ as the messenger of the Supreme God . . . The Old and New Testaments, Marcion argued, cannot be reconciled to each other. The code of conduct advocated by Moses was 'an eye for an eye', but Christ set this precept aside. Elisha had had children eaten by bears; Christ said, 'Let the little children come to me'. Joshua had stopped the sun in its path in order to continue the slaughter of his enemies; Paul quoted Christ as commanding, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath'. In the Old Testament divorce was permitted and so was polygamy; but in the New Testament neither is allowed. Moses enforced the Jewish Sabbath and Law; Christ has freed believers from both."*

*The Development of the Canon of the New Testament, Metzger, Bruce  
M. Clarendon Press. Oxford. 1987*

*“Marcion, we may conclude, was important for two reasons. He rejected the Old Testament as the document of an alien religion; and he taught that Jesus had come to save humankind from the control of the evil Creator to whom the Old Testament witnesses. These are precisely the two aspects of his work on which patristic condemnations, from Tertullian onwards, focus. In the process he denied the validity of allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, which he saw as a means of accommodating it to Christian belief.”*

*The Canon Debate, Lee Martin McDonald, James A. Sanders, Editors*

Marcion’s writings went on to take more Gnostic dimensions as the centuries went by . . .

But yet, the meaning of this obviously holy and profound mystical experience could not be understood by me at this time. I could only conjecture.

And there were two other heresies and their liturgies which remained out of my view. But I was not allowed to remember their energies . . .

Suddenly, I was again swept away, to grandiosely awake in the earthly realm not knowing how I could have taken such a conscious journey and yet to have done so while still alive in the body.

And a voice pierced the silence saying:

“Of either Buddha mind  
Is it This One Extreme Bodh Gaya

(A village in central Bihar, Northeastern India. The Site of the tree under which Siddhartha became the Buddha.)

Or is it really the other?

Is it the opposite?"

And whoosh, the spirit swept me into the ethereal winds with a gathered burst. In the cloudy skies, I saw Pope Francis coming to my church, pleading my case against the all too common accusations that had been made against me as a heretic for about five years hence. "We seek the truth, do we not?" He said. "God is the embodiment of all truth. Does the truth change God? Or does it enhance and glorify? Do not speak of heresies, speak of the truth . . . for it was Christ who said the truth will set you free." Pausing, he garnered his thoughts. "Do you need Church?" His pause became pregnant. "In this jumbled mess . . . is all so beautiful. Be not afraid, as my predecessor Pope John Paul II so often spoke. And let it be." As his image began to disintegrate into the heavens, fragrance began to enter the atmosphere through his prayer.

*"Jesus: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."  
Luke 6:31*

*Buddha: "Consider others as yourself." Dhammapada 10:1*

*Jesus: "If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also." Luke 6:29*

*Buddha: "If anyone should give you a blow with his hand, with a stick, or with a knife, you should abandon any desires and utter no evil words." Majjhima Nikaya 21:6*

*Jesus: "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." Matthew 25:45*

*Buddha: "If you do not tend to one another, then who is there to tend you? Whoever would tend me, he should tend the sick." Vinaya, Mahavagga 8:26.3*

*Jesus: "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword." Matthew 26:52*

*Buddha: "Abandoning the taking of life, the ascetic Gautama dwells refraining from taking life, without stick or sword." Digha Nikaya 1:1.8*

*Jesus: "Those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it." Mark 8:35*

*Buddha: "With the relinquishing of all thought and egotism, the enlightened one is liberated through not clinging." Majjhima Nikaya 72:15*

*Jesus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20*

*Buddha: "Teach the dharma which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the end. Explain with the spirit and the letter in the fashion of Brahma. In this way you will be completely fulfilled and wholly pure." Vinaya Mahavagga 1:11.1"*

***Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings, Edited by Marcus Borg,  
published by Ulysses Press***

*"When Buddha was travelling and living in this world, there was an old Brahman priest who wore white robes who asked the Buddha, "How will all men and all Brahmins continue in their merit-making so as to escape the results of sin?" The Buddha answered, "Even though all of you give*

*alms according to the 5 precepts, the 8 precepts, the 10 precepts, or the 227 precepts for 9 trillion years and you raise your hands and offer yourselves as a burnt offering, or you pray 5 times a day, you will still not escape the results of your sins. If you do this every day, your merit gained will only be equal to the smallest strand of hair of an unborn infant which is extremely small. You shall not enter heaven's doors."*

*The old Brahman priest asked further, "What are we all to do to be saved?" The Buddha answered the old Brahman priest, "The results of sin and karma are very great, heavier than the sky, thicker than the earth, and so high that it would be like an angel dusting the corner-posts of the temple compound with a cloth post that are 18 inches high - dusting them one time per year - until the posts were worn down to the ground. When the posts are worn down, that's how long it would take to end your sins."*

*The Buddha said further, "I have given up my high position and entered the priesthood. I considered that even though I am good, I would have only a very small amount of merit at the end of the year. If I was given this same amount of merit for 100,000 epochs and live 10 more lifetimes, I would not be saved from sin's results even once. The old Brahman priest asked further, "So what should we all do?" The Buddha answered, "Keep on making merit and look for another Holy One who will come and help the world and all of you in the future."*

*Then the old Brahman priest asked, "What will the characteristics of the Holy One be like?" The Buddha answered him, "The Holy One who will keep ??? the world in the future will be like this: in the palms of his hands and*

*in the flat of his feet will be the design of a disc, in the side will be a stab wound; and his forehead will have many marks like scars. This Holy One will be the golden boat who will carry you over the cycle of rebirths all the way to the highest heaven (Nirvana).*

*Do not look for salvation the old way; there is no salvation in it for sure. Quit the old way. And there will be a new spirit like the light of a lightning bug in all of your hearts and you will be victorious over all your enemies. Nobody will be able to destroy you. If you die, you will not come back to be born in this world again. You will go to the highest heaven (Nirvana)."*

*Buddha was correct about the uselessness of trying to earn merit. It is impossible. What the Holy One Buddha has said would come has come. About 500 years after Buddha left this world, the prophecy was fulfilled. When Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away human sin, each hand and foot was pierced with a large nail leaving a disk shape. (John 20:20), his side was pierced with a spear (John 19:34); and his forehead had many marks on it from the crown of thorns the Romans put on him (John 19:2). Jesus Christ opened up a new way of faith to relate to God so that the old ways of merit could be left behind. Through Jesus alone, one can find escape from the impossibility of doing merit. Through Jesus alone, one can find perfect assurance that the highest heaven is opened by God's grace."*

*Permission was granted to copy these Buddhist Scriptures regarding the prophecy of the Holy One (Jesus) from Wat Phra Sing in Chiang Mai Province. The person who gave permission was Phra Sriwisutthiwong in Bangkok. It is guaranteed that this copy is accurate according to the original, that there is no error in transmission, which is in the book of the district headman, the religious encyclopedia, volume 23, book #29. This inquiry was made on October 13, 1954 A.D. (Buddhist era 2497).*

*Phra Sriwisutthiwong is the Deputy Abbot and Director of Wat Pho Museum, Wat Pho Temple, Thailand.*

And I was granted again to see the many manifestations of humanity, the degradation and wretchedness along with the perfection and glory that I've described in so many experiences before. As symphonies played sacred music, I saw defilements and demons flee the world as I heard a voice say, "Our purpose is to live out the life we were meant to live with the people for which we were meant to live it in peace." And I realized that the sacred music had cleansing qualities. I vowed to play it more openly in my own home.

I began to clean up places which had been defiled by wiping them away and writing liturgies upon their walls, placing holy objects in their stead and observing the times and seasons of places throughout the parallel universes of life. The quantum hologram contained a multiplicity and such things were purified by the writing down, singing, chanting, and praying of the liturgies.

Nuns passed by in full dress, unobserved by the people of their time. But they continued their work, their daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. Their work remained unseen, although profoundly important (as with the monks, priests and other religious) in the purification of humankind and our world.

Angelic hierarchies surrounded me and removed negative influences from my person, including two

alien greys who vomited on me to try to keep me from pursuing this mission of great importance.

Then, I observed atheists and the people of the world who had spent no time in preparation for eternity going to a secret confessional in the stars while remaining unconscious of it in their bodies. God was working on their souls in mysterious ways . . . beautiful. Animals were appearing in the skies surrounded by lights.

A young man broke down the walls of a barn looking for something valuable. But golden books peered through and shattered the world with their lights. The young man was mad, it was not what he was looking for . . . he was looking for earthly, not heavenly, treasure.

I had to begin climbing the mountains of the stars . . . others with me were hiding things of the earth, things of vice, in their midst. I told them they could not climb with me unless they were to discard such relics of a world past and gone. After they discarded their useless implements, I used my arms, and was able to generate light which mobilized our spirits upward towards a house in the heavens, a house containing some type of mysterious knowledge. We got in.

As we entered, we were all disbursed into the cyclonic energies of the work of God above on the world below. They were healing accelerations. We were gathered to travel many realms, beautifying and organizing them. We did 'the menial work' which I

was told made me the most happy; cleaning, arranging things, disbursing the garbage and the trash, the unhappy or unwilling thoughts of humanity . . . and we incited the liturgies.

Continuing to place relics, write liturgies on walls, shatter darkness with holy water and holy salt; we travelled through an aeon (literally thousands) of images of Our Lady. These were not just the apparitions as they've been seen by the people of earth, but by many other extraterrestrial races on other planets and in other galaxies. It was literally infinite. We organized the images and placed in a realm of honor wherein all beings in all worlds could benefit from their purifying effects.

Our Lady of Perpetual Adoration descended wearing a brown robe with brown rose lace on the hood of her veil. She reminded me of my consecration to the Poor Clare's and my new duty to stand in perpetual silence and honor of God in retreat and seclusion.

Dangers of the world were shown to me, as a blanket was displayed that protected and covered my space in the world disallowing defiled energies to enter. "Leave things as they are," she said, "cloistered and protected. Do not venture out into the world."

I was shown in an expectant vision what would happen if I did not follow this direction, my living space would become contaminated, words would be altered and distorted and the people would misunderstand that which was coming through. I was

to retain a verbal silence in this regard to protect the work being wrought in my soul.

She handed me a small green book which contained within it sacred mysteries about my cat. In the physical realm, I had named her Pangur Ban, after St. Colomba's mystical kitty cat who had lived with him as a hermit. In Gaelic, Pangur Ban meant White Panther.

In the mystical realms, her name was Secret Snow. In this small green book, it was described how Secret Snow was a mystical cat who had come from the heavens, incarnated and found her way to me to assist in processing things of the world. She was a mystical gift from God. I was honored.

The book further instructed to keep my heart and hearth pure, not to allow defilements which could interfere with the mission of silence, and the continuing disbursement of the liturgy into the etherical spheres of the earth.

My spirit was given to see what could happen if I allowed for those who wished to serve no purpose in this life to violate my sphere. Urine, trash, feces, vomit, blood and dead bodies appeared all over the house. And those who had brought such things with them refused to help in cleaning it up, processing it, altering the future potential of the human race. Our Lady of Perpetual Adoration looked with a calm deliberation upon the defilement . . . and it all caught fire and burned to ash before my eyes.

And within this mystical cathedral of silence in my heart, that which was Catholic and that which was Zen merged into one.

A worldly priest and his congregation had entered from below, those who had falsely accused me of heresy before began to again cause a raucous. "You are getting what you deserve, heretic." They thought they knew me, but didn't know me at all. Our Lady of Perpetual Adoration drove them out of the sanctuary without a single word of utterance.

Suddenly, my spirit was swept throughout my entire lifetime. Traveling through all of my life, I realized one thing stood out above all things. It was all very perfect.

Experiencing all the events of my life, there were many crime scenes. Such scenes represented any event wherein someone I had known or loved had suffered unjustly. But this, too, was perfect.

Many people had made lots of promises which they never intended to keep and did not. Many hardships came out of such things in the world. I relived all the mixed meanings, the hopes and the subsequent dashed hopes. Lots of corruption, sadness, politics and unjust events swirled through my mind like a sword. But it was ALL perfect.

Standing on a precipice, I was both happy and sad to see the perfection of our lives. Imperfection is perfect.

And then I was given to look at the mountains and valleys we had crossed throughout our journeys. We had been lucky to live amongst them.

Suddenly, I knew something was going to happen, something was wrong. I didn't know what it was. I saw my loved ones as old people; watching the things they had conquered and the things that would remain with them until the end.

Several of them came into the adoration chapel. I wanted to tell them all I had seen, but they were tired. So I grabbed them each individually and said 'You have to promise me that no matter what happens you know I love you with all my heart.' They didn't necessarily believe me. Something was coming, I could feel it, but I didn't know what. It seemed that something was coming personally, but also there were intimations of a huge world event that would change everything.

Despite all these revelations, I was still very happy and I felt a faint presence of my mother. She had been very sick but living on the other side of the country. Because I'd also been sick, I hadn't been able to see her in quite a few years. Neither of us could travel.

As I was observing, I was shown a home which was related to my loved ones. There was clutter everywhere. I was trying to put everything away, but their thoughts were just too exhausting. These thoughts continued to generate more and more things, more and more stuff, and there was no way to

really help to ever complete cleaning it up. It was like a chaos realm in and of itself. I was saddened, but enlightened in the role I could and could not play in this drama which played out in their psychic constructs.

It became evident that each and every one of us must become conscious of these for ourselves and begin to process them out of our realities. For to live in such unconsciousness provides no processing of these meandering constructs which are born of self-delusion, vice, meaninglessness or just simple disinterest in the matters and workings of God. It becomes almost like huge landfill of wasted thoughts, far reaching negativities and gross neglect of mind and thus, soul.

Swiftly, I broke through the walls and entered into alternate realities which were so expansive, I experienced such a prolific revisionment of my master plan that I no longer could stay. I couldn't wait to find my way out of these earthly prisons created in the heart of humankind and those I loved.

Still others realities I was given to travel, to those within my sphere who were keeping their spiritual houses very nicely.

And then the being of the snow came, a lighted spirit covered in the ice and snow of my particular region. A being of silence, and a being of atonement and resolution.

He transported me to my mother's bedside. It was as if she was going through a life review

My mother and I traveled through her life crying uncontrollably through some of it, laughing uncontrollably through others. We had much that had been left unresolved before she had entered the cruel world of dementia and could no longer resolve that which had remained unprocessed and unforgiven. But here, in this space we were preparing her for her passing which still seemed to me as if it could be a long time away.

Singers in white were singing songs about Christ in the background which was very purifying for my mother.

And I specifically remember holding hands and dancing with her when she was about eighteen in the fields of Germany where she had grown up and laughing together as if we were joining our younger selves into a unity. My mother had needed to see me . . . and God had made it happen despite the difficulties.

And then the ancient sacred texts from throughout the world and throughout time appeared all around me. My mother stood in the midst of them. It was shown to me that although she had been an atheist her whole life and had never known God, that her life was an ancient sacred text and served purposes that I could not yet understand. Her life was a holy ignorance, and I was in awe.

As my spirit was being prepared to leave, I was given specific prayers to offer for my mother as she went through this process; they were specific devotions to Jesus and to Jesus through Mary. I began those devotions immediately . . .

And suddenly, a huge world event was being prophesied somehow . . . I was surrounded by extraterrestrial babies, helping one to incubate. It was interesting to see the tiny larvael cells which were their beginning, turning into the extraterrestrial life forms which they were to become. But they had landed, they were here.

Again, the accusations of heresy . . . I disinterestedly continued my work. But the dark side was fighting against me, they were making constant moves to convey a false dominance so that people like myself would give up the fight.

But Our Lady of Perpetual Adoration again appeared to say, "Too many people are very easily overcome . . . and are not willing to fight for others."

In a flash of light, , Our Lady showed showed me two priests of whom she was extremely pleased. Cardinal James Flannaghan and Cardinal James O'Malley. The first was deceased and the second still living, but both had fought battles in the church over corruption and sexual abuse. She hovered over them, around them and encompassed them. She morphed into all the hundreds of iconographic of manifestations of herself, as I held myself in awe of the holiness of these two

men. Springs of living water began to flow over their images and all around them.

Shift . . . scene changed. I had prayed to Our Blessed Mother that I be allowed to go through my purgatory while still on earth. All around me was a world where everything appeared slightly off from what it should have been in all truth; a purgatory where souls work through the sin of white lies. But isn't this what happens when little white lies are told? Indiscrepancies upon indecision, and suddenly, nothing appears as it really is? When merged all together, everything in this purgatorial world became something different than that which it really was . . . a potpourri of misperception. In gratitude, I thanked her for this insight. She responded by saying, "The whisperers, be careful of the whisperers."

And in a rapid sweep of sorrowful insight, that which I had felt coming, but was unable to identify, occurred with the suddenness that death affords to us all. My mother passed from this realm into eternal life . . . that's what was coming, that's what was going to happen that I could not discern. And thus, the purification and afterlife journey would begin . . .

She hid silently in a sandy aqueduct, while I called out to her, "Mom, I'm here," repeatedly. But she had gone through a life review and was afraid I would be angry with her. There was no anger, I just wanted to help her with what I did best, her afterlife journey.

And the cluttered reality was presented again . . . to one who would have to choose between continuing to live a surface existence with no eternal thrust or perhaps to go forward into a destiny, an existence with eternal purpose.

The vastness demonstrated here between these two realities was shocking, harsh and a dichotomy of worlds. It was presented in a matter which represented these two worlds as being completely divergent from one another; different universes within the same reality. To stay in the realm of surface existence was in a very worldly sphere, but to choose 'destiny' . . . it was a completely different universe, they were millions of light years apart. It appeared as a portal to a vast galactic realm of cosmic light, so small as an entrance and barely visible to those still captured by their worldly concern. But you could feel its emanation into worlds so very far beyond what could be imaged in the portal which simply hovered in the sky, a small reminder to those captured below, that there is an above which could equally captivate their spirits if they would but let it.

Furniture papers, books and other random items were thrown into a waterlogged reality which consistently and continually refilled itself. It was like the sea after a tsunami wherein debris and dead bodies were scattered everywhere. But there were also living dead bodies, the walking dead, so to speak.

There was no end to the contamination of thoughts and pointless acts which manifested in the mystical

realms as garbage, trash, rotting and molding antiquities, and the souls of the senseless walking around as if dead and rotting corpses.

It was truly a chaotic thing to live without God, there was no movement, like a pond without a source of fresh water. And it didn't take long to get exhausted when trying to clean it up, with a fresh new source of contamination ever ready and at the helm to recontaminate.

At first, it seemed to her that living a surface existence without God could be fun, but she had never before seen the actual mystical reality that living such an existence created in the mystical realms. After all, she'd never acknowledged such realms existed. She was kind of between a rock and a hard place. She had died but remained alive in a completely new world and decisions had to be made.

"No," she thought, "a new path will begin." And as we joined hands in order to leave this death behind, I noticed that something was gleaming in the water below the surface. "Hold on, Mom," I said, "I think I see something." Reaching underneath the murky waters, I picked up a golden key . . . the key to heaven which had miraculously manifested as soon as my mother had generated this new thought. I placed it in both of our hands which we held together. Our spirits were lifted up and out, moving forward and into a place where destiny could begin and proceed. We looked each other in the eyes and laughed as we

soared upwards towards a destination yet unknown but now a surety of its finding.

How ineffable had 'destiny' become to me in this worldly display of surface landscaping. 'Destiny' held a secret, a destination. It was a place. It was a decision. And it bore no resemblance to its opposite which wasn't a decision, it was a place of not coming to a resolution in the mind towards anything at all. Rather, a choosing not to decide, to remain in a chaotic, voidless absence of God of your own making; a mess which was generally not visible to those who were making it until after their own death.

How grateful I was to be traveling towards this secret now, rather than standing still, away from the tomb and ever closer to eternal life.

*"In the country of Wei lived Wang P'ou, a very dutiful child, whose mother, when alive, was much afraid of thunder. After her death her grave was dug in the hilly forest; and whenever it blew and rained furiously . . . he hastened immediately to the grave, and, reverently kneeling, besought her with tears, saying: "I am here, dear mother; do not be alarmed." If his kind mother, when alive, always dreaded the voice of Heaven's majesty, how much more will she now, when lying alone in the depths of the wild forest! If P'ou was with his mother, he knew she would be comforted; and he thinks that if in the green hills she has a companion, she will not be terrified."*

*The Book of Filial Duty, By Iven Chen, 1908*

*“1. The tomb in which they laid the body of the Lord was in a garden, rich with flowers, the garden of Siloam, and Joseph's home was near.*

*2. Before the watch began Caiaphas sent a company of priests out to the garden of Siloam that they might be assured that Jesus' body was within the tomb.*

*3. They rolled away the stone; they saw the body there, and then they placed the stone again before the door.*

*4. And Pilate sent his scribe who placed upon the stone the seal of Rome, in such a way that he who moved the stone would break the seal.*

*5. To break this Roman seal meant death to him who broke the seal.*

*6. The Jewish soldiers all were sworn to faithfulness; and then the watch began.*

*7. At midnight all was well, but suddenly the tomb became a blaze of light, and down the garden walk a troupe of white-clad soldiers marched in single file.*

*8. They came up to the tomb and marched and countermarched before the door.*

*9. The Jewish soldiers were alert; they thought the friends had come to steal the body of the Nazarene. The captain of the guard cried out to charge.*

*10. They charged; but not a white-clad soldier fell. They did not even stop; they marched and countermarched among the frightened men.*

*11. They stood upon the Roman seal; they did not speak; they unsheathed not their swords; it was the Silent Brotherhood.*

*12. The Jewish soldiers fled in fear; they fell upon the ground.*

*13. They stood apart until the white-clad soldiers marched away, and then the light about the tomb grew dim.*

14. *Then they returned; the stone was in its place; the seal was not disturbed, and they resumed their watch.*
15. *Now, Jesus did not sleep within the tomb. The body is the manifest of soul; but soul is soul without its manifest.*
16. *And in the realm of souls, unmanifest, the Lord went forth and taught.*
17. *He opened up the prison doors and set the prisoners free;*
18. *He broke the chains of captive souls, and led the captives to the light;*
19. *He sat in council with the patriarchs and prophets of the olden times;*
20. *The masters of all times and climes he met, and in the great assemblies he stood forth and told the story of his life on earth, and of his death in sacrifice for man,*
21. *And of his promises to clothe himself again in garb of flesh and walk with his disciples, just to prove the possibilities of man;*
22. *To give to them the key of life, of death, and of the resurrection of the dead.*
23. *In council all the masters sat and talked about the revelations of the coming age,*
24. *When she, the Holy Breath, shall fill the earth and air with holy breath, and open up the way of man to perfectness and endless life.*
25. *The garden of Siloam was silent on the Sabbath day; the Jewish soldiers watched and no one else approached the tomb; but on the following night the scene was changed.*
26. *At midnight every Jewish soldier heard a voice which said, Adon Mashich Cumi, which meant, Lord Christ arise.*
27. *And they supposed again that friends of Jesus were alert, were coming up to take the body of their Lord away.*
28. *The soldiers were alert with swords unsheathed and drawn, and then they heard the words again.*

29. *It seemed as though the voice was everywhere, and yet they saw no man.*
30. *The soldiers blanched with fear, and still to flee meant death for cowardice, and so they stood and watched.*
31. *Again, and this was just before the sun arose, the heavens blazed with light, a distant thunder seemed to herald forth a coming storm;*
32. *and then the earth began to quake and in the rays of light they saw a form descend from heaven. They said, Behold an angel comes.*
33. *And then they heard again, Adon Mashich Cumi.*
34. *And then the white-robed form tramped on the Roman seal and then he tore it into shreds; he took the mighty stone in hand as though it were a pebble from the brook, and cast it to the side.*
35. *And Jesus opened up his eyes and said, All hail the rising sun; the coming of the day of righteousness!*
36. *And then he folded up his burial gown, his head bands and his coverings and laid them all aside.*
37. *He rose, and for a moment stood beside the white-robed form.*
38. *The weaker soldiers fell upon the ground, and hid their faces in their hands; the stronger stood and watched.*
39. *They saw the body of the Nazarene transmute; they saw it change from mortal to immortal form, and then it disappeared.*
40. *The soldiers heard a voice from somewhere; yea, from everywhere, it said,*
41. *Peace, peace on earth; good will to men.*
42. *They looked, the tomb was empty and the Lord had risen as he said."*

From a member of the Out-of-Body Travel Foundation one week after my mother's death.

Marilynn

I saw your mom and you in a dream, Marilyn, just now. It was a picture of you and her. She looked really beautiful, but had an 80's style. Anyway, the picture of you two was on a Mass Card from the church. Then you had written an update where you mentioned news of the Foundation's Saved Souls number growing almost 10x over.

The new number was in the millions. I surmise that your mother is now realizing where she was off in understanding your mission when she was here. In the next realm, Her realization of the misunderstanding she had of your mission is leading to energetic assistance, and it's going to cause your foundation to thrive. The exact number was upward 400-500 million."

And the words were spoken to me quietly in my ear as I entered the frequential obligation of the mystical realms. "Take charge of the child for the Reaper will be here for but a moment. He will produce considerable persuasion . . ."

As a woman sang the opera 'La Boheme' in the background, she stood in a long dress on a small boat in a river. Her mournful song lamented into the graduated night . . .

# CHAPTER ONE

## A Vision of Purgatory – The Play

But that was not where it had begun . . . at the time of her passing much had remained unresolved.

Her purgatorial crossing had gone through many mansions before she was able to traverse through that beautiful portal. It had begun in a long sleep, and emerged in the venomous anger of a life unexamined.

Beginning at a small and tightly enclosed reminiscence of her home when she was married the second time, she was going through a period of time where she just wanted some peace. She had taken care of kids her whole life, gone through a divorce, married another man and had a beautiful decade with him. But then he got seriously ill and she spent the next twenty years caring for him. She was tired.

But purgatories are not meant for the sheer enjoyment, there is always something we must see that we have been missing, and so, unbeknownst to her I was lying in an upstairs room laying on the bed of my childhood, dying.

Poison began to come out of me in the form of a clear liquid with tiny little bugs infesting it all. Every pore was pouring out literally gallons of this liquid, I was

soaked in it and it was soaking the bed and anything with which my body came into contact.

As the black sheep of the family, I had taken on the energy of a lot of the anger in the household. So within the poison were falsehoods, accusations and false views about who I was which were very strongly encountered in my life from the family.

In my youth, I had always believed in Christ, my mother and siblings were atheists at the time. For some reason, this was a source of a lot of anger. My Father had been very violent and I had been the one to call the police when things got dangerous, but the anger was directed at me for calling the police, not at him for pulling out the rifle.

This poison was literally killing me and I knew it, and I had to get down the stairs to ask my mother for help or I would die. Unable to stand, I grasped my hands and began dragging my body down the staircase before my body stopped on a linoleum entrance to the home. In my mind, I was begging my mother for help, asking her to call 911. I knew she would help . . .

But when I saw her I knew things were going to go very differently than I had hoped. She was not happy to see me, having created this little house reminiscent of a short time in her life where she had some peace, she was absolutely burned out.

But beyond this, the anger, rage and what was most disturbing, the hatred, that she had towards me came

out of her in a violently coherent manner. There was a viciousness in the hatred which was important for me to experience, witness and understand. For not one moment, did she think about calling 911, but began dragging my now unconscious spiritual body through the house, into the living room and onto a couch. She was going to wait for me to die there and then figure out what to do. Under no circumstances, was she going to call for help.

At that moment, I realized how much my mother really had disliked and sometimes hated me throughout her life. Of course, this made me very sad, but she had been the type of person who never spoke about or resolved anything. When she got dementia, it was too late. But after death, it is never too late, we all have to undergo purgation.

A wise remembrance for those who carry on arguments, disagreements and misunderstandings without trying to reconcile them with one another. Just do it . . . it's that simple. And if you have not been able to reach a purificatory result, keep doing it . . . until you can.

As a result of her dragging me into the living room and onto the couch, my mother lost out on what would've been a great opportunity to disburse some of this karmic thrust more readily. Had she called 911 when I was at the linoleum entryway, the cleanup would've been so much simpler; a simple mopping and sweeping. And others, heavenly intercessors, would have arrived to help to work through these

things. But because she had dragged me through carpet and onto another cloth surface to die, the couch, the poisons were now being literally absorbed into those fabrics and it would be much harder to clean it up.

Leaving me on the couch to die, it was made known to me that the poisons would all drain out of me and return to where they had come from . . . my mother would have to process them.

My spirit was gently pulled from the receptacle in the realm, but I knew just the fact that the poisons were now in the open would mean that the next time I might see her, she may very well have disbursed much of these and she might be doing much better. In the meantime, it was my task to pray for her ardently to get through this poison, so she could disburse it and enter yet another mansion.

Yet, another two weeks later, and a lot of ardent prayer, I saw my mother doing very much better. But she was moving into an old home we had lived in when one of our children was younger. Her and her second husband had some issues to work out, and she was going to now (that she had worked through quite a lot of the vestiges of her anger with me) stay with us while she and her husband were a little angry with one another.

Her husband had passed about a decade before, and already gone through his own quite harrowing journey to purification and peace, but these journeys

often involve individual purifications which arise with the crossing of another soul with which were entwined during life. But she was doing much better . . . and I was grateful I could help her by letting her stay where we had once lived. She was surrounded by the souls of all of us, our children, her children, her grandchildren - her family - to support her in this time. Everyone was present, but manifesting in various levels of consciousness.'

In essence, these were things happening with quantum aspects of the individual souls, aspects which would remain present in all of time and space, regardless of whether they yet lived or had died from the earth. Unconscious to most, the quantum states have much to do with creating the constant influx and inflow of the world beyond the veil of life to the world of formation and manifestation below.

But yet, every single human being and every form of life has these quantum states which will operate in a multitude of dimensions all at the same time. While their conscious awareness may only be aware of one point of light or life, in one world, we are all multiworld beings. All life is multidimensional and crosses all boundaries in various frequential manifestations.

And I knew she and him were going to work things out.

During life, he had been quite jealous and oftentimes difficult. He, too, had not been a believer during his

life and almost ended up in hell. But due to a specific battle waged on his behalf, he was given the chance to enter the purgatorial journey shortly after his own death. As a result, he had already gone through much of these issues, seeing their destructive capabilities and purified of them years before. What remained was mostly related to my mothers anger about the events.

Yet, another week later, I saw her climbing a stairway, her husband following her about ten steps below. The stairway was pitch black darkness at the bottom, but about halfway up became light. My mother ascended quickly, with her husband happily following her and they were going higher. More mansions lay ahead.

Yet, another week later, she was resting comfortably in an old home we had lived within when our children were small. All of them were present, it was necessary for her to experience my soul and theirs all in a new way, to make up for lost time, to make up for things we were unable to experience together due to the previous poisons, but also due to illnesses that she and I had suffered; and other circumstances which had kept us apart for several years before her death.

Yet, another week later, we entered a new mansion together wherein it was just she and I. Again, we were surrounded by the time we had lost with one another due to both of our illnesses and misunderstandings. Clutter was everywhere, which I knew to be thoughts, misunderstandings and just

basically other crap. Much of the crap were obstacles placed in our path by others, by circumstances. We would have to carefully go through it, and remove these fetters between us.

In order to do so, my mother had to look upon them, understand them and to accept them: the circumstances of my marriage, having three young children, being so, so ill, and carrying the load of a young family.

I knew it was deftly important that my mother and I finally touch again after all these years. Though I had spent much time holding her hand after her death in her casket, we had been unable to do this during her illness or her crossing over (primarily due to my own illness which made travel impossible) and we needed to touch.

Staying with her the whole night, I was unwilling to leave her in these impurities of the past. And it was not necessary to do so because many of these things had gone on to be changed in the manifest world, as well, which meant she was visiting an energetic construct of what once was, not how things currently energated within the physical realm. Much purification had taken place . . .

In a far away corner, we found a small place which was clear. As we were running towards it, I touched my mother on the back as she was reaching to sit down in this lighted and pure place. Feeling such relief and warmth, we began talking openly about all

the misunderstandings, misperceptions, things done and left undone, many apologies for all that remained between us. Everything was brought to a healthy conclusion, and it didn't take long, just five or ten minutes.

How much we could do if we were to become conscious, aware and live in this manner? Holding nothing back, setting out to resolve even the smallest of misunderstandings, apologizing for the things of the past and the present, and choosing not to hold on to that which could not be undone, yet only understood?

And these were painful, hard memories . . . not just white-washed minor inflictions of hurt. These were serious crimes against one another that everyone among us has committed and most of us have also experienced; things with serious consequences like rape, untimely deaths, abandonment, suicide and more.

My mother and I were both victims and perpetrators of one another, and in order to reach peace, it was so important we were both in a space to accept this truth which is so adamant and prevalent among families and the human condition in this world, this conscious state, we call life.

Before we knew it, all of that was just gone. We sat silently, peacefully, holding one another's hands in a place of total love for one another. None of it mattered anymore . . .

And it was then that we stood before the portal . . . wherein my mother looked upon the defilement of a life without God and had chosen to enter within.

We took the key to heaven I had found in the waters and flew through the tiny gateway to aeons of worlds.

Whoosh . . .

My mother was no longer with me, but I knew she was now of this world. My peace was full. Feeling her presence overriding the realm, my children were presented to me, and I was shown things about them they would need to know, things I would need to teach them still, even as adults, who were struggling to gather 'Destiny' into their own hands. The call of the world was still strong in some of them, and the call of the spirit stronger in others.

My mother had to go now, but she would not fully leave until she had made certain that I knew she was also full, but that I had work to do in that other realm . . . she was a mother, she understood the importance now of this path which must be trod.

Much of it would be without her, but not really because these worlds were intertwined. She saw this now, and knew in a way that reached beyond human understanding that I lived in both worlds, and must continue to do so to fulfill the work of my Master and Lord. But we both knew we would continue to see one another within the context of her journey as God

may so deign. Our journey was not over, simply because another journey must begin or continue.

I had to begin climbing the mountains of the stars . . .

*“Patrick in his time ordered the observance of the following ceremonies by all penitents before their entrance into the original cave on Saints' Island; and for a long time they were strictly carried out:--'The visitor must first go to the bishop of the diocese, declare to him that he came of his own free will, and request of him permission to make the pilgrimage. The bishop warned him against venturing any further in his design, and represented to him the perils of his undertaking; but if the pilgrim still remained steadfast in his purpose, he gave him a recommendatory letter to the prior of the island. The prior again tried to dissuade him from his design by the same arguments that had been previously urged by the bishop. If, however, the pilgrim still remained steadfast, he was taken into the church to spend there fifteen days in fasting and praying. After this the mass was celebrated, the holy communion administered to him and holy water sprinkled over him, and he was led in procession with reading of litanies to the entrance of the purgatory, where a third attempt was made to dissuade him from entering. If he still persisted, the prior allowed him to enter the cave, after he had received the benediction of the priests, and, in entering, he commended himself to their prayers, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead with his own hand. The prior then made fast the door, and opened it not again till the next morning, when, if the penitent were there, he was taken out and led with great joy to the church, and, after fifteen days' watching and praying, was dismissed. If he was not found when the door was opened, it was understood that he had perished in his*

*pilgrimage through purgatory; the door was closed again, and he was never afterwards mentioned'.*

*An enormous mass of literary and historical material was recorded during the mediaeval period, in various European vernaculars and in Latin, concerning St. Patrick's Purgatory; and all of it testifies to the widespread influence of the rites which already then as now attracted thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Christendom. In the poem of Owayne Miles, which forms part of this material, we find a poetical description of the purgatorial initiatory rites quite comparable to Virgil's account of Aeneas on his initiatory journey to Hades.*

*The poem records how Sir Owain was locked in the cave, and how, after a short time, he began to penetrate its depths. He had but little light, and this by degrees disappeared, leaving him in total darkness. Then a strange twilight appeared. He went on to a hall and there met fifteen men clad in white and with heads shaven after the manner of ecclesiastics. One of them told Owain what things he would have to suffer in his pilgrimage, how unclean spirits would attack him, and by what means he could withstand them. Then the fifteen men left the knight alone, and soon all sorts of demons and ghosts and spirits surrounded him, and he was led on from one torture and trial to another by different companies of fiends. (In the original Latin legend there were four fields of punishment.) Finally Owain came to a magic bridge which appeared safe and wide, but when he reached the middle of it all the fiends and demons and unclean spirits raised so horrible a yell that he almost fell into the chasm below. He, however, reached the other shore, and the power of the devils ceased. Before him was a celestial city, and the perfumed air which*

*was wafted from it was so ravishing that he forgot all his pains and sorrows. A procession came to Owain and, welcoming him, led him into the paradise where Adam and Eve dwelt before they had eaten the apple. Food was offered to the knight, and when he had eaten of it he had no desire to return to earth, but he was told that it was necessary to live out his natural life in the world and to leave his flesh and bones behind him before beginning the heavenly existence. So he began his return journey to the cave's entrance by a short and pleasant way. He again passed the fifteen men clad in white, who revealed what things the future had in store for him; and reaching the door safely, waited there till morning. Then he was taken out, congratulated, and invited to remain with the priests for fifteen days.*

*Here we have clearly enough many of the essential features of the underworld: there is the mystic bridge which when crossed guarantees the traveller against evil spirits, just as in Ireland a peasant believes himself safe when fairies are pursuing him if he can only cross a bridge or stream. The celestial city is both like the Christian Heaven and the Sidhe world. The eating of angel food by Owain has an effect quite like that of eating food in Fairyland; but Owain, by Christian influence, is sent back on earth to die 'that death which the King of Heaven and Earth hath ordained,' as Patrick said of the prince whom he saved from the Sidhe-folk.*

*A curious story, in which King Arthur himself is made to visit St. Patrick's Purgatory, published during the sixteenth century by a learned Frenchman, Stephanus Forcatulus, shows how real a relation there is between Purgatory and the Greek or Roman Hades.*

*Arthur, it is said, leaving the light behind him, descended into the cave by a rough and steep road. 'For they say that this cave is an entrance to the shades, or at least to purgatory, where poor sinners may get their offences washed out, and return again rejoicing to the light of day.' But Forcatulus adds that 'I have learnt from certain serious commentaries of Merlin, that Gawain, his master of horse, called Arthur back, and dissuaded him from examining further the horrid cave in which was heard the sound of falling water which emitted a sulphureous smell, and of voices lamenting as it were for the loss of their bodies!'"*

*The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries, Part III, Section X, The Testimony of Christianity, by W.Y. Evans-Wentz, 1911*

*"WHEN Jesus, after uttering a loud cry, expired, I saw his heavenly soul under the form of a bright meteor pierce the earth at the foot of the Cross, accompanied by the angel Gabriel and many other angels. His Divine nature continued united to his soul as well as to his body, which still remained hanging upon the Cross, but I cannot explain how this was, although I saw it plainly in my own mind. The place into which the soul of Jesus entered was divided into three parts, which appeared to me like three worlds; and I felt that they were round, and that each division was separated from the other by a hemisphere.*

*I beheld a bright and beautiful space opposite to Limbo; it was enamelled with flowers, delicious breezes wafted through it; and many souls were placed there before being admitted into Heaven after their deliverance from Purgatory. Limbo, the place where the souls were waiting for the Redemption, was divided into different compartments, and encompassed by a thick foggy*

*atmosphere. Our Lord appeared radiant with light and surrounded by angels, who conducted him triumphantly between two of these compartments; the one on the left containing the patriarchs who lived before the time of Abraham, and that on the right those who lived between the days of Abraham and St. John Baptist. These souls did not at first recognise Jesus, but were filled nevertheless with sensations of joy and hope. There was not a spot in those narrow confines which did not, as it were, dilate with feelings of happiness. The passage of Jesus might be compared to the wafting of a breath of air, to a sudden flash of light, or to a shower of vivifying dew, but it was swift as a whirlwind. After passing through the two compartments, he reached a dark spot in which Adam and Eve were standing; he spoke to them, they prostrated and adored him in a perfect ecstasy of joy, and they immediately joined the band of angels, and accompanied our Lord to the compartment on the left, which contained the patriarchs who lived before Abraham. This compartment was a species of Purgatory, and a few evil spirits were wandering about among the souls and endeavouring to fill them with anxiety and alarm. The entrance through a species of door was closed, but the angels rapped, and I thought I heard them say, 'Open these doors.' When Jesus entered in triumph the demons dispersed, crying out at the same time, 'What is there between thee and us? What art thou come to do here? Wilt thou crucify us likewise?' The angels hunted them away, having first chained them. The poor souls confined in this place had only a slight presentiment and vague idea of the presence of Jesus; but the moment he told them that it was he himself, they burst out into acclamations of joy, and welcomed him with hymn of rapture and delight. The soul of our Lord then wended its way to the right, towards that part which really constituted Limbo; and there he met the*

*soul of the good thief which angels were carrying to Abraham's bosom, as also that of the bad thief being dragged by demons into Hell. Our Lord addressed a few words to both, and then entered Abraham's bosom, accompanied by numerous angels and holy souls, and also by those demons who had been chained and expelled from the compartment.*

*This locality appeared to me more elevated than the surrounding parts; and I can only describe my sensations on entering it, by comparing them to those of a person coming suddenly into the interior of a church, after having been for some time in the burial vaults. The demons, who were strongly chained, were extremely loth to enter, and resisted to the utmost of their power, but the angels compelled them to go forward. All the just who had lived before the time of Christ were assembled there; the patriarchs, Moses, the judges, and the kings on the left-hand side; and on the right side, the prophets, and the ancestors of our Lord, as also his near relations, such as Joachim, Anna, Joseph, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John. There were no demons in this place, and the only discomfort that had been felt by those placed there was a longing desire for the accomplishment of the promise; and when our Lord entered they saluted him with joyful hymns of gratitude and thanksgiving for its fulfilment, they prostrated and adored him, and the evil spirits who had been dragged into Abraham's bosom when our Lord entered were compelled to confess with shame that they were vanquished. Many of these holy souls were ordered by our Lord to return to the earth, reënter their own bodies, and thus render a solemn and impressive testimony to the truth. It was at this moment that so many dead persons left their tombs in Jerusalem; I regarded them less in the light*

*of dead persons risen again than as corpses put in motion by a divine power, and which, after having fulfilled the mission intrusted to them, were laid aside in the same manner as the insignia of office are taken off by a clerk when he has executed the orders of his superiors.*

*I next saw our Lord, with his triumphant procession, enter into a species of Purgatory which was filled with those good pagans who, having had a faint glimmering of the truth, had longed for its fulfilment: this Purgatory was very deep, and contained a few demons, as also some of the idols of the pagans. I saw the demons compelled to confess the deception they had practised with regard to these idols, and the souls of the poor pagans cast themselves at the feet of Jesus, and adored him with inexpressible joy: here, likewise, the demons were bound with chains and dragged away. I saw our Saviour perform many other actions; but I suffered so intensely at the same time, that I cannot recount them as I should have wished.*

*Finally, I beheld him approach to the centre of the great abyss, that is to say, to Hell itself; and the expression of his countenance was most severe.*

*The exterior of Hell was appalling and frightful; it was an immense, heavy-looking building, and the granite of which it was formed, although black, was of metallic brightness; and the dark and ponderous doors were secured with such terrible bolts that no one could behold them without trembling. Deep groans and cries of despair might be plainly distinguished even while the doors were tightly closed; but, O, who can describe the dreadful yells and shrieks which burst upon the ear when the bolts were unfastened and the doors flung open; and, O, who can*

*depict the melancholy appearance of the inhabitants of this wretched place!*

*The form under which the Heavenly Jerusalem is generally represented in my visions is that of a beautiful and well-regulated city, and the different degrees of glory to which the elect are raised are demonstrated by the magnificence of their palaces., or the wonderful fruit and flowers with which the gardens are embellished. Hell is shown to me under the same form, but all within it is, on the contrary, close, confused, and crowded; every object tends to fill the mind with sensations of pain and grief; the marks of the wrath and vengeance of God are visible everywhere; despair, like a vulture, gnaws every heart, and discord and misery reign around. In the Heavenly Jerusalem all is peace and eternal harmony, the beginning, fulfilment, and end of everything being pure and perfect happiness; the city is filled with splendid buildings, decorated in such a manner as to charm every eye and enrapture every sense; the inhabitants of this delightful abode are overflowing with rapture and exultation, the gardens gay with lovely flowers, and the trees covered with delicious fruits which give eternal life. In the city of Hell nothing is to be seen but dismal dungeons, dark caverns, frightful deserts, fetid swamps filled with every imaginable species of poisonous and disgusting reptile. In Heaven you behold the happiness and peaceful union of the saints; in Hell, perpetual scenes of wretched discord, and every species of sin and corruption, either under the most horrible forms imaginable, or represented by different kinds of dreadful torments. All in this dreary abode tends to fill the mind with horror; not a word of comfort is heard or a consoling idea admitted; the one tremendous thought, that the justice of an all-powerful God inflicts or, the damned nothing but*

*what they have fully deserved is the absorbing tremendous conviction which weighs down each heart. Vice appears in its own grim disgusting colours, being stripped of the mask under which it is hidden in this world, and the infernal viper is seen devouring those who have cherished or fostered it here below. In a word, Hell is the temple of anguish and despair, while the kingdom of God is the temple of peace and happiness. This is easy to understand when seen; but it is almost impossible to describe clearly.*

*The tremendous explosion of oaths, curses, cries of despair, and frightful exclamations which, like a clap of thunder, burst forth when the gates of Hell were thrown open by the angels, would be difficult even to imagine; our Lord spoke first to the soul of Judas, and the angels then compelled all the demons to acknowledge and adore Jesus. They would have infinitely preferred the most frightful torments to such a humiliation; but all were obliged to submit. Many were chained down in a circle which was placed round other circles. In the centre of Hell I saw a dark and horrible-looking abyss, and into this Lucifer was cast, after being first strongly secured with chains; thick clouds of sulphureous black smoke arose from its fearful depths, and enveloped his frightful form in the dismal folds, thus effectually concealing him from every beholder. God himself had decreed this; and I was likewise told, if I remember right, that he will be unchained for a time fifty or sixty years before the year of Christ 2000. The dates of many other events were pointed out to me which I do not now remember; but a certain number of demons are to be let loose much earlier than Lucifer, in order to tempt men, and to serve as instruments of the divine vengeance. I should think that some must be loosened even in the present day, and others will be set free in a short time.*

*It would be utterly impossible for me to describe all the things which were shown to me; their number was so great that I could not reduce them sufficiently to order to define and render them intelligible. Besides which my sufferings are very great, and when I speak on the subject of my visions I behold them in my mind's eye portrayed in such vivid colours, that the sight is almost sufficient to cause a weak mortal like myself to expire.*

*I next saw innumerable bands of redeemed souls liberated from Purgatory and from Limbo, who followed our Lord to a delightful spot situated above the celestial Jerusalem, in which place I, a very short time ago, saw the soul of a person who was very dear to me. The soul of the good thief was likewise taken there, and the promise of our Lord, 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,' was fulfilled.*

*It is not in my power to explain the exact time that each of these events occurred, nor can I relate one-half of the things which I saw and heard; for some were incomprehensible even to myself, and others would be misunderstood if I attempted to relate them. I have seen our Lord in many different places. Even in the sea he appeared to me to sanctify and deliver everything in the creation. Evil spirits fled at his approach, and cast themselves into the dark abyss. I likewise beheld his soul in different parts of the earth, first inside the tomb of Adam, under Golgotha; and when he was there the souls of Adam and Eve came up to him, and he spoke to them for some time. He then visited the tombs of the prophets, who were buried at an immense depth below the surface; but he passed through the soil in the twinkling of an eye. Their souls immediately reëntered their bodies, and he spoke to them, and explained the most wonderful mysteries. Next I saw him, accompanied by a*

*chosen band of prophets, among whom I particularly remarked David, visit those parts of the earth which had been sanctified by his miracles and by his sufferings. He pointed out to them, with the greatest love and goodness, the different symbols in the old law expressive of the future; and he showed them how he himself had fulfilled every prophecy. The sight of the soul of our Lord, surrounded by these happy souls, and radiant with light, was inexpressibly grand as he glided triumphantly through the air, sometimes passing, with the velocity of lightning, over rivers, then penetrating through the hardest rocks to the very centre of the earth, or moving noiselessly over its surface.*

*I can remember nothing beyond the facts which I have just related concerning the descent of Jesus into Limbo, where he went in order to present to the souls there detained the grace of the Redemption which he had merited for them by his death and by his sufferings; and I saw all these things in a very short space of time; in fact, time passed so quickly that it seemed to me but a moment. Our Lord, however, displayed before me, at the same time, another picture, in which I beheld the immense mercies which he bestows in the present day on the poor souls in Purgatory; for on every anniversary of this great day, when his Church is celebrating the glorious mystery of his death, he casts a look of compassion on the souls in Purgatory, and frees some of those who sinned against him before his crucifixion. I this day saw Jesus deliver many souls; some I was acquainted with, and others were strangers to me, but I cannot name any of them.*

*Our Lord, by descending into Hell, planted (if I may thus express myself), in the spiritual garden of the Church, a*

*mysterious tree, the fruits of which--namely, his merits--are destined for the constant relief of the poor souls in Purgatory. The Church militant must cultivate the tree, and gather its fruits, in order to present them to that suffering portion of the Church which can do nothing for itself. Thus it is with all the merits of Christ; we must labour with him if we wish to obtain our share of them; we must gain our bread by the sweat of our brow. Everything which our Lord has done for us in time must produce fruit for eternity; but we must gather these fruits in time, without which we cannot possess them in eternity. The Church is the most prudent and thoughtful of mothers; the ecclesiastical year is an immense and magnificent garden, in which all those fruits for eternity are gathered together, that we may make use of them in time. Each year contains sufficient to supply the wants of all; but woe be to that careless or dishonest gardener who allows any of the fruit committed to his care to perish; if he fails to turn to a proper account those graces which would restore health to the sick, strength to the weak, or furnish food to the hungry! When the Day of Judgment arrives, the Master of the garden will demand a strict account, not only of every tree, but also of all the fruit produced in the garden."*

*The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by Anne Catherine Emmerich, CHAPTER LIX, A Detached Account of the Descent into Hell, 1862*

#### "AFTER DEATH

*DEATH is the laying aside of the physical body; but it makes no more difference to the ego than does the laying aside of an overcoat to the physical man. Having put off his physical body, the ego continues to live in his astral body until the force has become exhausted which has been*

*generated by such emotions and passions as he has allowed himself to feel during earth-life. When that has happened, the second death takes place; the astral body also falls away from him, and he finds himself living in the mental body and in the lower mental world. In that condition he remains until the thought-forces generated during his physical and astral lives have worn themselves out; then he drops the third vehicle in its turn and remains once more an ego in his own world, inhabiting his causal body.*

*There is, then, no such thing as death as it is ordinarily understood. There is only a succession of stages in a continuous life--stages lived in the three worlds one after another. The apportionment of time between these three worlds varies much as man advances. The primitive man lives almost exclusively in the physical world, spending only a few years in the astral at the end of each of his physical lives. As he develops, the astral life becomes longer, and as intellect unfolds in him, and he becomes able to think, he begins to spend a little time in the mental world as well. The ordinary man of civilized races remains longer in the mental world than in the physical and astral; indeed, the more a man evolves the longer becomes his mental life and the shorter his life in the astral world.*

*The astral life is the result of all feelings which have in them the element of self. If they have been directly selfish, they bring him into conditions of great unpleasantness in the astral world; if, though tinged with thoughts of self, they have been good and kindly, they bring him a comparatively pleasant though still limited astral life. Such of his thoughts and feelings as have been entirely unselfish produce their results in his life in the mental world; therefore that life in the mental, world cannot be other than*

*blissful. The astral life, which the man has made for himself either miserable or comparatively joyous, corresponds to what Christians call purgatory; the lower mental life, which is always entirely happy, is what is called heaven.*

*Man makes for himself his own purgatory and heaven, and these are not planes, but states of consciousness . . . . a man who lives foolishly may make for himself a very unpleasant and long enduring purgatory. Neither purgatory nor heaven can ever be eternal, for a finite cause cannot produce an infinite result. The variations in individual cases are so wide that to give actual figures is somewhat misleading. If we take the average man of what is called the lower middle class, the typical specimen of which would be a small shopkeeper or shop-assistant, his average life in the astral world would be perhaps about forty years, and the life in the mental world about two hundred. The man of spirituality and culture, on the other hand, may have perhaps twenty years of life in the astral world and a thousand in the heaven life. One who is specially developed may reduce the astral life to a few days or hours and spend fifteen hundred years in heaven.*

*Not only does the length of these periods vary greatly, but the conditions in both worlds also differ widely. The matter of which all these bodies are built is not dead matter but living, and that fact has to be taken into consideration. The physical body is built up of cells, each of which is a tiny separate life animated by the Second Outpouring, which comes forth from the Second Aspect of the Deity. These cells are of varying kinds and fulfil various functions, and all these facts must be taken into account if the man wishes to understand the work of his physical body and to live a healthy life in it.*

*The same thing applies to the astral and mental bodies. In the cell-life which permeates them there is as yet nothing in the way of intelligence, but there is a strong instinct always pressing in the direction of what is for its development. The life animating the matter of which such bodies are built is upon the outward arc of evolution, moving downwards or outwards into matter, so that progress for it means to descend into denser forms of matter, and to learn to express itself through them. Unfoldment for the man is just the opposite of this; he has already sunk deeply into matter and is now rising out of that towards his source. There is consequently a constant conflict of interests between the man within and the life inhabiting the matter of his vehicles, inasmuch as its tendency is downward, while his is upward.*

*The matter of the astral body (or rather the life animating its molecules) desires for its evolution such undulations as it can get, of as many different kinds as possible, and as coarse as possible. The next step in its evolution will be to ensoul physical matter and become used to its still slower oscillations; and as a step on the way to that, it desires the grossest of the astral vibrations. It has not the intelligence definitely to plan for these; but its instinct helps it to discover how most easily to procure them.*

*The molecules of the astral body are constantly changing, as are those of the physical body, but nevertheless the life in the mass of those astral molecules has a sense, though a very vague sense, of itself as a whole--as a kind of temporary entity. It does not know that it is part of a man's astral body; it is quite incapable of understanding what a man is; but it realizes in a blind way that under its present conditions it receives many more waves, and much*

*stronger ones, than it would receive if floating at large in the atmosphere. It would then only occasionally catch, as from a distance, the radiation of man's passions and emotions; now it is in the very heart of them, it can miss none, and it gets them at their strongest. Therefore it feels itself in a good position, and it makes an effort to retain that position. It finds itself in contact with something finer than itself--the matter of the man's mental body; and it comes to feel that if it can contrive to involve that finer something in its own undulations, they will be greatly intensified and prolonged.*

*Since astral matter is the vehicle of desire and mental matter is the vehicle of thought, this instinct, when translated into our language, means that if the astral body can induce us to think that we want what it wants, it is much more likely to get it. Thus it exercises a slow steady pressure upon the man--a kind of hunger on its side, but for him a temptation to what is coarse and undesirable. If he be a passionate man there is a gentle but ceaseless pressure in the direction of irritability; if he be a sensual man, an equally steady pressure in the direction of impurity.*

*A man who does not understand this usually makes one of two mistakes with regard to it: either he supposes it to be the prompting of his own nature, and therefore regards that nature as inherently evil, or he thinks of the pressure as coming from outside--as a temptation of an imaginary devil. The truth lies between the two. The pressure is natural, not to the man but to the vehicle which he is using; its desire is natural and right for it, but harmful to the man, and therefore it is necessary that he should resist it. If he does so resist, if he declines to yield himself to the feelings suggested to him, the particles within him which*

*need those vibrations become apathetic for lack of nourishment, and eventually atrophy and fall out from his astral body, and are replaced by other particles, whose natural wave-rate is more nearly in accordance with that which the man habitually permits within his astral body.*

*This gives the reason for what are called promptings of the lower nature during life. If the man yields himself to them, such promptings grow stronger and stronger until at last he feels as though he could not resist them, and identifies himself with them--which is exactly what this curious half-life in the particles of the astral body wants him to do.*

*At the death of the physical body this vague astral consciousness is alarmed. It realizes that its existence as a separated mass is menaced, and it takes instinctive steps to defend itself and to maintain its position as long as possible. The matter of the astral body is far more fluidic than that of the physical, and this consciousness seizes upon its particles and disposes them so as to resist encroachment. It puts the grossest and densest upon the outside as a kind of shell, and arranges the others in concentric layers, so that the body as a whole may become as resistant to friction as its constitution permits, and may therefore retain its shape as long as possible.*

*For the man this produces various unpleasant effects. The physiology of the astral body is quite different from that of the physical; the latter acquires its information from without by means of certain organs which are specialized as the instruments of its senses, but the astral body has no separated senses in our meaning of the word. That which for the astral body corresponds to sight is the power of its molecules to respond to impacts from without, which come*

*to them by means of similar molecules. For example, a man has within his astral body matter belonging to all the subdivisions of the astral world, and it is because of that that he is capable of "seeing" objects built of the matter of any of these subdivisions.*

*Supposing an astral object to be made of the matter of the second and third subdivisions mixed, a man living in the astral world could perceive that object only if on the surface of his astral body there were particles belonging to the second and third subdivisions of that world which were capable of receiving and recording the vibrations which that object set up. A man who from the arrangement of his body by the vague consciousness of which we have spoken, had on the outside of that vehicle only the denser matter of the lowest subdivision, could no more be conscious of the object which we have mentioned than we are ourselves conscious in the physical body of the gases which move about us in the atmosphere or of objects built exclusively of etheric matter.*

*During physical life the matter of the man's astral body is in constant motion, and its particles pass among one another much as do those of boiling water.*

*Consequently at any given moment it is practically certain that particles of all varieties will be represented on the surface of his astral body, and that therefore when he is using his astral body during sleep he will be able to "see" by its means any astral object which approaches him.*

*After death, if he has allowed the rearrangement to be made (as from ignorance, all ordinary persons do) his condition in this respect will be different. Having on the surface of his*

*astral body only the lowest and grossest particles, he can receive impressions only from corresponding particles outside; so that instead of seeing the whole of the astral world about him, he will see only one-seventh of it, and that the densest and most impure. The vibrations of this heavier matter are the expressions only of objectionable feelings and emotions, and of the least refined class of astral entities. Therefore it emerges that a man in this condition can see only the undesirable inhabitants of the astral world, and can feel only its most unpleasant and vulgar influences.*

*He is surrounded by other men, whose astral bodies are probably of quite ordinary character; but since he can see and feel only that which is lowest and coarsest in them, they appear to him to be monsters of vice with no redeeming features. Even his friends seem not at all what they used to be, because he is now incapable of appreciating any of their better qualities. Under these circumstances it is little wonder that he considers the astral world a hell; yet the fault is in no way with the astral world, but with himself--first, for allowing within himself so much of that cruder type of matter, and, secondly, for letting that vague astral consciousness dominate him and dispose it in that particular way.*

*The man who has studied these matters declines absolutely to yield to the pressure during life or to permit the rearrangement after death, and consequently he retains his power of seeing the astral world as a whole, and not merely the cruder and baser part of it.*

*The astral world has many points in common with the physical; just like the physical, it presents different appearances to different people, and even to the same*

*person at different periods of his career. It is the home of emotions and of lower thoughts; and emotions are much stronger in that world than in this. When a person is awake we cannot see that larger part of his emotion at all; its strength goes in setting in motion the gross physical matter of the brain. So if we see a man show affection here, what we can see is not the whole of his affection, but only such part of it as is left after all this other work has been done. Emotions therefore bulk far more largely in the astral life than in the physical. They in no way exclude higher thought if they are controlled, so in the astral world as in the physical a man may devote himself to study and to helping his fellows, or he may waste his time and drift about aimlessly.*

*The astral world extends nearly to the mean distance of the orbit of the moon; but though the whole of this realm is open to any of its inhabitants who have not permitted the redistribution of their matter, the great majority remain much nearer to the surface of the earth. The matter of the different subdivisions of that world interpenetrates with perfect freedom, but there is on the whole a general tendency for the denser matter to settle towards the centre. The conditions are much like those which obtain in a bucket of water which contains in suspension a number of kinds of matter of different degrees of density. Since the water is kept in perpetual motion, the different kinds of matter are diffused through it; but in spite of that, the densest matter is found in greatest quantity nearest to the bottom. So that though we must not at all think of the various subdivisions of the astral world as lying above one another as do the coats of an onion, it is nevertheless true that the average arrangement of the matter of those subdivisions partakes somewhat of that general character.*

*Astral matter interpenetrates physical matter precisely as though it were not there, but each subdivision of physical matter has a strong attraction for astral matter of the corresponding subdivision. Hence it arises that every physical body has its astral counterpart. If I have a glass of water standing upon a table, the glass and the table, being of physical matter in the solid state, are interpenetrated by astral matter of the lowest sub-division. The water in the glass, being liquid, is interpenetrated by what we may call astral liquid--that is, by astral matter of the sixth subdivision; whereas the air surrounding both, being physical matter in the gaseous condition, is entirely interpenetrated by astral-gaseous matter--that is, astral matter of the fifth sub-division.*

*But just as air, water, glass and table are alike interpenetrated all the time by the finer physical matter which we have called etheric, so are all the astral counterparts interpenetrated by the finer astral matter of the higher subdivisions which correspond to the etheric. But even the astral solid is less dense than the finest of the physical ethers.*

*The man who finds himself in the astral world after death, if he has not submitted to the rearrangement of the matter of his body, will notice but little difference from physical life. He can float about in any direction at will, but in actual fact he usually stays in the neighbourhood to which he is accustomed. He is still able to perceive his house, his room, his furniture, his relations, his friends. The living, when ignorant of the higher worlds, suppose themselves to have "lost" those who have laid aside their physical bodies; but the dead are never for a moment under the impression that they have lost the living. Functioning as they are in*

*the astral body, the dead can no longer see the physical bodies of those whom they have left behind; but they do see their astral bodies, and as those are exactly the same in outline as the physical, they are perfectly aware of the presence of their friends. They see each one surrounded by a faint ovoid of luminous mist, and if they happen to be observant, they may notice various other small changes in their surroundings; but it is at least quite clear to them that they have not gone away to some distant heaven or hell, but still remain in touch with the world which they know, although they see it at a somewhat different angle.*

*The dead man has the astral body of his living friend obviously before him, so he cannot think of him as lost; but while the friend is awake, the dead man will not be able to make any impression upon him, for the consciousness of the friend is then in the physical world, and his astral body is being used only as a bridge. The dead man cannot therefore communicate with his friend, nor can he read his friend's higher thoughts; but he will see by the change in colour in the astral body any emotion which that friend may feel, and with a little practice and observation he may easily learn to read all those thoughts of his friend which have in them anything of self or of desire.*

*When the friend falls asleep the whole position is changed. He is then also conscious in the astral world side by side with the dead man, and they can communicate in every respect as freely as they could during physical life. The emotions felt by the living react strongly upon the dead who love them. If the former give way to grief, the latter cannot but suffer severely.*

*The conditions of life after death are almost infinite in their variety, but they can be calculated without difficulty by any one who will take the trouble to understand the astral world and to consider the character of the person concerned. That character is not in the slightest degree changed by death; the man's thoughts, emotions and desires are exactly the same as before. He is in every way the same man, minus his physical body; and his happiness or misery depends upon the extent to which this loss of the physical body affects him.*

*If his longings have been such as need a physical body for their gratification, he is likely to suffer considerably. Such a craving manifests itself as a vibration in the astral body, and while we are still in this world most of its strength is employed in setting in motion the heavy physical particles. Desire is therefore a far greater force in the astral life than in the physical, and if the man has not been in the habit of controlling it, and if in this new life it cannot be satisfied, it may cause him great and long-continued trouble.*

*Take as an illustration the extreme case of a drunkard or a sensualist. Here we have a lust which has been strong enough during physical life to overpower reason, common sense and all the feelings of decency and of family affection. After death the man finds himself in the astral world feeling the appetite perhaps a hundred times more strongly, yet absolutely unable to satisfy it because he has lost the physical body. Such a life is a very real hell--the only hell there is; yet no one is punishing him; he is reaping the perfectly natural result of his own action. Gradually as time passes this force of desire wears out, but only at the cost of terrible suffering for the man, because to him every day seems as a thousand years. He has no measure of time*

*such as we have in the physical world. He can measure it only by his sensations. From a distortion of this fact has come the blasphemous idea of eternal damnation.*

*Many other cases less extreme than this will readily suggest themselves, in which a hankering which cannot be fulfilled may prove itself a torture. A more ordinary case is that of a man who has no particular vices, such as drink or sensuality, but yet has been attached entirely «to things of the physical world, and has lived a life devoted to business or to aimless social functions. For him the astral world is a place of weariness; the only thing for which he craves are no longer possible for him, for in the astral world there is no business to be done, and, though he may have as much companionship as he wishes, society is now for him a very different matter, because all the pretences upon which it is usually based in this world are no longer possible.*

*These cases, however, are only the few, and for most people the state after death is much happier than life upon earth. The first feeling of which the dead man is usually conscious is one of the most wonderful and delightful freedom. He has absolutely nothing to worry about, and no duties rest upon him, except those which he chooses to impose upon himself. For all but a very small minority, physical life" is spent in doing what the man would much rather not do; but he has to do it in order to support himself or his wife and family. In the astral world no support is necessary; food is no longer needed, shelter is not required, since he is entirely unaffected by heat or cold; and each man by the mere exercise of his thought clothes himself as he wishes.*

*For the first time since early childhood the man is entirely free to spend the whole of his time in doing just exactly what he likes.*

*His capacity for every kind of enjoyment is greatly enhanced, if only that enjoyment does not need a physical body for its expression. If he loves the beauties of Nature, it is now within his power to travel with great rapidity and without fatigue over the whole world, to contemplate all its loveliest spots, and to explore its most secret recesses. If he delights in art, all the world's masterpieces are at his disposal. If he loves music, he can go where he will to hear it, and it will now mean much more to him than it has ever meant before; for though he can no longer hear the physical sounds, he can receive the whole effect of the music into himself in far fuller measure than in this lower world. If he is a student of science, he can not only visit the great scientific men of the world, and catch from them such thoughts and ideas as may be within his comprehension, but also he can undertake researches of his own into the science of this higher world, seeing much more of what he is doing than has ever before been possible to him. Best of all, he whose great delight in this world has been to help his fellow men will still find ample scope for his philanthropic efforts.*

*Men are no longer hungry, cold, or suffering from disease in this astral world; but there are vast numbers who, being ignorant, desire knowledge--who, being still in the grip of desire for earthly things, need the explanation which will turn their thought to higher levels--who have entangled themselves in a web of their own imaginings, and can be set free only by one who understands these new surroundings and can help them to distinguish the facts of the world from*

*their own ignorant misrepresentation of them. All these can be helped by the man of intelligence and of kindly heart. Many men arrive in the astral world in utter ignorance of its conditions, not realizing at first that they are dead, and when they do realize it fearing the fate that may be in store for them, because of false and wicked theological teaching. All of these need the cheer and comfort which can only be given to them by a man of common sense who possesses some knowledge of the facts of Nature.*

*There is thus no lack of the most profitable occupation for any man whose interests during his physical life have been rational; nor is there any lack of companionship. Men whose tastes and pursuits are similar drift naturally together there just as they do here; and many realms of Nature, which during our physical life are concealed by the dense veil of matter, now lie open for the detailed study of those who care to examine them.*

*To a large extent people make their own surroundings. We have already referred to the seven subdivisions of this astral world. Numbering these from the highest and least material downwards, we find that they fall naturally into three classes--divisions one, two and three forming one such class, and four, five and six another; while the seventh and lowest of all stands alone. As I have said, although they all interpenetrate, their substance has a general tendency to arrange itself according to its specific gravity, so that most of the matter belonging to the higher subdivisions is found at a greater elevation above the surface of the earth than the bulk of the matter of the lower portions.*

*Hence, although any person inhabiting the astral world can move into any part of it, his natural tendency is to float at*

*the level which corresponds with the specific gravity of the heaviest matter in his astral body. The man who has not permitted the rearrangement of the matter of his astral body after death is entirely free of the whole astral world; but the majority, who do permit it, are not equally free--not because there is anything to prevent them from rising to the highest level or sinking to the lowest, but because they are able to sense clearly only a certain part of that world.*

*I have described something of the fate of a man who is on the lowest level, shut in by a strong shell of coarse matter. Because of the extreme comparative density of that matter he is conscious of less outside of his own subdivision than a man at any other level. The general specific gravity of his own astral body tends to make him float below the surface of the earth. The physical matter of the earth is absolutely non-existent to his astral senses, and his natural attraction is to that least delicate form of astral matter which is the counterpart of that solid earth. A man who has confined himself to that lowest subdivision will therefore usually find himself floating in darkness and cut off to a great extent from others of the dead, whose lives have been such as to keep them on a higher level.*

*Divisions four, five and six of the astral world (to which most people are attracted) have for their background the astral counterpart of the physical world in which we live, and all its familiar accessories. Life in the sixth subdivision is simply like our ordinary life on this earth minus the physical body and its necessities while as it ascends through the fifth and fourth divisions it becomes less and less material and is more and more withdrawn from our lower world and its interests.*

*The first, second and third sections, though occupying the same space, yet give the impression of being much further removed from the physical, and correspondingly less material. Men who inhabit these levels lose sight of the earth and its belongings; they are usually deeply self-absorbed, and to a large extent create their own surroundings, though these are sufficiently objective to be perceptible to other men of their level, and also to clairvoyant vision.*

*This region is the summerland of which we hear in spiritualistic circles--the world in which, by the exercise of their thought, the dead call into temporary existence their houses and schools and cities. These surroundings, though fanciful from our point of view, are to the dead as real as houses, temples or churches built of stone are to us, and many people live very contentedly there for a number of years in the midst of all these thought-creations.*

*Some of the scenery thus produced is very beautiful; it includes lovely lakes, magnificent mountains, pleasant flower gardens, decidedly superior to anything in the physical world; though on the other hand it also contains much which to the trained clairvoyant (who has learned to see things as they are) appears ridiculous--as, for example, the endeavours of the unlearned to make a thought-form of some of the curious symbolic descriptions contained in their various scriptures. An ignorant peasant's thought-image of a beast full of eyes within, or of a sea of glass mingled with fire, is naturally often grotesque, although to its maker it is perfectly satisfactory. This astral world is full of thought-created figures and landscapes. Men of all religions image here their deities and their respective conceptions of paradise, and enjoy themselves greatly among these dream-*

*forms until they pass into the mental world and come into touch with something nearer to reality.*

*Every one after death--any ordinary person, that is, in whose case the rearrangement of the matter of the astral body has been made--has to pass through all these subdivisions in turn. It does not follow that every one is conscious in all of them. The ordinarily decent person has in his astral body but little of the matter of its lowest portion--by no means enough to construct a heavy shell. The redistribution puts on the outside of the body its densest matter; in the ordinary man this is usually matter of the sixth subdivision, mixed with a little of the seventh, and so he finds himself viewing the counterpart of the physical world.*

*The ego is steadily withdrawing into himself, and as he withdraws he leaves behind him level after level of this astral matter. So the length of the man's detention in any section of the astral world is precisely in proportion to the amount of its matter which is found in his astral body, and that in turn depends upon the life he has lived, the desires he has indulged, and the class of matter which by so doing he has attracted towards him and built into himself. Finding himself then in the sixth section, still hovering about the places and persons with which he was most closely connected while on earth, the average man, as time passes on, finds the earthly surroundings gradually growing dimmer and becoming of less and less importance to him, and he tends more and more to mould his entourage into agreement with the more persistent of his thoughts. By the time that he reaches the third level he finds that this characteristic has entirely superseded the vision of the realities of the astral world.*

*The second subdivision is a shade less material than the third, for if the latter is the summerland of the spiritualists, the former is the material heaven of the more ignorantly orthodox; while the first or highest level appears to be the special home of those who during life have devoted themselves to materialistic but intellectual pursuits, following them not for the sake of benefiting their fellow men, but either from motives of selfish ambition or simply for the sake of intellectual exercise. All these people are perfectly happy. Later on they will reach a stage when they can appreciate something much higher, and when that stage comes they will find the higher ready for them.*

*In this astral life people of the same nation and of the same interest tend to keep together, precisely as they do here. The religious people, for example, who imagine for themselves a material heaven, do not at all interfere with men of other faiths whose ideas of celestial joy are different. There is nothing to prevent a Christian from drifting into the heaven of the Hindu or the Muhammadan, but he is little likely to do so, because his interests and attractions are all in the heaven of his own faith, along with friends who have shared that faith with him. This is by no means the true heaven described by any of the religions, but only a gross and material misrepresentation of it; the real thing will be found when we come to consider the mental world.*

*The dead man who has not permitted the rearrangement of the matter of his astral body is free of the entire world, and can wander all over it at will, seeing the whole of whatever he examines, instead of only a part of it as the others do. He does not find it inconveniently crowded, for the astral world is much larger than the surface of the physical earth,*

*while its population is somewhat smaller, because the average life of humanity in the astral world is shorter than the average in the physical.*

*Not only the dead, however, are the inhabitants of this astral world, but always about one-third of the living as well, who have temporarily left their physical bodies behind them in sleep. The astral world has also a great number of non-human inhabitants, some of them far below the level of man, and some considerably above him. The nature-spirits form an enormous kingdom, some of whose members exist in the astral world, and make a large part of its population. This vast kingdom exists in the physical world also, for many of its orders wear etheric bodies and are only just beyond the range of ordinary physical sight. Indeed, circumstances not infrequently occur under which they can be seen, and in many lonely mountain districts these appearances are traditional among the peasants, by whom they are commonly spoken of as fairies, good people, pixies or brownies.*

*They are protean, but usually prefer to wear a miniature human form. Since they are not yet individualized, they may be thought of almost as etheric and astral animals; yet many of them are intellectually quite equal to average humanity. They have their nations and types just as we have, and they are often grouped into four great classes, and called the spirits of earth, water, fire and air. Only the members of the last of these four divisions normally confine their manifestation to the astral world, but their numbers are so prodigious that they are everywhere present in it.*

*Another great kingdom has its representatives here--the kingdom of the angels (called in India the devas). This is a*

*body of beings who stand far higher in evolution than man, and only the lowest fringe of their hosts touches the astral world--a fringe whose constituent members are perhaps at about the level of development of what we should call a distinctly good man.*

*We are neither the only nor even the principal inhabitants of our solar system; there are other lines of evolution running parallel with our own which do not pass through humanity at all, though they must all pass through a level corresponding to that of humanity. On one of these other lines of evolution are the nature-spirits above described, and at a higher level of that line comes this great kingdom of the angels. At our present level of evolution they come into obvious contact with us only very rarely, but as we develop we shall be likely to see more of them--especially as the cyclic progress of the world is now bringing it more and more under the influence of the Seventh Ray. This Seventh Ray has ceremonial for one of its characteristics, and it is through ceremonial such as that of the Church or of Freemasonry that we come most easily into touch with the angelic kingdom.*

*When all the man's lower emotions have worn themselves out--all emotions, I mean, which have in them any thought of self--his life in the astral world is over, and the ego passes on into the mental world. This is not in any sense a movement in space; it is simply that the steady process of withdrawal has now passed beyond even the finest kind of astral matter; so that the man's consciousness is focussed in the mental world. His astral body has not entirely disintegrated, though it is in process of doing so, and he leaves behind him an astral corpse, just as at a previous stage of the withdrawal he left behind him a physical*

*corpse. There is a certain difference between the two which should be noticed, because of the consequences which ensue from it.*

*When the man leaves his physical body his separation from it should be complete, and generally is so; but this is not the case with the much finer matter of the astral body. In the course of his physical life the ordinary man usually entangles himself so much in astral matter (which, from another point of view, means that he identifies himself so closely with his lower desires) that the indrawing force of the ego cannot entirely separate him from it again. Consequently, when he finally breaks away from the astral body and transfers his activities to the mental, he loses a little of himself, he leaves some of himself behind imprisoned in the matter of the astral body.*

*This gives a certain remnant of vitality to the astral corpse, so that it still moves freely in the astral world, and may easily be mistaken by the ignorant for the man himself--the more so as such fragmentary consciousness as still remains to it is part of the man, and therefore it naturally regards itself and "speaks of itself as the man. It retains his memories, but is only a partial and unsatisfactory representation of him. Sometimes in spiritualistic seances one comes into contact with an entity of this description, and wonders how it is that one's friend has deteriorated so much since his death. To this fragmentary entity we give the name "shade".*

*At a later stage even this fragment of consciousness dies out of the astral body, but does not return to the ego to whom it originally belonged. Even then the astral corpse still remains, but when it is quite without any trace of its*

*former life we call it a "shell". Of itself a shell cannot communicate at a seance, or take any action of any sort; but such shells are frequently seized upon by sportive nature-spirits and used as temporary habitations. A shell so occupied can communicate at a seance and masquerade as its original owner, since some of his characteristics and certain portions of his memory can be evoked by the nature-spirit from his astral corpse.*

*When a man falls asleep, he withdraws in his astral body, leaving the whole of the physical vehicle behind him. When he dies, he draws out with him the etheric part of the physical body, and consequently has usually at least a moment of unconsciousness while he is freeing himself from it. The etheric double is not a vehicle and cannot be used as such; so when the man is surrounded by it, he is for the moment able to function neither in the physical world nor the astral. Some men succeed in shaking themselves free of this etheric envelope in a few moments; others rest within it for hours, days or even weeks.*

*Nor is it certain that, when the man is free from this, he will at once become conscious of the astral world. For there is in him a good deal of the lowest kind of astral matter, so that a shell of this may be made around him. But he may be quite unable to use that matter.*

*If he has lived a reasonably decent life he is little in the habit of employing it or responding to its vibrations, and he cannot instantly acquire this habit. For that reason, he may remain unconscious until that matter gradually wears away, and some matter which he is in the habit of using comes on the surface. Such an occlusion, however, is scarcely ever complete, for even in the most carefully made*

*shell some particles of the finer matter occasionally find their way to the surface, and give him fleeting glimpses of his surroundings.*

*There are some men who cling so desperately to their physical vehicles that they will not relax their hold upon the etheric double, but strive with all their might to retain it. They may be successful in doing so for a considerable time, but only at the cost of great discomfort to themselves. They are shut out from both worlds, and find themselves surrounded by a dense grey mist, through which they see very dimly the things of the physical world, but with all the colour gone from them. It is a terrible struggle for them to maintain their position in this miserable condition, and yet they will not relax their hold upon the etheric double, feeling that that is at least some sort of link with the only world that they know. Thus they drift about in a condition of loneliness and misery until from sheer fatigue their hold fails them, and they slip into the comparative happiness of astral life. Sometimes in their desperation they grasp blindly at other bodies, and try to enter into them, and occasionally they are successful in such an attempt. They may seize upon a baby body, ousting the feeble personality for whom it was intended, or sometimes they grasp even the body of an animal. All this trouble arises entirely from ignorance, and it can never happen to anyone who understands the laws of life and death.*

*When the astral life is over, the man dies to that world in turn, and awakens in the mental world. With him it is not at all what it is to the trained clairvoyant, who ranges through it and lives amidst the surroundings which he finds there, precisely as he would in the physical or astral worlds. The ordinary man has all through his life been*

*encompassing himself with a mass of thought-forms. Some which are transitory, to which he pays little attention, have fallen away from him long ago, but those which represent the main interests of his life are always with him, and grow ever stronger and stronger. If some of these have been selfish, their force pours down into astral matter, and he has exhausted them during his life in the astral world. But those which are entirely unselfish belong purely to his mental body, and so when he finds himself in the mental world it is through these special thoughts that he is able to appreciate it.*

*His mental body is by no means fully developed; only those parts of it are really in action to their fullest extent which he has used in this altruistic manner. When he awakens again after the second death, his first sense is one of indescribable bliss and vitality--a feeling of such utter joy in living that he needs for the time nothing but just to live. Such bliss is of the essence of life in all the higher worlds of the system. Even astral life has possibilities of happiness far greater than anything that we can know in the dense body; but the heaven-life in the mental world is out of all proportion more blissful than the astral. In each higher world the same experience is repeated. Merely to live in any one of them seems the uttermost conceivable bliss; and yet, when the next one is reached, it is seen that it far surpasses the last.*

*Just as the bliss increases, so does the wisdom and the breadth of view. A man fusses about in the physical world and thinks himself so busy and so wise; but when he touches even the astral, he realizes at once that he has been all the time only a caterpillar crawling about and seeing nothing but his own leaf, whereas now he has spread his*

*wings like the butterfly and flown away into the sunshine of a wider world. Yet, impossible as it may seem, the same experience is repeated when he passes into the mental world, for this life is in turn so much fuller and wider and more intense than the astral that once more no comparison is possible. And yet beyond all these there is still another life, that of the intuitional world, unto which even this is but as moon-light unto sunlight.*

*The man's position in the mental world differs widely from that in the astral. There he was using a body to which he was thoroughly accustomed, a body which he had been in the habit of employing every night during sleep. Here he finds himself living in a vehicle which he has never used before--a vehicle furthermore which is very far from being fully developed--a vehicle which shuts him out to a great extent from the world about him, instead of enabling him to see it. The lower part of his nature burnt itself away during his purgatorial life, and now there remain to him only his higher and more refined thoughts, the noble and unselfish aspirations which he poured out during earth-life. These cluster round him, and make a sort of shell about him, through the medium of which he is able to respond to certain types of vibrations in this refined matter.*

*These thoughts which surround him are the powers by which he draws upon the wealth of the heaven-world, and he finds it to be a storehouse of infinite extent, upon which he is able to draw just according to the power of those thoughts and aspirations; for in this world is existing the infinite fullness of the Divine Mind, open in all its limitless affluence to every soul, just in proportion as that soul has qualified itself to receive. A man who has already completed his human evolution, who has fully realized and unfolded*

*the divinity whose germ is within him, finds the whole of this glory within his reach; but since none of us has yet done that, since we are only gradually rising towards that splendid consummation, it follows that none of us as yet can grasp that entirety.*

*But each draws from it and cognizes so much of it as he has by previous effort prepared himself to take. Different individuals bring very different capacities; they tell us in the East that each man brings his own cup, and some of the cups are large and some are small, but small or large every cup is filled to its utmost capacity; the sea of bliss holds far more than enough for all.*

*A man can look out upon all this glory and beauty only through the windows which he himself has made. Every one of these thought-forms is such a window, through which response may come to him from the forces without. If during his earth-life he has chiefly regarded physical things, then he has made for himself but few windows through which this higher glory can shine in upon him. Yet every man who is above the lowest savage must have had some touch of pure unselfish feeling, even if it were but once in all his life, and that will be a window for him now.*

*The ordinary man is not capable of any great activity in this mental world; his condition is chiefly receptive, and his vision of anything outside his own shell of thought is of the most limited character. He is surrounded by living forces, mighty angelic inhabitants of this glorious world, and many of their orders are very sensitive to certain aspirations of man and readily respond to them. But a man can take advantage of these only in so far as he has already prepared himself to profit by them, for his thoughts and*

*aspirations are only along certain lines, and he cannot suddenly form new lines. There are many directions which the higher thought may take--some of them personal and some impersonal. Among the latter are art, music and philosophy; and a man whose interest lay along any one of these lines finds both measureless enjoyment and unlimited instruction waiting for him--that is, the amount of enjoyment and instruction is limited only by his power of perception.*

*We find a large number of people whose only higher thoughts are those connected with affection and devotion. If a man loves another deeply or if he feels strong devotion to a personal deity, he makes a strong mental image of that friend or of the deity, and the object of his feeling is often present in his mind. Inevitably he takes that mental image into the heaven-world with him, because it is to that level of matter that it naturally belongs.*

*Take first the case of affection. The love which forms and retains such an image is a very powerful force--a force which is strong enough to reach and to act upon the ego of his friend in the higher part of the mental world. It is that ego that is the real man whom he loves--not the physical body which is so partial a representation of him. The ego of the friend, feeling this vibration, at once and eagerly responds to it, and pours himself into the thought-form, which has been made for him; so that the man's friend is truly present with him more vividly than ever before. To this result it makes no difference whatever whether the friend is what we call living or dead; the appeal is made not to the fragment of the friend which is sometimes imprisoned in a physical body, but to the man himself on his own true level; and he always responds. A man who has a hundred*

*friends can simultaneously and fully respond to the affection of every one of them, for no number of representations on a lower level can exhaust the infinity of the ego.*

*Thus every man in his heaven-life has around him all the friends for whose company he wishes, and they are for him always at their best, because he himself makes for them the thought-form through which they manifest to him. In our limited physical world we are so accustomed to thinking of our friend as only the limited manifestation which we know in the physical world, that it is at first difficult for us to realize the grandeur of the conception; when we can realize it, we shall see how much nearer we are in truth to our friends in the heaven-life than we ever were on earth. The same is true in the case of devotion. The man in the heaven-world is two great stages nearer to the object of his devotion than he was during physical life, and so his experiences are of a far more transcendent character.*

*In this mental world, as in the astral, there are seven subdivisions. The first, second and third are the habitat of the ego in his causal body, so the mental body contains matter of the remaining four only, and it is in those sections that his heaven-life is passed. Man does not, however, pass from one to the other of these, as is the case in the astral world, for there is nothing in this life corresponding to the rearrangement. Rather is the man drawn to the level which best corresponds to the degree of his development, and on that level he spends the whole of his life in the mental body. Each man makes his own conditions, so that the number of varieties is infinite.*

*Speaking broadly, we may say that the dominant characteristic observed in the lowest portion is unselfish family affection. Unselfish it must be, or it would find no place here; all selfish tinges, if there were any, worked out their results in the astral world. The dominant characteristic of the sixth level may be said to be anthropomorphical religious devotion; while that of the fifth section is devotion expressing itself in active work of some sort. All these--the fifth, sixth and seventh sub-divisions--are concerned with the working out of devotion to personalities (either to one's family and friends or to a personal deity) rather than the wider devotion to humanity for its own sake, which finds its expression in the next section. The activities of this fourth stage are varied. They can best be arranged in four main divisions: unselfish pursuit of spiritual knowledge; high philosophy or scientific thought; literary or artistic ability exercised for unselfish purposes; and service for the sake of service.*

*Even to this glorious heaven-life there comes an end, and then the mental body in its turn drops away as the others have done, and the man's life in his causal body begins. Here the man needs no windows, for this is his true home and all his walls have fallen away. The majority of men have as yet but very little consciousness at such a height as this; they rest dreamily unobservant and scarcely awake, but such vision as they have is true, however limited it may be by their lack of development. Still, every time they return, these limitations will be smaller, and they themselves will be greater; so that this truest life will be wider and fuller for them.*

*As this improvement continues, this causal life grows longer and longer, assuming an ever larger proportion as*

*compared to the existence at lower levels. And as he grows, the man becomes capable not only of receiving but also of giving. Then indeed is his triumph approaching, for he is learning the lesson of the Christ, learning the crowning glory of sacrifice, the supreme delight of pouring out all his life for the helping of his fellow-men, the devotion of the self to the all, of celestial strength to human service, of all those splendid heavenly forces to the aid of the struggling sons of earth. That is part of the life that lies before us; these are some of the steps which even we who are still so near the bottom of the golden ladder may see rising above us, so that we may report them to those who have not seen as yet, in order that they too may open their eyes to the unimaginable splendour which surrounds them here and now in this dull daily life. This is part of the gospel of Theosophy--the certainty of this sublime future for all. It is certain because it is here already, because to inherit it we have only to fit ourselves for it."*

***A Textbook of Theosophy, H.W. Leadbeater, After  
Death, 1912***

*"The Church Fathers on Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead with Commentary*

**PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD AND PURGATORY**

*Comments from the Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), article on "purgatory":*

*"The proofs for the Catholic position, both in Scripture and in Tradition, are bound up also with the practice of praying for the dead. For why pray for the dead, if there be no belief in the power of prayer to afford solace to those who as yet are excluded from the sight of God? So true is this position that prayers for the dead and the existence of a place of*

*purgation are mentioned in conjunction in the oldest passages of the Fathers, who allege reasons for succouring departed souls. Those who have opposed the doctrine of purgatory have confessed that prayers for the dead would be an unanswerable argument if the modern doctrine of a 'particular judgment' had been received in the early ages. But one has only to read the testimonies hereinafter alleged to feel sure that the Fathers speak, in the same breath, of oblations for the dead and a place of purgation; and one has only to consult the evidence found in the catacombs to feel equally sure that the Christian faith there expressed embraced clearly a belief in judgment immediately after death."*

*Comments from the Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), article on "purgatory":*

*"The Fathers in general are clear in their affirmation of the existence of purgatory. This is not to deny that some time was needed to formulate a clear and definitive idea of the purification to take place in the other world, for varying eschatological views prevented in the early centuries a uniform presentation of its nature. The witness of the Fathers to the fact of such purification after death, therefore, is beyond doubt; their explanation of the purifying process has as much validity as the reasons advanced by each one. One thing is certain: the primitive Church never accepted the belief that in each and every instance the eternal beatitude of the just began immediately after death....In addition, prayers and other good works were offered for the departed souls as a matter of common practice. There can be no doubt, then, that the widespread belief of the early Church, as shown by many of the Fathers (see Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Ephraem, Ambrose,*

*Augustine, Chrysostom, Caesarius of Arles, and Gregory the Great...)* and as evidenced by the liturgy, demanded the existence of a state after death in which the souls of the just would be fully purified from any remains of sin before entering heaven." (NCE, volume 11, page 1035-6)

Comments by Jacques Le Goff, author of *The Birth of Purgatory* [University of Chicago Press, 1984]

*Excerpts from chapter 2 "The Fathers of Purgatory" -- these I find to be highly relevant passages from this chapter: From the Old Testament, Clement [of Alexandria] and Origen took the notion that fire is a divine instrument, and from the New Testament the idea of baptism by fire (from the Gospels) and the idea of a purificatory trial after death (from Paul). The notion of fire as a divine instrument comes from commonly cited interpretations of Old Testament passages [ e.g. Lev 10:1-2; Deut 32:22; Jer 15:14; cf. Luke 3:16].... (page 53)*

*Origen's conceptions were more detailed and far reaching than Clement's. As we have seen, Origen thought that all men, even the righteous, must be tried by fire, since no one is absolutely pure. Every soul is tainted by the mere fact of its union with the flesh....Origen and Clement agree that there are two kinds of sinners, or, rather, that there are the righteous, whose only taint is that inherent in human nature (rupos, later translated into Latin as sordes), and the sinners properly so called, who bear the extra burden of sins that in theory are mortal (pros thanaton amartia, or peccata in Latin).... (page 54,55)*

*For Clement of Alexandria, the 'intelligent' fire that enters into the sinner's soul was not a material thing...but neither*

*was it a mere metaphor: it was a 'spiritual' fire (Stromata 7:6 and 5:14)...what is involved [in Origen's view] is a purificatory fire, which, though immaterial, is not merely a metaphor: it is real but spiritual, subtle....Origen's eschatological notions were highly personal...He believed that the souls of the righteous would pass through the fire of judgment in an instant and would reach Paradise on the eighth day after Judgment Day.... (page 55,56)*

*Thus, if Origen glimpsed the future Purgatory, still his idea of Purgatory was so overshadowed by his eschatology and his idea of Hell as a temporary abode that ultimately it vanishes from view. Nevertheless, it was Origen who clearly stated for the first time the idea that the soul can be purified in the other world after death. For the first time a distinction was drawn between mortal and lesser sins. We even see three categories beginning to take shape: the righteous, who pass through the fire of judgment and go directly to heaven; those guilty of the lesser sins only, who sojourn in the 'fire of combustion' is brief; and 'mortal sinners,' who remain in the flames for an extended period. Origen actually develops the metaphor introduced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.... (page 56,57)*

*In this period [of the fourth century] Christian thought concerning the fate of the soul after death was based mainly on the vision of Daniel (Dan 7:9) and on a passage from Paul (1 Cor 3:10-15), and less frequently on Tertullian's idea of refrigerium and Origen's concept of a purifying fire....Lactantius (d. after 317) believed that all who died, including the righteous, would be tried by fire, but not until the Last Judgment [cites Instit 7:21 Migne PL 6:800]...Hilary of Poitiers (d. 367), Ambrose (d. 397), Jerome (d. 419/420), and the unidentified writer known as*

*Ambrosiaster, who lived in the second half of the fourth century, all had ideas on the fate of the soul after death that make them heirs of Origen. (page 58,59)*

*[Ambrose] also clearly stated that the prayers of the living could help to relieve the suffering of the dead, that suffrages could be of use in mitigating the penalties meted out in the other world...[cites Ambrose on the Emperor Theodosius]... (page 60)*

*Ambrosiaster, if he adds little to what Ambrose has already said, is important because he is the author of the first real exegesis of 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. As such he had considerable influence on the medieval commentators on this passage, which played a key role in the inception of Purgatory, and in particular on the early scholastics of the twelfth century. Like Hilary and Ambrose, Ambrosiaster distinguishes three categories: the saints and the righteous, who will go directly to heaven at the time of the resurrection; the ungodly, apostates, infidels, and atheists, who will go directly into the fiery torments of Hell; and the ordinary Christians, who, though sinners, will first pay their debt and for a time be purified by fire but then go to Paradise because they had the faith...[then quotes Ambrosiaster on 1 Cor 3:15]... (page 61)*

*It was the role of Augustine, who left so deep an imprint on Christianity and who, in the Middle Ages, was regarded as probably the greatest of all the Christian 'authorities,' to have been the first to introduce a number of ingredients that later went to make up the doctrine of Purgatory....Augustine's importance in the history of Purgatory stems first from the terminology he introduced, which remained current through much of the Middle Ages.*

There are three key terms, the adjectives *purgatorius*, *temporarius*, or *temporalis*, and *transitorius*. 'Purgatorius' figured in the phrase 'poenae purgatoriae': I prefer to translate this as 'purgatorial punishments' rather than 'purificatory punishments,' the latter being too precise for Augustine's way of thinking (the phrase occurs in *City of God* 21:13 and 21:16). We also find *tormenta purgatoria*, purgatorial torments (in *City of God* 21:16), and *ignis purgatorius*, purgatorial fire (in *Enchiridion* 69).

*Temporarius* is used, for example, in the expression *poenae temporariae*, temporary punishments, which is contrasted with *poenae sempiternae*, eternal punishments (*City of God* 21:13). *Poenae temporales* is found in Erasmus's edition of the *City of God* (21:26).... (page 61, 63)

Now for the Church Fathers on prayers for the dead, purgatory, and the development of the doctrine.

### *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*

"And after the exhibition, Tryphaena again received her [Thecla]. For her daughter Falconilla had died, and said to her in a dream: 'Mother, you shall have this stranger Thecla in my place, in order that she may pray concerning me, and that I may be transferred to the place of the righteous'." (Acts of Paul and Thecla [c. AD 160] or ANF VIII:490)

Abercius

"The citizen of a prominent city, I erected this while I lived, that I might have a resting place for my body. Abercius is my name, a disciple of the chaste Shepherd who feeds his sheep on the mountains and in the fields, who has great eyes surveying everywhere, who taught me the faithful

writings of life. Standing by, I, Abercius, ordered this to be inscribed: Truly, I was in my seventy-second year. May everyone who is in accord with this and who understands it pray for Abercius." (Epitaph of Abercius [c. AD 190])

*The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*

"That very night, this was shown to me in a vision: I [Perpetua] saw Dinocrates going out from a gloomy place, where also there were several others, and he was parched and very thirsty, with a filthy countenance and pallid color, and the wound on his face which he had when he died. This Dinocrates had been my brother after the flesh, seven years of age, who died miserably with disease....For him I had made my prayer, and between him and me there was a large interval, so that neither of us could approach to the other....and [I] knew that my brother was in suffering. But I trusted that my prayer would bring help to his suffering; and I prayed for him every day until we passed over into the prison of the camp, for we were to fight in the camp-show. Then....I made my prayer for my brother day and night, groaning and weeping that he might be granted to me. Then, on the day on which we remained in fetters, this was shown to me: I saw that the place which I had formerly observed to be in gloom was now bright; and Dinocrates, with a clean body well clad, was finding refreshment....[And] he went away from the water to play joyously, after the manner of children, and I awoke. Then I understood that he was translated from the place of punishment." (The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity 2:3:4 [c. AD 202] or ANF III:701-702)

*Origen of Alexandria*

"For if on the foundation of Christ you have built not only gold and silver and precious stones [1 Corinthians 3]; but

*also wood and hay and stubble, what do you expect when the soul shall be separated from the body? Would you enter into heaven with your wood and hay and stubble and thus defile the kingdom of God; or on account of these hindrances would you remain without and receive no reward for your gold and silver and precious stones; Neither is this just. It remains then that you be committed to the fire which will burn the light materials; for our God to those who can comprehend heavenly things is called a cleansing fire. But this fire consumes not the creature, but what the creature has himself built, wood, and hay and stubble. It is manifest that the fire destroys the wood of our transgressions and then returns to us the reward of our great works." (Homilies on Jeremias [c. AD 244] or Migne PG 13:445,448)*

*St. Clement of Alexandria*

*"Accordingly the believer, through great discipline, divesting himself of the passions, passes to the mansion which is better than the former one, viz., to the greatest torment, taking with him the characteristic of repentance from the sins he has committed after baptism. He is tortured then still more -- not yet or not quite attaining what he sees others to have acquired. Besides, he is also ashamed of his transgressions. The greatest torments, indeed, are assigned to the believer. For God's righteousness is good, and His goodness is righteous. And though the punishments cease in the course of the completion of the expiation and purification of each one, yet those have very great and permanent grief who are found worthy of the other fold, on account of not being along with those that have been glorified through righteousness." (Stromata 6:14 [c. post AD 202] or ANF II:504)*

*Tertullian of Carthage*

*"That allegory of the Lord [Matt 5:25,26] which is extremely clear and simple in its meaning, and ought to be from the first understood in its plain and natural sense...Then, again, should you be disposed to apply the term 'adversary' to the devil, you are advised by the (Lord's) injunction, while you are in the way with him, 'to make even with him such a compact as may be deemed compatible with the requirements of your true faith. Now the compact you have made respecting him is to renounce him, and his pomp, and his angels. Such is your agreement in this matter. Now the friendly understanding you will have to carry out must arise from your observance of the compact: you must never think of getting back any of the things which you have abjured, and have restored to him, lest he should summon you as a fraudulent man, and a transgressor of your agreement, before God the Judge (for in this light do we read of him, in another passage, as 'the accuser of the brethren,' or saints, where reference is made to the actual practice of legal prosecution); and lest this Judge deliver you over to the angel who is to execute the sentence, and he commit you to the prison of hell, out of which there will be no dismissal until the smallest even of your delinquencies be paid off in the period before the resurrection. What can be a more fitting sense than this? What a truer interpretation?" (A Treatise on the Soul 35 [c. AD 210] or ANF III:216)*

*"All souls, therefore; are shut up within Hades: do you admit this? (It is true, whether) you say yes or no: moreover, there are already experienced there punishments and consolations; and there you have a poor man and a rich...Moreover, the soul executes not all its operations with the ministrations of the flesh; for the judgment of God*

*pursues even simple cogitations and the merest volitions. 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Therefore, even for this cause it is most fitting that the soul, without at all waiting for the flesh, should be punished for what it has done without the partnership of the flesh. So, on the same principle, in return for the pious and kindly thoughts in which it shared not the help of the flesh, shall it without the flesh receive its consolation. In short, inasmuch as we understand 'the prison' pointed out in the Gospel to be Hades, and as we also interpret 'the uttermost farthing' to mean the very smallest offence which has to be recompensed there before the resurrection, no one will hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline, without prejudice to the full process of the resurrection, when the recompense will be administered through the flesh besides." (A Treatise on the Soul 58 [c. AD 210] or ANF III:234-235)*

*"We offer sacrifices for the dead on their birthday anniversaries [the date of death or their birth into eternal life]." (The Crown 3:3 [c. AD 211] or ANF III:94)*

*"A woman, after the death of her husband....prays for his soul and asks that he may, while waiting, find rest; and that he may share in the first resurrection. And each year, on the anniversary of his death, she offers the sacrifice." (Monogamy 10:1:2 [c. AD 216] or ANF III:66-67)*

*St. Cyprian of Carthage*

*"The strength of the truly believing remains unshaken; and with those who fear and love God with their whole heart, their integrity continues steady and strong. For to adulterers even a time of repentance is granted by us, and*

*peace [or reconciliation] is given. Yet virginity is not therefore deficient in the Church, nor does the glorious design of continence languish through the sins of others. The Church, crowned with so many virgins, flourishes; and chastity and modesty preserve the tenor of their glory. Nor is the vigor of continence broken down because repentance and pardon are facilitated to the adulterer. It is one thing to stand for pardon, another thing to attain to glory; it is one thing, when cast into prison, not to go out thence until one has paid the uttermost farthing; another thing at once to receive the wages of faith and courage. It is one thing, tortured by long suffering for sins, to be cleansed and long purged by fire; another to have purged all sins by suffering. It is one thing, in fine, to be in suspense till the sentence of God at the day of judgment; another to be at once crowned by the Lord" (Letters 51[55]:20 [c. AD 253] or ANF V:332)*

#### *Apostolic Constitutions*

*"Let us pray for our brethren that are at rest in Christ, that God, the lover of mankind, who has received his soul, may forgive him every sin, voluntary and involuntary, and may be merciful and gracious to him, and give him his lot in the land of the pious that are sent into the bosom of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with all those that have pleased Him and done His will from the beginning of the world, whence all sorrow, grief, and lamentation are banished." (Apostolic Constitutions 8:4,41 [c. third Century] or ANF VII:497)*

#### *St. Lactantius*

*"But also, when God will judge the just, it is likewise in fire that he will try them. At that time, they whose sins are uppermost, either because of their gravity or their number, will be drawn together by the fire and will be burned.*

*Those, however, who have been imbued with full justice and maturity of virtue, will not feel that fire; for they have something of God in them which will repel and turn back the strength of the flame." (Divine Institutes 7:21:6 [c. AD 307] or ANF VII:217)*

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

*"Then we make mention also of those who have already fallen asleep: first, the patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, and martyrs, that through their prayers and supplications God would receive our petition; next, we make mention also of the holy fathers and bishops who have already fallen asleep, and, to put it simply, of all among us who have already fallen asleep; for we believe that it will be of very great benefit to the souls of those for whom the petition is carried up, while this holy and most solemn sacrifice is laid out."*

*"For I know that there are many who are saying this: 'If a soul departs from this world with sins, what does it profit it to be remembered in the prayer?'...[we] grant a remission of their penalties...we too offer prayers to Him for those who have fallen asleep though they be sinners. We do not plait a crown, but offer up Christ who has been sacrificed for our sins; and we thereby propitiate the benevolent God for them as well as for ourselves." (23 [Mystagogic 5], 8, 9, 10 [c. 350 AD] or NPNF2 VII:154-155)*

*St. Basil the Great*

*"I think that the noble athletes of God, who have wrestled all their lives with the invisible enemies, after they have escaped all of their persecutions and have come to the end of life, are examined by the prince of this world; and if they are found to have any wounds from their wrestling, any stains or effects of sin, they are detained. If, however they are found*

*unwounded and without stain, they are, as unconquered, brought by Christ into their rest." (Homilies on the Psalms 7:2 [c. ante AD 370])*

*St. Ephraem of Syria*

*"Lay me not with sweet spices: for this honour avails me not; Nor yet incense and perfumes: for the honour benefits me not. Burn sweet spices in the Holy Place: and me, even me, conduct to the grave with prayer. Give ye incense to God: and over me send up hymns. Instead of perfumes of spices: in prayer make remembrance of me." (His Testament [c. ante AD 373] or NPNF2 XIII:135)*

*St. Epiphanius of Salamis*

*"Useful too is the prayer fashioned on their behalf [of the deceased], even if it does not force back the whole of guilty charges laid to them. And it is useful also, because in this world we often stumble either voluntarily or involuntarily, and thus it is a reminder to do better." (Panarion 75:8 or Medicine Chest Against All Heresies [c. AD 375])*

*St. Gregory of Nyssa*

*"If a man distinguish in himself what is peculiarly human from that which is irrational, and if he be on the watch for a life of greater urbanity for himself, in this present life he will purify himself of any evil contracted, overcoming the irrational by reason. If he has inclined to the irrational pressure of the passions, using for the passions the cooperating hide of things irrational, he may afterward in a quite different manner be very much interested in what is better, when, after his departure out of the body, he gains knowledge of the difference between virtue and vice and finds that he is not able to partake of divinity until he has been purged of the filthy contagion in his soul by the*

*purifying fire." (Sermon on the Dead [c. AD 382] or Migne PG 13:445,448)*

*St. John Chrysostom*

*"Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice [Job 1:5], why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them." (Homilies on First Corinthians 41:5 [c. AD 392])*

*"Weep for those who die in their wealth and who with all their wealth prepared no consolation for their own souls, who had the power to wash away their sins and did not will to do it. Let us weep for them, let us assist them to the extent of our ability, let us think of some assistance for them, small as it may be, yet let us somehow assist them. But how, and in what way? By praying for them and by entreating others to pray for them, by constantly giving alms to the poor on their behalf. Not in vain was it decreed by the apostles that in the awesome mysteries remembrance should be made of the departed. They knew that here there was much gain for them, much benefit. When the entire people stands with hands uplifted, a priestly assembly, and that awesome sacrificial Victim is laid out, how, when we are calling upon God, should we not succeed in their defense? But this is done for those who have departed in the faith, while even the catechumens are not reckoned as worthy of this consolation, but are deprived of every means of assistance except one. And what is that? We may give alms to the poor on their behalf." (Homilies on Philippians 3:4-10 [c. AD 402] or NPNF1 XIII:197)*

*St. Ambrose of Milan*

*"Give, oh Lord, rest to Thy servant Theodosius, that rest Thou hast prepared for Thy saints....I love him, therefore will I follow him to the land of the living; I will not leave him till by my prayers and lamentations he shall be admitted unto the holy mount of the Lord, to which his deserts call him." (De Obit Theodosii [c. AD 395] or Migne PL 16:1397)*

*St. Augustine of Hippo*

*"The man who has cultivated that remote land [Gen 3:17] and who has gotten his bread by his very great labor is able to suffer this labor to the end of this life. After this life, however, it is not necessary that he suffer. But the man who perhaps has not cultivated the land and has allowed it to be overrun with brambles has in this life the curse of his land on all his works, and after this life he will have either purgatorial fire or eternal punishment [habebit vel ignem purgationis vel poenam aeternam]." (De Genesi contra Manich 2:20:30 [c. AD 389])*

*"'Lord, rebuke me not in Your indignation, nor correct me in Your anger' [Psalm 38:1]...In this life may You cleanse me and make me such that I have no need of the corrective fire, which is for those who are saved, but as if by fire...for it is said: 'He shall be saved, but as if by fire' [1 Cor 3:15]. And because it is said that he shall be saved, little is thought of that fire. Yet plainly, though we be saved by fire, that fire will be more severe than anything a man can suffer in this life." (Explanations of the Psalms 37:3 [c. AD 392])*

*"There is an ecclesiastical discipline, as the faithful know, when the names of the martyrs are read aloud in that place at the altar of God, where prayer is not offered for them. Prayer, however, is offered for other dead who are*

*remembered. It is wrong to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we ought ourselves be commended." (Sermons 159:1 [c. AD 411])*

*"But by the prayers of the holy Church, and by the salvific sacrifice, and by the alms which are given for their spirits, there is no doubt that the dead are aided, that the Lord might deal more mercifully with them than their sins would deserve. The whole Church observes this practice which was handed down by the Fathers: that it prays for those who have died in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when they are commemorated in their own place in the sacrifice itself; and the sacrifice is offered also in memory of them, on their behalf. If, then, works of mercy are celebrated for the sake of those who are being remembered, who would hesitate to recommend them, on whose behalf prayers to God are not offered in vain? It is not at all to be doubted that such prayers are of profit to the dead; but for such of them as lived before their death in a way that makes it possible for these things to be useful to them after death." (Sermons 172:2)*

*"Temporal punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both here and hereafter; but all of them before that last and strictest judgment [ante iudicium illud severissimum novissimumque]. But not all who suffer temporal punishments after death will come to eternal punishments, which are to follow after that judgment." (The City of God 21:13 [c. AD 413-426])*

*"The prayer either of the Church herself or of pious individuals is heard on behalf of certain of the dead; but it is heard for those who, having been regenerated in Christ, did not for the rest of their life in the body do such wickedness*

*that they might be judged unworthy of such mercy, nor who yet lived so well that it might be supposed they have no need of such mercy." (The City of God 21:24:2)*

*"That there should be some such fire even after this life is not incredible, and it can be inquired into and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater or lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish -- through a certain purgatorial fire [per ignem quemdam purgatorium]."* (Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Love 18:69 [c. AD 421] or NPNF1 III:260)

*"The time which interposes between the death of a man and the final resurrection holds souls in hidden retreats, accordingly as each is deserving of rest or of hardship, in view of what it merited when it was living in the flesh. Nor can it be denied that the souls of the dead find relief through the piety of their friends and relatives who are still alive, when the Sacrifice of the Mediator [Mass] is offered for them, or when alms are given in the Church. But these things are of profit to those who, when they were alive, merited that they might afterward be able to be helped by these things. There is a certain manner of living, neither so good that there is no need of these helps after death, nor yet so wicked that these helps are of no avail after death."* (Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Love 29:109)"

*The Church Fathers on Purgatory, Catholic and Christian Apologetics  
Articles, Anonymous*

*"OF THE FIVE KINDS OF MEN WHO SHALL  
APPEAR AT THE JUDGMENT  
Five kinds of men shall appear before this Judge.*

*The first, and the worst, are those Christians who have died in mortal sin, without repentance and without regret; for these have despised the death of Christ and His sacraments, or else they have received them unworthily and in vain. And they have not practised the works of mercy, showing charity toward their neighbours, as God has commanded. And for this they are doomed to the depths of hell.*

*The second kind are the unbelievers, Pagans and Jews. These must all appear before Christ, though they were damned already during their lives; for, in their time, they possessed neither Divine grace nor Divine love, and for this reason they have always dwelt in the eternal death of damnation. But these shall have less pain than the evil Christians; for, since they received fewer gifts of God, they owed Him less loyalty.*

*The third kind are those good Christians who, from time to time, fell into sin, and rose again through contrition and penance; but who have not made full satisfaction for their sins according to justice. These belong to purgatory.*

*The fourth kind consists of those men who have kept God's commandments; or, when they broke them, they have returned to God with contrition and with penance, and with works of charity and mercy and so have made satisfaction; so that their souls coming forth from their mouths go straight to heaven, without passing through purgatory.*

*The fifth kind are all those who, above all outward works of charity, have their sojourn in heaven, and are noughted and lost in God, and God in them, so that there is no other thing between God and them but time and their mortal*

*nature. When these men are made free from their bodies, they enjoy, in that very moment, eternal bliss; and they are not judged, but shall themselves judge other men, with Christ, in the Day of Doom. And then all mortal life, and all temporal sorrows, both on earth and in purgatory, shall end, and all the souls of the damned, together with the Fiend and his companions, shall sink and disappear in the deeps of hell, in a corruption and everlasting horror without end. And in the twinkling of an eye the blessed shall be with Christ their Bridegroom in eternal glory; and they shall see and taste and enjoy the fathomless riches of the Being of God, eternally and for ever.*

*This is the third coming, which all of us await, and which is still to happen. The first coming, when God became man and lived in humility among us, and died for the love of us, this coming we should imitate, outwardly by fulfilling the perfect moral virtues, inwardly by the practice of charity and true humility. In the second coming, which happens in the present time, He comes with grace within each loving heart; and this coming we should long for and pray for every day, that we may remain steadfast and grow in new virtues. The third coming, at the Judgment, or in the hour of death, we should expect with longing, with trust, and with awe; that we may be set free from this misery and enter into the house of glory.*

*This coming in its three ways is the second point of the four chief points, wherein Christ says: Sponsus venit, The Bridegroom cometh.*

#### OF A SPIRITUAL GOING OUT WITH ALL VIRTUES

*Now understand and mark this: Christ says, at the beginning of this precept, Behold; and this is done through*

*charity and a pure conscience, as you have heard before. Then He has shown us what we shall see, that is, the threefold coming.*

*Now He commands us what we shall do next, and says: Go ye out. If you possess the first point, that is, if you are able to see, through grace and through charity; and if, further, you have gazed well upon your pattern Christ and His going out; then, there arises within you, out of charity, and out of the loving observation of your Bridegroom, a righteousness, namely, that thereafter you long to follow Him in the virtues. Then Christ is saying within you: Go ye out. This going out must be done in three ways: we must go out towards God, towards ourselves, and towards our neighbours, and this we must do by means of charity and righteousness. For charity ever strives towards the height, towards the kingdom of God, which is God Himself; for He is the source from which unmediated charity flows forth, and wherein it abides in the Unity. And righteousness, which is born of charity, wills the perfection of all the moral and all the other virtues which are honourable and proper to the kingdom of God, that is the soul.*

*Charity and Righteousness: these two lay the foundation of the kingdom of the soul where God would dwell. And this foundation is humility.*

*These three virtues prop and bear the whole weight and the whole edifice of all the other virtues and of all transcendence. For charity always confronts man with the unfathomable goodness of God, from which it has flowed forth, that thereby he may live worthily and remain steadfast before God, and grow in true humility and all other virtues. And righteousness places man face to face*

*with the eternal truth of God, that he may know truth, and become enlightened, and may fulfil all virtue without erring. But humility brings man face to face with the most high mightiness of God, that he may always remain little and lowly, and may surrender himself to God, and may not stand upon his selfhood. This is the way in which a man should hold himself before God, that thereby he may grow continually in new virtues."*

*The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, Chapter X and XI, By Jan VVan Ruuysbroeck, 1916*

**"HE SHALL GO OUT TOWARDS HIS FRIENDS IN PURGATORY**

*At times the man shall behold his friends in purgatory, and shall consider their misery and their yearnings and their heavy pains. Then shall he pray and beseech the pity, the mercy, and the generosity of God; and shall plead their good-will, and their great misery, and their yearning after the rich goodness of God, and he shall bring to God's remembrance that they died in love, and that their only refuge is in His passion and mercy.*

*Now understand this: it may sometimes happen that this enlightened man is specially urged of the Spirit of God to pray for a certain thing, for some sinner, or for some soul, or for some ghostly benefit, in such a way that he feels and understands it to be the work of the Holy Ghost, and not of his own choice, or self-will, or nature. Then the man sometimes becomes so intense and so ardent in his prayer that he receives in ghostly wise the answer that his prayer has been heard. And with the coming of this sign the thrust of the Spirit and the prayer abate."*

*The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, Chapter XLI, By Jan VVan  
Ruysbroeck, 1916*

## CHAPTER TWO

# A Vision of 'Destiny' – The Love

Standing before the mountain of stars, I perched my eyesight on the snowy mountain peak that lay high, high above it. About thirty beautifully garnished angelic hosts were hovering, all of them wearing a gown of a different infinite pastel shade: purples, pinks, blues, yellows, whites, etc.

The white clouds above us were as a mist which permeated every sphere of this peaceful, tranquil, lumination to the heavens.

They began to show me things of importance for the people of the world who were all struggling in one way or another to maintain, preserve and cultivate a proper spiritual path within the context of a physical existence.

For a short period of time, I was shown some important things about the souls of the people of the world; obstacles that they were allowing into their lives which stifled spiritual movement.

Or this eve, I was to be shown the souls of about a handful of people of the world. Three of them were present in this spiritual acclimation, which indicated

some openness to the spirit world. One was absent, and this absence was indicative of a lack of openness to the spirit world. Two young ones were present, and their presence was indicative of some openness to the spirit world.

One of these people of the world was sitting at the bottom on a bench next to what appeared to be an outhouse with a pretty profound force of energy holding her spirit literally down. This was a spirit of distraction which was all too common in the world. In order to please others, she was being held back from doing anything of significance in this life and engaging in frivolous activities which diminished any sort of spiritual formation. The powerful force over her head came from the person of the world who had not entered this sphere of spiritual recognizance. By allowing this person to form her destiny, she had given it up . . . at least for now.

The other person of the world was struggling a bit, but moving. Both of these people of the world were spiritually lazy, and this had become a significant obstacle to both. They both really needed to step it up a bit; life is short, time is meaningful, and spiritual progress is essential.

The other person of the world was shown as being unusually open to the spirit world, although not yet manifesting it upon the ground, but it was shown to me that he would help them both in time to come.

One of the young people of the earth was a child of 'Destiny.' She was to become a mystic in time, and had been dressed for that potentiality in a gorgeous little girl's dress.

Having ascended about twenty meters up the mountain, we both looked back at the other person of the world who remained held down on the bench. It was her mother. She couldn't come, she couldn't move due to the repressive force which hovered above her like an invisible migraine.

The young person of the world's dress had little poop stains all over it, indicating the defilements which were already beginning to affect that gift and how it would eventually manifest and possibly alter this profoundly important 'Destiny' if something did not change in the way she was being brought up.

Looking towards her mother, the angels and I encouraged her to come and clean her up; change her dress and renew her spirit, so to speak. It was clear, however, that some of these defilements came from a lack of knowledge being imparted to her by her other parent who was not present in this spiritual realm. Because he didn't hold God firmly in his breast, or even lukewarmly, he held many false views about God. His influence could be very detrimental to her. And as it was that he was not even able to be present in the spiritual realms, it became her mother's God-given responsibility to protect the 'Destiny' of her child. But she couldn't . . . she was allowing an

inferior energy to take precedence in her household, thus, destroying that very 'Destiny.'

Reaching towards the young girl, I spoke up to the angelic hosts standing nearby, saying "I'll do it, I'll clean her up." But they replied, "You cannot, it must be her mother." Looking towards her, I sighed in frustration knowing that this particular task was not mine to do and I took the hand of the angels who beckoned me to further ascend the mountain to the stars.

Another person of the world appeared to take the rest of the journey with me. I realized that these other two people of the world could not come, but the one who was unusually open would come part of the way.

Caught up in the things of the world which held him below, this person of the world would accompany us, but not participate in the frequent undertakings which were about to take place as he was unable to 'see' the grand splendor yet to come. His frequency would not allow it. But I was grateful for the company.

And it must be noted that potentialities can be seen in the spiritual realm, but in order to attain to significance, those potentials must reach the ground.

In other words, this person of the world who showed much openness to the spiritual realms was not necessarily bringing that to fruition in the physical world. All life on earth, being born with great

potentiality, can only reach the summit if they bring that interior openness into their own external existence in physicality.

It must also be noted that 'seeing' is a frequential undertaking. What we are able to 'see' is entirely dependent upon the frequency and vibration we have attained in the physical vessel below and within the spiritual receptacle above.

In other words, potentialities can be seen within the spirit realm of those who may not manifest any of it on earth. Their existence alone does not make these potentials significant, but rather, an internal thrust which rises upwards to bring them into being.

So . . . in other words, this one person of the world being open to the spirit gives him no more potential than these other two who were being spiritually lazy. Upward thrust would determine that . . .

Potential is something that all human life is given. Remember, potentials unrealized have no meaning, whereas potentials realized are eternal. Potential is then determined by focus and action to bring it in.

As we climbed the mountain peak, the crowd of angels began to do something quite spectacular. Windows of eternity would open up in the icy mass of the sequential peak; a sheer curtain lying between its destination and our world, a cloudy image of the world beyond emanated through the shadow mist.

Through a huge hole in the ice and snow of the mountain, a thin curtain-like veil could be seen. Angelic beings parted the shadowy veil between this world and the next. I was shown in a manner indescribable in human terms how the conscious waking world of a physical human life could be seen as one half of a circle. Whereas, the whispers of eternity, or 'the All' was revealed as the celestial servants parted the veil like they would have a curtain. The other side was the other half of that circle.

In an ideal way of 'seeing,' 'a "soul could let it's shadow stretch and land on either side." (From 'Nexus', By Dan Fogelberg)

The whole of our human existence was overshadowed by the other world; merged and transcendant in every possible way. There was absolutely no separation.

Entering into the inner sphere of the heavenly etheric was an experience of absolute and total bliss. Colors vibrated with a frequency undefineable in its height and allure. And within that frequency I was able to see how every human action below, was overshadowed by a spiritual action from above.

Unfortunately, the opposite would also then be true. Certain human actions could not be mirrored by the light, but rather, would be overshadowed by a less precise spiritual action resonating from the cloudy,

darker and/or evil realms which would then manifest as different shades of a similar sphere.

As I had seen with these people of the world below, there are many spheres of influence residing in action. And in this understanding of the spherical realm of influence, a soul could understand that much as the moon might pass by the sun during a total eclipse, various frequencies of knowledge pass through our own world below, and we choose - which world, which sphere, upon which our souls will resonate. Every soul has 'Destiny' offered unto it, but only the very few choose it.

Why do so many souls bypass the light?

Because it is the light configuration, the upper part of the sphere of physical life, which allows us to live within the confines of physical reality as it manifests before us.

What opens the potential of 'Destiny'?

Each life opens this potential, but often takes the more common world view. Thus, consciousness descends into a series of containers which hold many spheres below it. Only the few merge and contain the higher spheres.

An average person of the world honestly doing the best that they can could, would reside at the 'veil' level, having the physical manifest below and the immediate light of heaven above. Both semi-circles

would merge and be joined. This interconnection occurs despite the fact that most people of the world on this side of the veil would rarely or never part it during their lives to witness the interconnection.

Those on the other side of the veil, however, would be given the fuller view in stages and steps according to their post-crossing development.

This interconnectedness remains intact, as nothing on earth has not yet first happened in heaven . . . unless . . . unless a soul were traveling downwards, wherein the influx from 'above' would become that which was coming from 'below.'

But at this moment, the focus remained upon the veil to the higher worlds, the veil as it revealed itself to the immediate worlds above; or as the angels called it, 'The All.'

Progressing up the mountain this eve with the decad or triad of angelic spirits, tremendous breaks in the ice were to be seen. Over the night, we would travel through another decad or triad of these wide-angled holes which presented within them a thin, but white, white, white veil, which could be opened like a curtain. Beyond them, in their transparency, you could see worlds beyond number, aeons of worlds, higher frequencies, vibrations and existences. To see them was to gasp in reverential respect. Each subsequent veil held a higher frequency than the former.

The icy holes in the rocks were like windows, separated by about twenty meters up the mountain each, and held within them a veil. Every glass enclosed peak held within it another sequentially more infinite vibration than the previous.

For a moment, I was allowed to see that a new group had formed. These other people of the world could not 'see' through these veils as they were so attached to the material world below. When I looked in their direction, they appeared as if babbling to someone or something that was holding their 'sight' from the world below. Even though they were there, they were present at this great mystery, they could not 'see.' And in this lies a great mystery . . .

The mystery of 'seeing' is contained in frequency and vibration. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. The Holy Spirit descends for all, but faith is a gift given and received.

The Holy Spirit can be received in many ways. Not all are called to mystical union, as not all are called to scientific genius. However, all 'seeing' is contained within frequency and vibration. The only path to attain it, is through this reception.

Faith is a gift we must receive from the Holy Spirit. Everything beyond it must be received, as well, and it all comes down from the higher into the lower as frequency.

We are given to bring heaven to earth. This is done by allowing frequency and vibration to descend thus unto our physical receptacles introducing pattern. Jesus incarnated into human form, he made the pattern accessible to all.

Continuing to ascend up the mountain, there was little exertion in the effort as the angels seemed to lighten the steep depth of the climb. All worlds were opened in the ascending ice bank window as each veil was revealed as a sheer curtain which they cast aside with the simple swoop of their angelic hands.

As each world was revealed to me, an ecstasy was contained within my soul. I absorbed the high pastel pinks, blues, purples, yellows and whites of these higher spheres of existence into my 'marrow and bones' (as the Buddhists would call it). But each pulsation was of a higher quality than the previous, and a higher frequency was to come with the next.

With each rapture of the spirit, I experienced this merging, melding and blending of the two worlds; the two semi-circles. The angels said to me, "This is the world of 'the All', of God." Repeating themselves at every new window, they said, "This is the world of 'the All', of God. This is the world of 'the All', of God

Then the angels started repeating, "This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God."

Again, "This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God."

Again, "This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God."

"This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God."

I knew 'the All' to be God in his highest, most potent forms, in in His multi-dimensional manifestations, in His greatness and lowliness . . . in all that He had created everywhere; all times, places and beings.

And with each repetition, "This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God." I fell into a higher, finer frequency of God and was showered in an absorption into a more profound light. I was literally just vibrating . . . higher and higher and higher.

And the angels repeated, "This is 'the All', of God. You belong to 'the All.' You belong to God.", frequency and vibration.

All became frequency.

We were about to reach the summit, and the angels motioned us to stop. It would be the final ascent and only a very few people of the world would be allowed to proceed there with me as it was a place of great holiness. The rest of the people disappeared with no fanfare into the ether.

The angels began showing me old photographs; which held upon them images of regular and

ordinary human lives; a family sitting to table and holding hands for prayer at dinner in the 1950's, a family portrait of a family all dressed in the regalia of the late 1800's . . . many, many portraits. It was the usual slew of posed photographs marking momentous events in the lives of family and friends during their earthly sojourns upon the earth.

And in each image I could 'see' and feel how both worlds had completely overlapped. Every time, in every moment . . .

I was being taught how to 'see' the whole view, the spirit world was always interacting, the world of 'the All' was never missing from that fragmentation. Even in the most mundane of life's circumstances, 'the All' was always overlapping the physical realms, in every human life. It remained accessible to everyone in some mysterious way.

Each photograph held within it a knowing, a seeing of a different kind. This veil was sheer, excruciatingly thin . . . and the otherworld spheres were ineffably linked to every moment of human life, even though much of it was to remain unseen by those who could not 'see.'

I began to weep, as if I was suddenly being given some type of profound insight into each of these individual lifetimes, these moments. Some of the old pictures held images which involved the faith of the people in them. And this made my weeping more interior and profound.

In that moment, I understood the supreme importance of every life lived, each of these lives held such a deep importance. Each of these moments and acts of faith were regarded with such honor, respect and . . . really just tears. It was as if the profundity of these lives, these photographs . . . were being poured into my soul. And without knowing the why, I just knew the importance.

For a moment, my spirit was lifted into the photographs, and I awakened in an old, old mansion. Inside it were the belongings of many who had gone before. As I would touch the old sewing machine or the desk of a family long since passed, I would weep. And as I started to noticed old rosaries, medals, statues and other sacramental hidden behind other antiques, I found myself rushing in and trying to find more because as I touched them, I felt what could only be described as a genuine weeping from God.

When you take a moment to really think about how many lives are born and die every day in our world alone . . . think not only of human life, but of every other form of life . . . ponder on the fact that so many different forms of life exist together in one space; between human, animal, atomic, etc.

The bird perched outside your window lives in an entirely different universe than your own.

Multiply this by how many universes must exist within the mind of God.

And I felt God weeping interiorly, inside my soul, for every life that had been, and every act of faith made by those people. Long since forgotten, long since passed . . .

I could only think - as I tried to contain my ever flowing tears with the movement from one room to the next touching into yet another person's life, or another family's struggles - God is weeping for every life He has created.

In this moment, I could only try to fathom what this indicated? If you've ever pondered suicide, think deeply on this. God was weeping inside me, through me, and in my soul for every life that had ever been.

Honestly, in a world where life and death comes and goes in a moment, I could not really take the meaning of this moment to its fullest conclusion. It would be something I would have to contemplate because I had a very strong realization of the importance of each and every life, and felt it very emotionally.

My soul was swiftly struck from behind by a power of 'the All' I could not define. My spirit fell to its knees and miraculously had traveled to the summit of the mountain. The stars were all around me in an infinite kaleidoscope of light, and my garment had transformed into a gown of great whiteness with many layers of soft flowing dress. It fell just below my knees but was soft and fragrant. Garnered by its lightness, it blew in the spirit wind as I stood in the midsts of mists of white and the icy patch of summit

before a handsome priest who also kneeled before me.

“Are you ready to renew your vows?” He said, and as he did I instinctively knew he was not speaking of renewing my wedding vows that I had taken thirty two or so years before, but of repeating the vows I had taken with Mother Angelica just six months prior to become a Poor Clare Nun of Perpetual Adoration.

There was a little bit of concern in his voice, because I had been going through some sexual temptations recently of which would challenge such a vow.

Another priest appeared with a horse below a cliff face off the mountaintop, both of whom had manifested in the ether. He introduced himself to me as Father Thomas, saying that he had been a Marist Priest during his life. Remaining above him on the steep ice edge, I didn’t know how to help him to ascend this upright cliff face.

But my thinking was much adieu about nothing, he said, because he wanted to demonstrate something to me. Imagine how hard it would be to get a horse up top of a straight cliff like this . . . but as he spoke of the temptations which I had recently undergone, he and the horse began to lift up off the ground and float up towards me on the mountaintop ledge.

They didn’t have to climb the cliff, because they were accepting help from the Lord. Fr. Thomas and the horse were able to scale the cliff as if lifted up by

some heavenly source which demonstrated the power of grace in our prayer life and during times of temptation. I understood that he was showing me that you must not only ask, but receive of grace when it is given. Grace was stronger than temptation, if asked for and received by the one who would so entreat of the Lord. The horse disappeared . . .

Fr. Thomas now stood majestically upon the mountain top. Accepting the grace, I, still kneeling, now turned towards him. "Are you ready to repeat your vows" He repeated the words of the other priest who was now quietly kneeling at his side.

There was quiet for a few moments as although I wished to renew my vows, I realized I did not know them. I'd never actually read them. Interiorly, I realized there was significance in me being asked to take the vows a second time, as most nuns will take a set of three vows. The first vows will bring them into the order as a postulant (which means candidate), the second vow is that of a novice (which means a beginner) and the third are perpetual (which is the defining set of permanent vows which are meant to be life-long). I was intrigued that I was being asked to follow what seemed to be the set rule of the church in this mystical space outside of time.

But again, I didn't know the vows. I'd never actually read them.

Before I could wince, a female voice began reciting the vows in my ear and I started to repeat them after her.

Fr. Thomas generated such a big smile on his face as this happened, because he knew it was 'the sign' they were looking for to know that I was really and truly ready to take them.

And in beautiful words I would not be able to remember upon return to the body, I made vows to live as a Nun in the Order of the Poor Clare's of Perpetual Adoration.

But what did this mean? How would I live out such a calling in the world, in my own home, in the state of life my circumstances presented?

What held interest about this was that all nuns will take the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty, but the Poor Clare's also take a vow of enclosure; which is specifically intended for their life as contemplative nuns who remain in prayer before the Lord at all times.

And the angel's began pronouncing very loudly and with holy acclaim, "You belong to God, you belong to the All!" They acclaimed it across what now seemed like a horizon of many worlds. "You belong to God, you belong to the All!"

Repeatedly, they shouted, "You belong to God, you belong to the All!"

And two of the angels came out of the many towards me in an unexpected rush of wind. In their hands, they each carried a sword, but the ends of them were more of a single point than a regular sword. Before I knew what was happening, I was crying out in pain as the angels had pushed the swords through both of my shoulders.

Under their breath, they continued to whisper, "You belong to God, you belong to the All!" I rested in bliss.

*"Ecstasy and Rapture*

*Since the object of all contemplation is the production of that state of intimate communion in which the mystics declare that the self is "in God and God is in her," it might be supposed that the orison of union represented the end of mystical activity, in so far as it is concerned with the attainment of a transitory but exalted consciousness of "oneness with the Absolute." Nearly all the great contemplatives, however, describe as a distinct, and regard as a more advanced phase of the spiritual consciousness, the group of definitely ecstatic states in which the concentration of interest on the Transcendent is so complete, the gathering up and pouring out of life on this one point so intense, that the subject is more or less entranced, and becomes, for the time of the ecstasy, unconscious of the external world. In ordinary contemplation he refused to attend to that external world: it was there, a blurred image, at the fringe of his conscious field, but he deliberately left it on one side. In ecstasy he cannot attend to it. None of its messages reach him: not*

*even those most insistent of all messages which are translated into the terms of bodily pain.*

*All mystics agree in regarding such ecstasy as an exceptionally favourable state; the one in which man's spirit is caught up to the most immediate union with the divine. The word has become a synonym for joyous exaltation, for the inebriation of the Infinite. The induced ecstasies of the Dionysian mysteries, the metaphysical raptures of the Neoplatonists, the voluntary or involuntary trance of Indian mystics and Christian saints – all these, however widely they may differ in transcendental value, agree in claiming such value, in declaring that this change in the quality of consciousness brought with it a valid and ineffable apprehension of the Real. Clearly, this apprehension will vary in quality and content with the place of the subject in the spiritual scale. The ecstasy is merely the psycho-physical condition which accompanies it. "It is hardly a paradox to say," says Myers, "that the evidence for ecstasy is stronger than the evidence for any other religious belief. Of all the subjective experiences of religion, ecstasy is that which has been most urgently, perhaps to the psychologist most convincingly asserted; and it is not confined to any one religion. . . . From the medicine man of the lowest savages up to St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul, with Buddha and Mahomet on the way, we find records which, though morally and intellectually much differing, are in psychological essence the same."*

*There are three distinct aspects under which the ecstatic state may be studied: the physical, the psychological, the mystical. Many of the deplorable misunderstandings and still more deplorable mutual recriminations which*

*surround its discussion come from the refusal of experts in one of these three branches to consider the results arrived at by the other two.*

*A. Physically considered, ecstasy is a trance; more or less deep, more or less prolonged. The subject may slide into it gradually from a period of absorption in, or contemplation of, some idea which has filled the field of consciousness: or, it may come on suddenly, the appearance of the idea – or even some word or symbol suggesting the idea – abruptly throwing the subject into an entranced condition. This is the state which some mystical writers call Rapture. The distinction, however, is a conventional one: and the works of the mystics describe many intermediate forms.*

*During the trance, breathing and circulation are depressed. The body is more or less cold and rigid, remaining in the exact position which it occupied at the oncoming of the ecstasy, however difficult and unnatural this pose may be. Sometimes entrancement is so deep that there is complete anaesthesia, as in the case which I quote from the life of St. Catherine of Siena. Credible witnesses report that Bernadette, the visionary of Lourdes, held the flaming end of a candle in her hand for fifteen minutes during one of her ecstasies. She felt no pain, neither did the flesh show any marks of burning. Similar instances of ecstatic anaesthesia abound in the lives of the saints, and are also characteristic of certain pathological states.*

*The trance includes, according to the testimony of the ecstasies, two distinct phases – ( a ) the short period of lucidity and ( b ) a longer period of complete unconsciousness, which may pass into a death like catalepsy, lasting for hours; or, as once with St. Teresa, for*

days. "The difference between union and trance," says Teresa, "is this: that the latter lasts longer and is more visible outwardly, because the breathing gradually diminishes, so that it becomes impossible to speak or to open the eyes. And though this very thing occurs when the soul is in union, there is more violence in a trance, for the natural warmth vanishes, I know not how, when the rapture is deep, and in all these kinds of orison there is more or less of this. When it is deep, as I was saying, the hands become cold and sometimes stiff and straight as pieces of wood; as to the body if the rapture comes on when it is standing or kneeling it remains so; and the soul is so full of the joy of that which Our Lord is setting before it, that it seems to forget to animate the body and abandons it. If the rapture lasts, the nerves are made to feel it."

Such ecstasy as this, so far as its physical symptoms go, is not of course the peculiar privilege of the mystics. It is an abnormal bodily state, caused by a psychic state: and this causal psychic state may be healthy or unhealthy, the result of genius or disease. It is common in the little understood type of personality called "sensitive" or mediumistic: it is a well-known symptom of certain mental and nervous illnesses. A feeble mind concentrated on one idea – like a hypnotic subject gazing at one spot – easily becomes entranced; however trivial the idea which gained possession of his consciousness. Apart from its content, then, ecstasy carries no guarantee of spiritual value. It merely indicates the presence of certain abnormal psycho-physical conditions: an alteration of the normal equilibrium, a shifting of the threshold of consciousness, which leaves the body, and the whole usual "external world" outside instead of inside the conscious field, and even affects those physical functions – such as breathing – which are almost entirely

*automatic. Thus ecstasy, physically considered, may occur in any person in whom (1) the threshold of consciousness is exceptionally mobile and (2) there is a tendency to dwell upon one governing idea or intuition. Its worth depends entirely on the objective value of that idea or intuition.*

*In the hysterical patient, thanks to an unhealthy condition of the centres of consciousness, any trivial or irrational idea, any one of the odds and ends stored up in the subliminal region, may thus become fixed, dominate the mind, and produce entrancement. Such ecstasy is an illness: the emphasis is on the pathological state which makes it possible. In the mystic, the idea which fills his life is so great a one – the idea of God – that, in proportion as it is vivid, real, and intimate, it inevitably tends to monopolize the field of consciousness. Here the emphasis is on the overpowering strength of spirit, not on the feeble and unhealthy state of body or mind. This true ecstasy, says Godferneaux, is not a malady, but “the extreme form of a state which must be classed amongst the ordinary accidents of conscious life.”*

*The mystics themselves are fully aware of the importance of this distinction. Ecstasies, no less than visions and voices, must they declare, be subjected to unsparing criticism before they are recognized as divine: whilst some are undoubtedly “of God,” others are no less clearly “of the devil.” “The great doctors of the mystic life,” says Malaval, “teach that there are two sorts of rapture, which must be carefully distinguished. The first are produced in persons but little advanced in the Way, and still full of selfhood; either by the force of a heated imagination which vividly apprehends a sensible object, or by the artifice of the Devil. These are the raptures which St. Teresa calls, in various*

*parts of her works, Raptures of Feminine Weakness. The other sort of Rapture is, on the contrary, the effect of pure intellectual vision in those who have a great and generous love for God. To generous souls who have utterly renounced themselves, God never fails in these raptures to communicate high things."*

*All the mystics agree with Malaval in finding the test of a true ecstasy, not in its outward sign, but in its inward grace, its after-value: and here psychology would do well to follow their example. The ecstatic states, which are supreme instances of the close connection between body and soul, have bodily as well as mental results: and those results are as different and as characteristic as those observed in healthy and in morbid organic processes. If the concentration has been upon the highest centre of consciousness, the organ of spiritual perception – if a door has really been opened by which the self has escaped for an instant to the vision of That Which Is – the ecstasy will be good for life. The entrancement of disease, on the contrary is always bad for life. Its concentration being upon the lower instead of the higher levels of mentality, it depresses rather than enhances the vitality, the fervour, or the intelligence of its subject: and leaves behind it an enfeebled will, and often moral and intellectual chaos. "Ecstasies that do not produce considerable profit either to the persons themselves or others, deserve to be suspected," says Augustine Baker, "and when any marks of their approaching are perceived, the persons ought to divert their minds some other way. It is the difference between a healthy appetite for nourishing food and a morbid craving for garbage. The same organs of digestion are used in satisfying both: yet he would be a hardy physiologist who*

*undertook to discredit all nutrition by a reference to its degenerate forms.*

*Sometimes both kinds of ecstasy, the healthy and the psychopathic, are seen in the same person. Thus in the cases of St. Catherine of Genoa and St. Catherine of Siena it would seem that as their health became feebler and the nervous instability always found in persons of genius increased, their ecstasies became more frequent; but these were not healthy ecstasies, such as those which they experienced in the earlier stages of their careers, and which brought with them an access of vitality. They were the results of increasing weakness of body, not of the overpowering strength of the spirit: and there is evidence that Catherine of Genoa, that acute self-critic, was conscious of this. "Those who attended on her did not know how to distinguish one state from the other. And hence on coming to; she would sometimes say, 'Why did you let me remain in this quietude, from which I have almost died?'" Her earlier ecstasies, on the contrary, had in a high degree the positive character of exaltation and life-enhancement consequent upon extreme concentration on the Absolute; as well as the merely negative character of annihilation of the surface-consciousness. She came from them with renewed health and strength, as from a resting in heavenly places and a feeding on heavenly food: and side by side with this ecstatic life, fulfilled the innumerable duties of her active vocation as hospital matron and spiritual mother of a large group of disciples. "Many times," says her legend, "she would hide herself in some secret place and there stay: and being sought she was found upon the ground, her face hidden in her hands, altogether beyond herself, in such a state of joy as is beyond thought or speech: and being called – yea, even in a loud voice – she heard not. And at*

*other times she would go up and down. . . . as if beyond herself, drawn by the impulse of love, she did this. And certain other times she remained for the space of six hours as if dead: but hearing herself called, suddenly she got up, and answering she would at once go about all that needed to be done even the humblest things. And in thus leaving the All, she went without any grief, because she fled all selfhood (la propriet ) as if it were the devil. And when she came forth from her hiding-place her face was rosy as it might be a cherub's; and it seemed as if she might have said, 'Who shall separate me from the love of God?'" "Very often," says St. Teresa, describing the results of such rapturous communion with Pure Love as that from which St. Catherine came joyous and rosy-faced, "he who was before sickly and full of pain comes forth healthy and even with new strength: for it is something great that is given to the soul in rapture."*

*B. Psychologically considered, all ecstasy is a form – the most perfect form – of the state which is technically called "complete mono-ideism," That withdrawal of consciousness from circumference to centre, that deliberate attention to one thing , which we discussed in Recollection, is here pushed – voluntarily or involuntarily – to its logical conclusion. It is (1) always paid for by psycho-physical disturbances; (2) rewarded in healthy cases by an enormous lucidity, a supreme intuition in regard to the one thing on which the self's interest has been set.*

*Such ecstasy, then, is an exalted form of contemplation, and might be expected in appropriate subjects to develop naturally from that state. "A simple difference of degree," says Maury, "separates ecstasy from the action of forcibly fixing an idea in the mind. Contemplation implies exercise*

*of will, and the power of interrupting the extreme tension of the mind. In ecstasy, which is contemplation carried to its highest pitch, the will, although in the strictest sense able to provoke the state, is nevertheless unable to suspend it."*

*In "complete mono-ideism" then, the attention to one thing and the inattention to all else, is so entire that the subject is entranced. Consciousness has been withdrawn from those centres which receive and respond to the messages of the external world: he neither sees, feels, nor hears. The Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat of the contemplative ceases to be a metaphor, and becomes a realistic description. It must be remembered that the whole trend of mystical education has been toward the production of this fixity of attention. Recollection and Quiet lead up to it. Contemplation cannot take place without it. All the mystics assure us that a unification of consciousness, in which all outward things are forgot, is the necessary prelude of union with the Divine; for consciousness of the Many and consciousness of the One are mutually exclusive states. Ecstasy, for the psychologist, is such a unification in its extreme form. The absorption of the self in the one idea, the one desire, is so profound – and in the case of the great mystics so impassioned – that everything else is blotted out. The tide of life is withdrawn, not only from those higher centres which are the seats of perception and of thought, but also from those lower centres which govern the physical life. The whole vitality of the subject is so concentrated on the transcendental world – or, in a morbid ecstatic, on the idea which dominates his mind – that body and brain alike are depleted of their energy in the interests of this supreme act.*

*Since mystics have, as a rule, the extreme susceptibility to suggestions and impressions which is characteristic of artistic and creative types, it is not surprising that their ecstasies are often evoked, abruptly, by the exhibition of, or concentration upon, some loved and special symbol of the divine. Such symbols form the rallying-points about which are gathered a whole group of ideas and intuitions. Their presence – sometimes the sudden thought of them – will be enough, in psychological language, to provoke a discharge of energy along some particular path: that is to say, to stir to life all those ideas and intuitions which belong to the self's consciousness of the Absolute, to concentrate vitality on them, and introduce the self into that world of perception of which they are, as it were, the material keys. Hence the profound significance of symbols for some mystics: their paradoxical clinging to outward forms, whilst declaring that the spiritual and intangible alone is real.*

*For the Christian mystics, the sacraments and mysteries of faith have always provided such a point d'appui; and these often play a large part in the production of their ecstasies. For St. Catherine of Siena, and also very often for her namesake of Genoa, the reception of Holy Communion was the prelude to ecstasy. Julian of Norwich and St. Francis of Assisi became entranced whilst gazing on the crucifix. We are told of Denis the Carthusian that towards the end of his life, hearing the *Veni Creator* or certain verses of the psalms, he was at once rapt in God and lifted up from the earth.*

*Of St. Catherine of Siena, her biographer says that "she used to communicate with such fervour that immediately afterwards she would pass into the state of ecstasy, in*

*which for hours she would be totally unconscious. On one occasion, finding her in this condition, they (the Dominican friars) forcibly threw her out of the church at midday, and left her in the heat of the sun watched over by some of her companions till she came to her senses." Another, "catching sight of her in the church when she was in ecstasy, came down and pricked her in many places with a needle. Catherine was not aroused in the least from her trance, but afterwards, when she came back to her senses, she felt the pain in her body and perceived that she had thus been wounded."*

*It is interesting to compare with this objective description, the subjective account of ecstatic union which St. Catherine gives in her "Divine Dialogue." Here, the deeper self of the mystic is giving in a dramatic form its own account of its inward experiences: hence we see the inward side of that outward state of entrancement, which was all that onlookers were able to perceive. As usual in the Dialogue, the intuitive perceptions of the deeper self are attributed by St. Catherine to the Divine Voice speaking in her soul.*

*"Oftentimes, through the perfect union which the soul has made with Me, she is raised from the earth almost as if the heavy body became light. But this does not mean that the heaviness of the body is taken away, but that the union of the soul with Me is more perfect than the union of the body with the soul; wherefore the strength of the spirit, united with Me, raises the weight of the body from the earth, leaving it as if immoveable and all pulled to pieces in the affection of the soul. Thou rememberest to have heard it said of some creatures, that were it not for My Goodness, in seeking strength for them, they would not be able to live; and I would tell thee that, in the fact that the souls of some*

*do not leave their bodies, is to be seen a greater miracle than in the fact that some have arisen from the dead, so great is the union which they have with Me. I, therefore, sometimes for a space withdraw from the union, making the soul return to the vessel of her body . . . from which she was separated by the affection of love. From the body she did not depart, because that cannot be except in death; the bodily powers alone departed, becoming united to Me through affection of love. The memory is full of nothing but Me, the intellect, elevated, gazes upon the object of My Truth; the affection, which follows the intellect, loves and becomes united with that which the intellect sees. These powers being united and gathered together and immersed and inflamed in Me, the body loses its feeling, so that the seeing eye sees not, and the hearing ear hears not, and the tongue does not speak; except as the abundance of the heart will sometimes permit it, for the alleviation of the heart and the praise and glory of My Name. The hand does not touch and the feet walk not, because the members are bound with the sentiment of Love."*

*A healthy ecstasy so deep as this seems to be the exclusive prerogative of the mystics: perhaps because so great a passion, so profound a concentration, can be produced by nothing smaller than their flaming love of God. But as the technique of contemplation is employed more or less consciously by all types of creative genius – by inventors and philosophers, by poets, prophets, and musicians, by all the followers of the "Triple Star," no less than by the mystic saints – so too this apotheosis of contemplation, the ecstatic state, sometimes appears in a less violent form, acting healthily and normally, in artistic and creative personalities at a complete stage of development. It may accompany the prophetic intuitions of the seer, the lucidity*

*of the great metaphysician, the artist's supreme perception of beauty or truth. As the saint is "caught up to God," so these are "caught up" to their vision: their partial apprehensions of the Absolute Life. Those joyous, expansive outgoing sensations, characteristic of the ecstatic consciousness, are theirs also. Their greatest creations are translations to us, not of something they have thought, but of something they have known, in a moment of ecstatic union with the "great life of the All."*

*We begin, then, to think that the "pure mono-ideism," which the psychologist identifies with ecstasy, though doubtless a part, is far from being the whole content of this state, True, the ecstatic is absorbed in his one idea, his one love: he is in it and with it: it fills his universe. But this unified state of consciousness does not merely pore upon something already possessed. When it only does this, it is diseased. Its true business is pure perception. It is outgoing, expansive: its goal is something beyond itself. The rearrangement of the psychic self which occurs in ecstasy is not merely concerned with the normal elements of consciousness. It is rather a temporary unification of consciousness round that centre of transcendental perception which mystics call the "apex" or the "spark of the soul." Those deeper layers of personality which normal life keeps below the threshold are active in it: and these are fused with the surface personality by the governing passion, the transcendent love which lies at the basis of all sane ecstatic states. The result is not merely a mind concentrated on one idea nor a heart fixed on one desire, nor even a mind and a heart united in the interests of a beloved thought: but a whole being welded into one, all its faculties, neglecting their normal universe, grouped about a new centre, serving a new life, and piercing like a single*

*flame the barriers of the sensual world. Ecstasy is the psycho-physical state which may accompany this brief synthetic act.*

*C. Therefore, whilst on its physical side ecstasy is an entrancement, on its mental side a complete unification of consciousness, on its mystical side it is an exalted act of perception. It represents the greatest possible extension of the spiritual consciousness in the direction of Pure Being: the "blind intent stretching" here receives its reward in a profound experience of Eternal Life. In this experience the departmental activities of thought and feeling the consciousness of I-hood, of space and time – all that belongs to the World of Becoming and our own place therein – are suspended. The vitality which we are accustomed to split amongst these various things, is gathered up to form a state of "pure apprehension": a vivid intuition of – or if you like conjunction with – the Transcendent. For the time of his ecstasy the mystic is, for all practical purposes, as truly living in the supersensual world as the normal human animal is living in the sensual world. He is experiencing the highest and most joyous of those temporary and unstable states – those "passive unions" – in which his consciousness escapes the limitations of the senses, rises to freedom, and is united for an instant with the "great life of the All."*

*Ecstasy, then, from the contemplative's point of view, is the development and completion of the orison of union, and he is not always at pains to distinguish the two degrees, a fact which adds greatly to the difficulties of students. In both states – though he may, for want of better language, describe his experience in terms of sight – the Transcendent is perceived by contact, not by vision: as, enfolded in*

*darkness with one whom we love, we obtain a knowledge far more complete than that conferred by the sharpest sight the most perfect mental analysis. In Ecstasy, the apprehension is perhaps more definitely "beatific" than in the orison of union. Such memory of his feeling-state as the ecstatic brings back with him is more often concerned with an exultant certainty – a conviction that he has known for once the Reality which hath no image, and solved the paradox of life – than with meek self-loss in that Cloud of Unknowing where the contemplative in union is content to meet his Beloved. The true note of ecstasy, however, its only valid distinction from infused contemplation, lies in entrancement; in "being ravished out of fleshly feeling," as St. Paul caught up to the Third Heaven, not in "the lifting of mind unto God." This, of course, is an outward distinction only, and a rough one at that, since entrancement has many degrees: but it will be found the only practical basis of classification.*

*Probably none but those who have experienced these states know the actual difference between them. Even St. Teresa's psychological insight fails her here, and she is obliged to fall back on the difference between voluntary and involuntary absorption in the divine: a difference, not in spiritual values, but merely in the psycho-physical constitution of those who have perceived these values. "I wish I could explain with the help of God," she says, "wherein union differs from rapture, or from transport, or from flight of the spirit, as they call it, or from trance, which are all one. I mean that all these are only different names for that one and the same thing, which is also called ecstasy. It is more excellent than union, the fruits of it are much greater, and its other operations more manifold, for union is uniform in the beginning, the middle, and the end, and is so also*

*interiorly; but as raptures have ends of a much higher kind, they produce effects both within and without [ i.e. , both physical and psychical]. . . . A rapture is absolutely irresistible; whilst union, inasmuch as we are then on our own ground, may be hindered, though that resistance be painful and violent."*

*From the point of view of mystical psychology, our interest in ecstasy will centre in two points. (1) What has the mystic to tell us of the Object of his ecstatic perception? (2) What is the nature of the peculiar consciousness which he enjoys in his trance? That is to say, what news does he bring us as to the Being of God and the powers of man?*

*It may be said generally that on both these points he bears out, amplifies, and expresses under formulae of greater splendour, with an accent of greater conviction, the general testimony of the contemplatives. In fact, we must never forget that an ecstatic is really nothing else than a contemplative of a special kind, with a special psychophysical make-up. Moreover, we have seen that it is not always easy to determine the exact point at which entrancement takes place, and deep contemplation assumes the ecstatic form. The classification, like all classifications of mental states, is an arbitrary one. Whilst the extreme cases present no difficulty, there are others less complete, which form a graduated series between the deeps of the "Quiet" and the heights of "Rapture." We shall never know, for instance, whether the ecstasies of Plotinus and of Pascal involved true bodily entrancement, or only a deep absorption of the "unitive" kind. So, too, the language of many Christian mystics when speaking of their "raptures" is so vague and metaphorical that it leaves us in great doubt as to whether they mean by Rapture the abrupt*

*suspension of normal consciousness, or merely a sudden and agreeable elevation of soul.*

*“Ravishing,” says Rolle, “as it is showed, in two ways is to be understood. One manner, forsooth, in which a man is ravished out of fleshly feeling; so that for the time of his ravishing plainly he feels nought in flesh, nor what is done of his flesh, and yet he is not dead but quick, for yet the soul to the body gives life. And on this manner saints sometime are ravished, to their profit and other men’s learning; as Paul ravished to the third heaven. And on this manner sinners also in vision sometime are ravished, that they may see joys of saints and pains of damned for their correction. And many other as we read of. Another manner of ravishing there is, that is lifting of mind into God by contemplation. And this manner of ravishing is in all that are perfect lovers of God, and in none of them but that love God. And as well this is called a ravishing as the other; for with a violence it is done, and as it were against nature.”*

*It is, however, very confusing to the anxious inquirer when – as too often – “lifting of mind by contemplation” is “as well called a ravishing as the other,” and ecstasy is used as a synonym for gladness of heart. Here, so far as is possible, these words will be confined to their strict meaning, and not applied generally to the description of all the outgoing and expansive states of the transcendental consciousness.*

*What does the mystic claim that he attains in this abnormal condition – this irresistible trance? The price that he pays is heavy, involving much psycho-physical wear and tear. He declares that his rapture or ecstasy includes a moment – often a very short, and always an indescribable*

*moment – in which he enjoys a supreme knowledge of or participation in Divine Reality. He tells us under various metaphors that he then attains Pure Being, his Source, his Origin, his Beloved: “is engulfed in the very thing for which he longs, which is God.” “Oh, wonder of wonders,” cries Eckhart, “when I think of the union the soul has with God! He makes the enraptured soul to flee out of herself, for she is no more satisfied with anything that can be named. The spring of Divine Love flows out of the soul and draws her out of herself into the unnamed Being, into her first source, which is God alone.”*

*This momentary attainment of the Source, the Origin, is the theme of all descriptions of mystic ecstasy. In Rulman Merswin’s “Book of the Nine Rocks,” that brief and overwhelming rapture is the end of the pilgrim’s long trials and ascents. “The vision of the Infinite lasted only for a moment: when he came to himself he felt inundated with life and joy. He asked, ‘Where have I been?’ and he was answered, ‘In the upper school of the Holy Spirit. There you were surrounded by the dazzling pages of the Book of Divine Wisdom. Your soul plunged therein with delight, and the Divine Master of the school has filled her with an exuberant love by which even your physical nature has been transfigured.’” Another Friend of God, Ellina von Crevelsheim, who was of so abnormal a psychic constitution that her absorption in the Divine Love caused her to remain dumb for seven years, was “touched by the Hand of God” at the end of that period, and fell into a five-days’ ecstasy, in which “pure truth” was revealed to her, and she was lifted up to an immediate experience of the Absolute. There she “saw the interior of the Father’s heart,” and was “bound with chains of love, enveloped in light, and filled with peace and joy.”*

*In this transcendent act of union, the mystic sometimes says that he is "conscious of nothing." But it is clear that this expression is figurative, for otherwise he would not have known that there had been an act of union: were his individuality abolished, it could not have been aware of its attainment of God. What he appears to mean is that consciousness so changes its form as to be no longer recognizable or describable in human speech. In the paradoxical language of Richard of St. Victor, "In a wondrous fashion remembering we do not remember, seeing we do not see, understanding we not understand, penetrating we do not penetrate." In this indescribable but most actual state, the whole self, exalted and at white heat, is unified and poured out in one vivid act of impassioned perception, which leaves no room for reflection or self-observation. That aloof "somewhat" in us which watches all our actions, splits our consciousness, has been submerged. The mystic is attending exclusively to Eternity, not to his own perception of Eternity. That he can only consider when the ecstasy itself is at an end.*

*"All things I then forgot,  
My cheek on Him Who for my coming came,  
All ceased, and I was not,  
Leaving my cares and shame  
Among the lilies, and forgetting them."*

*This is that perfect unity of consciousness, that utter concentration on an experience of love, which excludes all conceptual and analytic acts. Hence, when the mystic says that his faculties were suspended, that he "knew all and knew nought," he really means that he was so concentrated on the Absolute that he ceased to consider his separate existence: so merged in it that he could not perceive it as an*

*object of thought, as the bird cannot see the air which supports it, nor the fish the ocean in which it swims. He really "knows all" but "thinks" nought: "perceives all," but "conceives nought."*

*The ecstatic consciousness is not self-conscious: it is intuitive not discursive. Under the sway of a great passion, possessed by a great Idea, it has become "a single state of enormous intensity." In this state, it transcends our ordinary processes of knowledge, and plunges deep into the Heart of Reality. A fusion which is the anticipation of the unitive life takes place: and the ecstatic returns from this brief foretaste of freedom saying, "I know, as having known, the meaning of Existence; the sane centre of the universe – at once the wonder and the assurance of the soul." "This utter transformation of the soul in God," says St. Teresa, describing the same experience in the official language of theology, "continues only for an instant: yet while it continues no faculty of the soul is aware of it, or knows what is passing there. Nor can it be understood while we are living on the earth; at least God will not have us understand it, because we must be incapable of understanding it. I know is by experience."*

*The utterances of those who know by experience are here of more worth than all the statements of psychology, which are concerned of necessity with the "outward signs" of this "inward and spiritual grace." To these we must go if we would obtain some hint of that which ecstasy may mean to the ecstatic.*

*"When the soul, forgetting itself, dwells in that radiant darkness," says Suso, "it loses all its faculties and all its qualities, as St. Bernard has said. And this, more or less*

*completely, according to whether the soul – whether in the body or out of the body – is more or less united to God. This forgetfulness of self is, in a measure, a transformation in God; who then becomes, in a certain manner, all things for the soul, as Scripture saith. In this rapture the soul disappears, but not yet entirely. It acquires, it is true, certain qualities of divinity, but does not naturally become divine. . . . To speak in the common language, the soul is rapt, by the divine power of resplendent Being, above its natural faculties, into the nakedness of the Nothing.”*

*Here Suso is trying to describe his rapturous attainment of God in the negative terms of Dionysian theology. It is probable that much of the language of that theology originated, not in the abstract philosophizings, but in the actual ecstatic experience, of the Neoplatonists, who – Christian and Pagan alike – believed in, and sometimes deliberately induced, this condition as the supreme method of attaining the One. The whole Christian doctrine of ecstasy, on its metaphysical side, really descends from that great practical transcendentalist Plotinus: who is known to have been an ecstatic, and has left in his Sixth Ennead a description of the mystical trance obviously based upon his own experiences. “Then,” he says, “the soul neither sees, nor distinguishes by seeing, nor imagines that there are two things; but becomes as it were another thing, ceases to be itself and belong to itself. It belongs to God and is one with Him, like two concentric circles: concurring they are One; but when they separate, they are two. . . . Since in this conjunction with Deity there were not two things, but the perceiver was one with the thing perceived, if a man could preserve the memory of what he was when he mingled with the Divine, he would have within himself an image of God. . . . For then nothing stirred within him, neither anger, nor*

*desire, nor even reason, nor a certain intellectual perception nor, in short, was he himself moved, if we may assert this; but being in an ecstasy, tranquil and alone with God, he enjoyed an unbreakable calm." Ecstasy, says Plotinus in another part of the same treatise, is "another mode of seeing, a simplification and abandonment of oneself, a desire of contact, rest, and a striving after union." All the phases of the contemplative experience seem to be summed up in this phrase.*

*It has been said by some critics that the ecstasy of Plotinus was different in kind from the ecstasy of the Christian saints: that it was a philosophic rhapsody, something like Plato's "saving madness," which is also regarded on somewhat insufficient evidence as being an affair of the head and entirely unconnected with the heart. At first sight the arid metaphysical language in which Plotinus tries to tell his love, offers some ground for this view. Nevertheless the ecstasy itself is a practical matter; and has its root, not in reason, but in a deep-seated passion for the Absolute which is far nearer to the mystic's love of God than to any intellectual curiosity, however sublime. The few passages in which it is mentioned tell us what his mystical genius drove him to do: and not what his philosophical mind encouraged him to think or say. At once when we come to these passages we notice a rise of temperature, an alteration of values. Plotinus the ecstatic is sure whatever Plotinus the metaphysician may think, that the union with God is a union of hearts: that "by love He may be gotten and holden, but by thought never." He, no less than the mediaeval contemplatives, is convinced – to quote his own words – that the Vision is only for the desirous; for him who has that "loving passion" which "causes the lover to rest in the object of his love." The simile of marriage, of conjunction as*

*the soul's highest bliss, which we are sometimes told that we owe in part to the unfortunate popularity of the Song of Songs, in part to the sexual aberrations of celibate saints, is found in the work of this hardheaded Pagan philosopher: who was as celebrated for his practical kindness and robust common sense as for his transcendent intuitions of the One.*

*The greatest of the Pagan ecstasies then, when speaking from experience, anticipates the Christian contemplatives. His words, too, when compared with theirs, show how delicate are the shades which distinguish ecstasy such as this from the highest forms of orison. "Tranquil and alone with God" – mingled for an instant of time "like two concentric circles" with the Divine Life," "perceiver and perceived made one" – this is as near as the subtle intellect of Alexandria can come to the reality of that experience in which the impassioned mono-ideism of great spiritual genius conquers the rebellious senses, and becomes, if only for a moment, operative on the highest levels accessible to the human soul. Self-mergence, then – that state of transcendence in which, the barriers of selfhood abolished, we "receive the communication of Life and of Beatitude, in which all things are consummated and all things are renewed" – is the secret of ecstasy, as it was the secret of contemplation. On their spiritual side the two states cannot, save for convenience of description, be divided. Where contemplation becomes expansive, out-going, self-giving, and receives a definite fruition of the Absolute in return, its content is already ecstatic. Whether its outward form shall be so depends on the body of the mystic, not on his soul . . .*

*This ineffable "awareness," en dio stando rapito, this union with the Imageless Good, is not the only – though it is the purest – form taken by ecstatic apprehension. Many of the visions and voices described in a previous chapter were experienced in the entranced or ecstatic state; generally when the first violence of the rapture was passed. St. Francis and St. Catherine of Siena both received the stigmata in ecstasy: almost all the entrancements of Suso and many of those of St. Teresa and Angela of Foligno, entailed symbolic vision, rather than pure perception of the Absolute. More and more, then, we are forced to the opinion that ecstasy, in so far as it is not a synonym for joyous and expansive contemplation, is really the name of the outward condition rather than of any one kind of inward experience.*

### *Rapture*

*In all the cases which we have been considering – and they are characteristic of a large group – the onset of ecstasy has been seen as a gradual, though always involuntary process. Generally it has been the culminating point of a period of contemplation. The self, absorbed in the orison of quiet or of union, or some analogous concentration on its transcendental interests, has passed over the limit of these states; and slid into a still ecstatic trance, with its outward characteristics of rigid limbs, cold, and depressed respiration.*

*The ecstasy, however, instead of developing naturally from a state of intense absorption in the Divine Vision, may seize the subject abruptly and irresistibly, when in his normal state of consciousness. This is strictly what ascetic writers mean by Rapture. We have seen that the essence of*

*the mystic life consists in the remaking of personality: its entrance into a conscious relation with the Absolute. This process is accompanied in the mystic by the development of an art expressive of his peculiar genius: the art of contemplation. His practice of this art, like the practice of poetry, music, or any other form of creation, may follow normal lines, at first amenable to the control of his will, and always dependent on his own deliberate attention to the supreme Object of his quest; that is to say, on his orison. His mystic states, however they may end, will owe their beginning to some voluntary act upon his part: a deliberate response to the invitation of God, a turning from the visible to the invisible world. Sometimes, however, his genius for the transcendent becomes too strong for the other elements of character, and manifests itself in psychic disturbances – abrupt and ungovernable invasions from the subliminal region – which make its exercise parallel to the “fine frenzy” of the prophet, the composer, or the poet. Such is Rapture: a violent and uncontrollable expression of genius for the Absolute, which temporarily disorganizes and may permanently injure the nervous system of the self. Often, but not necessarily, Rapture – like its poetic equivalent – yields results of great splendour and value for life. But it is an accident, not an implicit of mystical experience: an indication of disharmony between the subject’s psychophysical make-up and his transcendental powers.*

*Rapture, then, may accompany the whole development of selves of an appropriate type. We have seen that it is a common incident in mystical conversion. The violent uprush of subliminal intuitions by which such conversion is marked disorganizes the normal consciousness, overpowers the will and the senses, and entails a more or*

*less complete entrancement. This was certainly the case with Suso and Rulman Merswin, and perhaps with Pascal: whose "Certitude, Peace, Joy" sums up the exalted intuition of Perfection and Reality – the conviction of a final and unforgettable knowledge – which is characteristic of all ecstatic perception.*

*In her Spiritual Relations, St. Teresa speaks in some detail of the different phases or forms of expression of these violent ecstatic states: trance, which in her system means that which we have called ecstasy, and transport, or "flight of the spirit," which is the equivalent of rapture. "The difference between trance and transport," she says, "is this. In a trance the soul gradually dies to outward things, losing the senses and living unto God. But a transport comes on by one sole act of His Majesty, wrought in the innermost part of the soul with such swiftness that it is as if the higher part thereof were carried away, and the soul were leaving the body."*

*Rapture, says St. Teresa in another place, "comes in general as a shock, quick and sharp, before you can collect your thoughts, or help yourself in any way; and you see and feel it as a cloud, or a strong eagle rising upwards and carrying you away on its wings. I repeat it: you feel and see yourself carried away, you know not whither." This carrying-away sensation may even assume the concrete form which is known as levitation: when the upward and outward sensations so dominate the conscious field that the subject is convinced that she is raised bodily from the ground. "It seemed to me, when I tried to make some resistance, as if a great force beneath my feet lifted me up. I know of nothing with which to compare it; but it was much more violent than the other spiritual visitations, and I was*

*therefore as one ground to pieces . . . And further, I confess that it threw me into a great fear, very great indeed at first; for when I saw my body thus lifted up from the earth, how could I help it? Though the spirit draws it upwards after itself, and that with great sweetness if unresisted, the senses are not lost; at least I was so much myself as to be able to see that I was being lifted up ."*

*So Rulman Merswin said that in the rapture which accompanied his conversion, he was carried round the garden with his feet off the ground:and St. Catherine of Siena, in a passage which I have already quoted, speaks of the strength of the spirit, which raises the body from the earth.*

*The subjective nature of this feeling of levitation is practically acknowledged by St. Teresa when she says, "When the rapture was over, my body seemed frequently to be buoyant, as if all weight had departed from it; so much so, that now and then I scarcely knew that my feet touched the ground. But during the rapture the body is very often as it were dead, perfectly powerless. It continues in the position it was in when the rapture came upon it—if sitting, sitting." Obviously here the outward conditions of physical immobility coexisted with the subjective sensation of being "lifted Up."*

*The self's consciousness when in the condition of rapture may vary from the complete possession of her faculties claimed by St. Teresa to a complete entrancement. However abrupt the oncoming of the transport, it does not follow that the mystic instantly loses his surface-consciousness. "There remains the power of seeing and hearing; but it is as if the things heard and seen were at a great distance far*

*away. "They have retreated, that is to say, to the fringe of the conscious field, but may still remain just within it. Though the senses may not be entirely entranced, however, it seems that the power of movement is always lost. As in ecstasy, breathing and circulation are much diminished.*

*"By the command of the Bridegroom when He intends ravishing the soul," says St. Teresa, "the doors of the mansions and even those of the keep and of the whole castle are closed; for He takes away the power of speech, and although occasionally the other faculties are retained rather longer, no word can be uttered. Sometimes the person is at once deprived of all the senses, the hands and body becoming as cold as if the soul had fled; occasionally no breathing can be detected. This condition lasts but a short while, I mean in the same degree, for when this profound suspension diminishes the body seems to come to itself and gain strength to return again to this death which gives more vigorous life to the soul."*

*This spiritual storm, then, in St. Teresa's opinion, enhances the vitality of those who experience it: makes them "more living than before." It initiates them into "heavenly secrets," and if it does not do this it is no "true rapture," but a "physical weakness such as women are prone to owing to their delicacy of constitution." Its sharpness and violence, however, leave considerable mental disorder behind: "This supreme state of ecstasy never lasts long, but although it ceases, it leaves the will so inebriated, and the mind so transported out of itself that for a day, or sometimes for several days, such a person is incapable of attending to anything but what excites the will to the love of God; although wide awake enough to this, she seems asleep as regards all earthly matters."*

*But when equilibrium is re-established, the true effects of this violent and beatific intuition of the Absolute begin to invade the normal life. The self which has thus been caught up to awareness of new levels of Reality, is stimulated to fresh activity by the strength of its impressions. It now desires an eternal union with that which it has known; with which for a brief moment it seemed to be merged. The peculiar talent of the mystic – power of apprehending Reality which his contemplations have ordered and developed, and his ecstasies express – here reacts upon his life-process, his slow journey from the Many to the One. His nostalgia has been increased by a glimpse of the homeland. His intuitive apprehension of the Absolute, which assumes in ecstasy its most positive form, spurs him on towards that permanent union with the Divine which is his goal. “Such great graces,” says St. Teresa, “leave the soul avid of total possession of that Divine Bridegroom who has conferred them.”*

*Hence the ecstatic states do not merely lift the self to an abnormal degree of knowledge: they enrich her life, contribute to the remaking of her consciousness, develop and uphold the “strong and stormy love which drives her home.” They give her the clearest vision she can have of that transcendent standard to which she must conform: entail her sharpest consciousness of the inflow of that Life on which her little striving life depends. Little wonder, then, that – though the violence of the onset may often try his body to the full – the mystic comes forth from a “good ecstasy” as Pascal from the experience of the Fire, humbled yet exultant, marvellously strengthened; and ready, not for any passive enjoyments, but rather for the struggles and*

*hardships of the Way, the deliberate pain and sacrifice of love.*

*In the third Degree of Ardent Love, says Richard of St. Victor, love paralyses action. Union (copula) is the symbol of this state: ecstasy is its expression. The desirous soul, he says finely, no longer thirsts for God but into God. The pull of its desire draws it into the Infinite Sea. The mind is borne away into the abyss of Divine Light; and, wholly forgetful of exterior things, knows not even itself, but passes utterly into its God. In this state, all earthly desire is absorbed in the heavenly glory. "Whilst the mind is separated from itself, and whilst it is borne away into the secret place of the divine mystery and is surrounded on all sides by the fire of divine love, it is inwardly penetrated and inflamed by this fire, and utterly puts off itself and puts on a divine love: and being conformed to that Beauty which it has beheld, it passes utterly into that other glory."*

*Thus does the state of ecstasy contribute to the business of deification; of the remaking of the soul's substance in conformity with the Goodness, Truth, and Beauty which is God, "Being conformed to that Beauty which it has beheld, it passes utterly into that other glory"; into the flaming heart of Reality, the deep but dazzling darkness of its home."*

***Mysticism, By Evelyn Underhill, Ecstasy and Rapture, 1911***

## CHAPTER THREE

# A Vision of the Way – The Choice

“Sage was the trip to send carefully.” The Buddhist Monk said very quietly. Wearing an orange tunic, the bald monk was very peaceful, calm, fragrant and aromatic. To be in his presence was a matter of bliss.

And for this eve, he was going to prepare us dinner.

For many moments, he walked around his little cell and showed me many succulent dishes that he had cooked; and they were all very beautiful, in perfect alignment, colorful, arranged in dynamic order, healthful and profoundly creative.

Twenty or thirty beautifully prepared dishes were shown us with great pleasure and peace, and then the monk brought us again back to the beginning and began to explain in very simple yet profound terms how to cook each dish according to the Way. Each entrée was filled with steps which graduated the soul through renunciation and enlightenment.

As he spoke and moved through so many dishes, I realized that I was being asked to live my daily life according to the Way; according to renunciation and enlightenment.

*"Differing somewhat from the Buddhists many orthodox Taoist priests forsake their temples and brotherhoods to marry and live the ordinary life of the world."*

*Lao Tsu's Tao and Wu Wei, Translated by James Goddard, 1939*

As many souls while they are learning the way are very involved in being and doing; he was demonstrating through the cooking of these meals that there comes a time when a renunciant must actually live out the Way - and the being and doing take a back seat to simply living deliberately . . . there is a mystery in living - while awake, while conscious, while apologetically aware.

There is a Samadhic way to live . . .

The peace that filled my frequencies was aerodynamic and uplifting. With each instruction my vibrations continued to expand deeper and further; into a place of non-doing, which manifested within my essence; as higher and grander states of peace, more superior stipulations of contentment, and a more gloried honor for the simple holy experience of living the Way on a daily basis.

Though his dishes looked scrumptious, I was not allowed to taste them, only to observe the Way in which they had been prepared and cooked.

*"This is the way I look at the matter: both he who has passion and he who is free from passion have the same wish, that his food, whether hard or soft, should be good;*

*neither wishes for what is bad . . . (but) he that is not free from passion experiences both the taste of that food, and also passion due to that taste; while he who is free from passion experiences the taste of that food, but no passion due to that taste."*

*Buddhism in Translations, Milindapañha, Translated by Henry Clarke Warren, Harvard University, 1896*

The Buddhist Monk nodded to me as we reached the end of the meals which he had prepared, and I returned to a nod to him. And each of those dishes which had been created with such care were beautiful. They'd been made of the natural foods of the earth; so many colors, so many combinations of understanding.

For a moment, it was as if the prepared foods before me entered into my soul like the words of profound ancient sacred text, a frequency of undefined simplicity. The monk smiled in my appreciation of his work. The joy on my face would have been similar had I been given the opportunity to look upon one of the sand mandalas that the monks create, knowing that it will subsequently be destroyed. They do this to show the impermanence of things in this world. This monk's food had a similar impact, because you knew it would be consumed, it would not last, but there was great wisdom hidden within this simple act of creating good food for the body to eat, knowing that in its nascency was an entirely different body of work relating to living a simple life in the freedom of practice of the Way.

Contentment, peace, compassion, renunciation, enlightenment: of all these consist the Way.

*"The Valley of Contentment*

*In this valley he (the traveller) discovers the breezes of Divine Contentment, which waft from the desert of the Spirit, and consume the veils of poverty.*

*There he witnesses the day wherein 'God will make all independent out of His abundance.'*

*(He will witness this day) with his outward and inward eye in the visible and invisible parts of things. He passes from sadness to joy; and he changes depression and dejection into gladness and cheerfulness.*

*Though the travellers in this valley outwardly dwell on the earth, yet inwardly they recline on the high couch of Significances, and they partake of ideal, imperishable benefits, and quaff pure, spiritual wines.*

*The tongue is unable to give an account of these three (last) valleys, and utterance falls exceeding short. The pen cannot step into this court, and the ink gives no result but blackness.*

*Concerning these states the nightingale of the heart has other melodies and mysteries which set the heart in agitation and the spirit in uproar.*

*But this enigma of Significances must be only revealed from heart to heart, and confided from breast to breast.*

*Heart alone can communicate to heart the state of the knower (of divine secrets); this is not the work of a messenger, nor can this be contained in letters. On many points I keep silent because of my inability; to state them is beyond speech, and if I say them my words would be insufficient.*

*Not until thou reachest the garden of these Significances wilt thou taste of the immortal wine of this valley. If thou tastest thereof thou wilt close thine eyes to all strangers, and drink from the wine of contentment. Thou wilt sever thyself from all, and become united with Him; give up thy life in His Way, and pour out thy soul freely; – although there is no stranger in this station, that thou shouldest close thine eyes; 'There was but God, but there was nothing with Him.' Because, in this stage, the traveller beholds the beauty of the Friend in everything.*

*In fire he sees the Face of the Beloved; in unreality perceives the sign of the Reality; and through the attributes he witnesses the Mystery of the Divine Substance (or Essence), for he has consumed the veils with a mere sigh, and removed the coverings with a single gaze.*

*He looks upon the new creation with a discerning sight; and comprehends subtle signs with a pure heart.*

*'At that Day we will make thy sight discerning,' – is an evidence of this saying, and is sufficient for this instance."*

*The Splendour of God, The Valley of Contentment, By Eric Hammond,  
1909*

*“OF FOUR THINGS WHICH BRING GREAT PEACE*

*"My Son, now will I teach thee the way of peace and of true liberty."*

*2. Do, O my Lord, as Thou sayest, for this is pleasing unto me to hear.*

*3. "Strive, My Son, to do another's will rather than thine own. Choose always to have less rather than more. Seek always after the lowest place, and to be subject to all. Wish always and pray that the will of God be fulfilled in thee. Behold, such a man as this entereth into the inheritance of peace and quietness."*

*4. O my Lord, this Thy short discourse hath in itself much of perfectness. It is short in words but full of meaning, and abundant in fruit. For if it were possible that I should fully keep it, disturbance would not so easily arise within me. For as often as I feel myself disquieted and weighed down, I find myself to have gone back from this teaching. But Thou, Who art Almighty, and always lovest progress in the soul, vouchsafe more grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil Thy exhortation, and work out my salvation.*

#### A PRAYER AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS

*5. O Lord my God, be not Thou far from me, my God, haste Thee to help me,(1) for many thoughts and great fears have risen up against me, afflicting my soul. How shall I pass through them unhurt? how shall I break through them?*

*6. "I," saith He, "will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight." (2) I will open the prison doors, and reveal to thee the secret places.*

*7. Do, Lord, as Thou sayest; and let all evil thoughts fly away before Thy face. This is my hope and my only comfort, to fly unto Thee in all tribulation, to hope in Thee, to call upon Thee from my heart and patiently wait for Thy loving kindness.*

A PRAYER FOR ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE MIND

8. *Enlighten me, Blessed Jesus, with the brightness of Thy inner light, and cast forth all darkness from the habitation of my heart. Restrain my many wandering thoughts, and carry away the temptations which strive to do me hurt. Fight Thou mightily for me, and drive forth the evil beasts, so call I alluring lusts, that peace may be within Thy walls and plenteousness of praise within Thy palaces,(3) even in my pure conscience. Command Thou the winds and the storms, say unto the sea, "Be still," say unto the stormy wind, "Hold thy peace," so shall there be a great calm.*

9. *Oh send forth Thy light and Thy truth,(4) that they may shine upon the earth; for I am but earth without form and void until Thou give me light. Pour forth Thy grace from above; water my heart with the dew of heaven; give the waters of devotion to water the face of the earth, and cause it to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift up my mind which is oppressed with the weight of sins, and raise my whole desire to heavenly things; that having tasted the sweetness of the happiness which is from above, it may take no pleasure in thinking of things of earth.*

10. *Draw me and deliver me from every unstable comfort of creatures, for no created thing is able to satisfy my desire and to give me comfort. Join me to Thyself by the inseparable bond of love, for Thou alone art sufficient to him that loveth Thee, and without Thee all things are vain toys. (1) Psalm lxxi. 12. (2) Isaiah xlv. 2. (3) Psalm cxxii. 7. (4) Psalm xliii. 3."*

*The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas a Kempis, tr. by William Benham.  
1895*

*"The waves of the Divine Love come dashing against my body. The swell of the Sea of Love causes the fall of the unrighteous; nay, it drowns the whole universe . . . "*

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, By Swami Abhedananda, 1907*

*“Compassion as the Pillar of World Peace*

*According to Buddhist psychology, most of our troubles are due to our passionate desire for and attachment to things that we misapprehend as enduring entities. The pursuit of the objects of our desire and attachment involves the use of aggression and competitiveness as supposedly efficacious instruments. These mental processes easily translate into actions, breeding belligerence as an obvious effect. Such processes have been going on in the human mind since time immemorial, but their execution has become more effective under modern conditions. What can we do to control and regulate these 'poisons' -- delusion, greed, and aggression? For it is these poisons that are behind almost every trouble in the world.*

*As one brought up in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, I feel that love and compassion are the moral fabric of world peace. Let me first define what I mean by compassion. When you have pity or compassion for a very poor person, you are showing sympathy because he or she is poor; your compassion is based on altruistic considerations. On the other hand, love towards your wife, your husband, your children, or a close friend is usually based on attachment. When your attachment changes, your kindness also changes; it may disappear. This is not true love.*

*Real love is not based on attachment, but on altruism. In this case your compassion will remain as a humane response to suffering as long as beings continue to suffer.*

*This type of compassion is what we must strive to cultivate in ourselves, and we must develop it from a*

*limited amount to the limitless. Undiscriminating, spontaneous, and unlimited compassion for all sentient beings is obviously not the usual love that one has for friends or family, which is alloyed with ignorance, desire, and attachment. The kind of love we should advocate is this wider love that you can have even for someone who has done harm to you: your enemy.*

*The rationale for compassion is that every one of us wants to avoid suffering and gain happiness. This, in turn, is based on the valid feeling of 'I,' which determines the universal desire for happiness. Indeed, all beings are born with similar desires and should have an equal right to fulfill them. If I compare myself with others, who are countless, I feel that others are more important because I am just one person whereas others are many. Further, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition teaches us to view all sentient beings as our dear mothers and to show our gratitude by loving them all. For, according to Buddhist theory, we are born and reborn countless numbers of times, and it is conceivable that each being has been our parent at one time or another. In this way all beings in the universe share a family relationship.*

*Whether one believes in religion or not, there is no one who does not appreciate love and compassion. Right from the moment of our birth, we are under the care and kindness of our parents; later in life, when facing the sufferings of disease and old age, we are again dependent on the kindness of others.*

*If at the beginning and end of our lives we depend upon others' kindness, why then in the middle should be not act kindly towards others?*

*The development of a kind heart (a feeling of closeness for all human beings) does not involve the religiosity we normally associate with conventional religious practice. It is not only for people who believe in religion, but is for everyone regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation. It is for anyone who considers himself or herself, above all, a member of the human family and who sees things from this larger and longer perspective. This is a powerful feeling that we should develop and apply; instead, we often neglect it, particularly in our prime years when we experience a false sense of security.*

*When we take into account a longer perspective, the fact that all wish to gain happiness and avoid suffering, and keep in mind our relative unimportance in relation to countless others, we can conclude that it is worthwhile to share our possessions with others. When you train in this sort of outlook, a true sense of compassion -- a true sense of love and respect for others -- becomes possible. Individual happiness ceases to be a conscious self-seeking effort; it becomes an automatic and far superior by-product of the whole process of loving and serving others.*

*Another result of spiritual development, most useful in day-to-day life, is that it gives a calmness and presence of mind. Our lives are in constant flux, bringing many difficulties. When faced with a calm and clear mind, problems can be successfully resolved. When, instead, we lose control over our minds through hatred, selfishness, jealousy, and anger, we lose our sense of judgment. Our minds are blinded and at those wild moments anything can happen, including war.*

*Thus, the practice of compassion and wisdom is useful to all, especially to those responsible for running national affairs, in whose hands lie the power and opportunity to create the structure of world peace."*

*The Human Approach to World Peace, Compassion as the Pillar to World Peace, H.H. the Dalai Lama, 1984*

*"Nothing can be achieved in the path of spirituality without discrimination (between the Real and the unreal) and renunciation (non-attachment to riches, honor, sensual pleasures). Renunciation is of many kinds. One kind springs from the acute pain due to worldly misery. But the better kind of renunciation arises from the realization that all worldly blessings are unreal even when they are within reach. Thus, having all, the man renounces everything for the sake of God . . . There are different stages of spirituality. First, there is the state of being struck speechless at the thought or realization of the Absolute Brahman, – Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. This is the utmost point as regards love of God that can be reached by ordinary mortals. Second, there is the state of ecstatic love. This is attainable only by a few. They are human beings with extraordinary, original powers and entrusted with a Divine commission. Being heirs of Divine powers and glories, they form a class of their own. To this class belong the Incarnations of God like Christ, Krishna, Buddha, and Chaitanya and their devotees of the highest order.*

*Ecstatic love. The two characteristics of ecstatic love are, first, the forgetfulness of the external world, and second, the forgetfulness of one's own body which is so dear to one. The first is like the unripe mango, the second is like the ripe mango. Ecstatic love of God is like a string in the hands of the Bhakta which binds God. The devotee holds the Lord*

*under his control, so to speak. The Lord must come to him whenever he calls out to Him. In Persian books it is written that within the flesh are the bones, within the bones is the marrow, within the marrow, the last and innermost of all, is this ecstatic love . . .*

*Chaitanya Deva was the incarnation of Divine Love or Bhakti. He came to teach mankind true Bhakti. He used to have three states of consciousness in ecstasy. First, consciousness of the gross and subtle body. At this time he would repeat the Name of the Lord and sing His praises in Sankirtan. Second, consciousness of the causal body alone. In this state he would become intoxicated with ecstatic joy, and retaining partial consciousness of the external, he would dance in company with other Bhaktas. Third, consciousness of the Absolute. In this state he would enter into the highest realm of Samâdhi, and rising above all sense-consciousness, his body would remain apparently lifeless. These states correspond to the five sheaths of the soul in Vedânta. According to Vedânta the gross body includes the material form which is the outermost sheath and the sheath of Prâna or the sense-organs and sense-powers. The subtle body includes two sheaths, mental and intellectual. The causal body is the sheath of joyfulness. Beyond these five is the true Self, the Absolute. When the mind reaches this state, the highest. Samâdhi or God-consciousness is the result."*

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, By Swami Abhedananda, 1907*

“THE PRAISE OF THE THOUGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

REVERENTLY bowing before the Blessed Ones, their Sons, the Body of the Law, and aft the worshipful ones (1),

*I will briefly set forth in accordance with Holy Writ the way whereby the sons of the Blessed Ones enter the godly life. Nothing new will be told here, nor have I skill in writing of books; therefore I have done this work to hallow my own thoughts, not designing it for the welfare of others. By it the holy impulse within me to frame righteousness is strengthened; but if a fellow-creature should see it, this my book will fulfil another end likewise.*

*This brief estate, which once gotten is a means to all the aims of mankind, is exceeding hard to win; if one use it not for wholesome reflection, how shall it ever come again to his lot? As in the night, amidst the gross darkness of the clouds, the lightning shows for an instant its radiance, so by the grace of the Enlightened it may hap that the mind of man turn for an instant to holy works. Thus righteousness is feeble, and the power of evil is constant, mighty, and dire; by what righteousness could it be overcome, if there were not the Thought of Enlightenment? (2) Pondering through many æons, the Supreme Saints have found this blessing, whereby a swelling joy sweeps in sweetness down the boundless waters of mankind. They who would escape the hundreds of life's sorrows, who would end the anguish of living creatures, and who would taste hundreds of deep delights, must never surrender the Thought of Enlightenment. 'The wretch held in thrall by Life's minions (3) is declared a son of the Blessed Ones straightway when the Thought of Enlightenment arises in him, and he becomes worshipful to the worlds of men and gods. This foul form that he has taken he makes into the priceless jewel of a Conqueror's form; oh, grasp firmly the Thought of Enlightenment, that exceedingly potent elixir! Ho, ye who are exiles in the marts of bodied being, grasp firmly the precious jewel of the Thought of Enlightenment,*

*which the immeasurably wise sole Guides of the world's caravan have well assayed I Like the plantain-tree (4), all other righteousness fades away after its fruit is cast; but the tree of the Thought of Enlightenment bears everlasting fruit and fades not, but Ls ever fecund. Though he have wrought most grievous sins, a man by taking refuge therein escapes them straightway; as ignorant beings under the guardianship of a mighty man escape sore terrors, why seek they not their refuge in this? . . .*

*Eager to escape sorrow, men rush into sorrow; from desire of happiness they blindly slay their own happiness, enemies to themselves; they hunger for happiness and suffer manifold pains; whence shall come one so kind as he who can satisfy them with all manner of happiness, allay all their pains, and shatter their delusion – whence such a friend, and whence such a holy deed? He who repays good deed with good deed is praised; what shall be said of the Son of Enlightenment, who does kindness unsought? He who sets a banquet before a few is called a "doer of righteousness," and is honoured by the world, because in his pride he entertains men for half a day with a brief largesse of mere food; but what of him who bestows on a measureless number of creatures a satisfaction of all desires unbounded in time and perishing not when the world of heaven perishes? Such is the Master of the Banquet, the Son of the Conqueror; whosoever sins in his heart against him, saith the Lord, shall abide in hell as many ages as the moments of his sin. But he whose spirit is at peace with them shall thence get abundant fruit; and truly, wrong to the Sons of the Conqueror can he done only by great effort, but kindness towards them is easy. I do homage to the bodies of them in whom has arisen the choice jewel of the*

*Thought, and even the ill-treatment of whom leads to happiness (5); in these mines of bliss I seek my refuge."*

*The Four Great Vows, Translated by Pravin K. Shah, Jain Study Center of North Carolina, 1993*

**"FOUR GREAT VOWS**

*Ordinary-beings are innumerable I vow to liberate them all*

*Defilements are endless I vow to eliminate them all*

*Buddha's teachings are unlimited I vow to learn them all*

*The ways of enlightenment are supreme*

*I vow to achieve them all*

*I vow to liberate all ordinary-beings from my mind*

*I vow to eliminate all defilements from my mind*

*I vow to embrace every teaching of my self-nature*

*I vow to achieve the way of enlightenment from my self-nature"*

***The Path of Light, By L.D. Barnett, 1909***

***"Verse 1 – The Song of the Realization of the Way.***

*There is the leisurely one ...*

*There is the leisurely one,  
Walking the Tao, beyond philosophy,  
Not avoiding fantasy, not seeking truth.*

*The real nature of ignorance is the Buddha-nature itself;  
The empty delusory body is the very body of the Dharma.*

*When the Dharma body awakens completely,  
There is nothing at all.  
The source of our self-nature  
Is the Buddha of innocent truth.  
Mental and physical reactions come and go  
Like clouds in the empty sky;  
Greed, hatred, and ignorance appear and disappear  
Like bubbles on the surface of the sea.*

*When we realize actuality,  
There is no distinction between mind and thing  
And the path to hell instantly vanishes.  
If this is a lie to fool the world,  
My tongue may be cut out forever.*

*Once we awaken to the Tathagata-Zen,  
The six noble deeds and the ten thousand good actions  
Are already complete within us.  
In our dream we see the six levels of illusion clearly;  
After we awaken the whole universe is empty.*

*No bad fortune, no good fortune, no loss, no gain;  
Never seek such things in eternal serenity.  
For years the dusty mirror has gone uncleaned,  
Now let us polish it completely, once and for all.*

*Who has no-thought? Who is not-born?  
If we are truly not-born,  
We are not un-born either.  
Ask a robot if this is not so.  
How can we realize ourselves*

*By virtuous deeds or by seeking the Buddha?*

*Release your hold on earth, water, fire, wind;  
 Drink and eat as you wish in eternal serenity.  
 All things are transient and completely empty;  
 This is the great enlightenment of the Tathagata.*

*Transience, emptiness and enlightenment --  
 These are the ultimate truths of Buddhism;  
 Keeping and teaching them is true Sangha devotion.  
 If you don't agree, please ask me about it.  
 Cut out directly the root of it all, --  
 This is the very point of the Buddha-seal.  
 I can't respond to any concern about leaves and branches.*

*People do not recognize the Mani-jewel.  
 Living intimately within the Tathagata-garbha,  
 It operates our sight, hearing, smell, taste, sensation,  
 awareness;  
 And all of these are empty, yet not empty.*

*The rays shining from this perfect Mani-jewel  
 Have the form of no form at all.  
 Clarify the five eyes and develop the five powers;  
 This is not intellectual work, -- just realize, just know.  
 It is not difficult to see images in a mirror,  
 But who can take hold of the moon in the water?*

*Always working alone, always walking alone,  
 The enlightened one walks the free way of Nirvana  
 With melody that is old and clear in spirit  
 And naturally elegant in style,  
 But with body that is tough and bony,  
 Passing unnoticed in the world.*

*We know that Shakya's sons and daughters  
 Are poor in body, but not in the Tao.  
 In their poverty, they always wear ragged clothing,  
 But they have the jewel of no price treasured within.*

*This jewel of no price can never be used up  
 Though they spend it freely to help people they meet.  
 Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya, Nirmanakaya,  
 And the four kinds of wisdom  
 Are all contained within.  
 The eight kinds of emancipation and the six universal  
 powers  
 Are all impressed on the ground of their mind.*

*The best student goes directly to the ultimate,  
 The others are very learned but their faith is uncertain.  
 Remove the dirty garments from your own mind;  
 Why should you show off your outward striving?*

*Some may slander, some may abuse;  
 They try to set fire to the heavens with a torch  
 And end by merely tiring themselves out.  
 I hear their scandal as though it were ambrosial truth;  
 Immediately everything melts  
 And I enter the place beyond thought and words.*

*When I consider the virtue of abusive words,  
 I find the scandal-monger is my good teacher.  
 If we do not become angry at gossip,  
 We have no need for powerful endurance and compassion.  
 To be mature in Zen is to be mature in expression,  
 And full-moon brilliance of dhyana and prajna  
 Does not stagnate in emptiness.*

*Not only can I take hold of complete enlightenment by myself,  
But all Buddha-bodies, like sands of the Ganges,  
Can become awakened in exactly the same way.*

*The incomparable lion-roar of doctrine  
Shatters the brains of the one hundred kinds of animals.  
Even the king of elephants will run away, forgetting his pride;  
Only the heavenly dragon listens calmly, with pure delight.*

*I wandered over rivers and seas, crossing mountains and streams,  
Visiting teachers, asking about the Way in personal interviews;  
Since I recognized the Sixth Founding Teacher at Ts'ao Ch'i,  
I know what is beyond the relativity of birth and death.*

*Walking is Zen, sitting is Zen;  
Speaking or silent, active or quiet, the essence is at peace.  
Even facing the sword of death, our mind is unmoved;  
Even drinking poison, our mind is quiet.*

*Our teacher, Shakyamuni, met Dipankara Buddha  
And for many eons he trained as Kshanti, the ascetic.  
Many births, many deaths;  
I am serene in this cycle,--there is no end to it.*

*Since I abruptly realized the unborn,  
I have had no reason for joy or sorrow  
At any honor or disgrace.*

*I have entered the deep mountains to silence and beauty;*

*In a profound valley beneath high cliffs,  
I sit under the old pine trees.  
Zazen in my rustic cottage  
Is peaceful, lonely, and truly comfortable.*

*When you truly awaken,  
You have no formal merit.  
In the multiplicity of the relative world,  
You cannot find such freedom.  
Self-centered merit brings the joy of heaven itself,  
But it is like shooting an arrow at the sky;  
When the force is exhausted, it falls to the earth,  
And then everything goes wrong.*

*Why should this be better  
Than the true way of the absolute,  
Directly penetrating the ground of Tathagata?*

*Just take hold of the source  
And never mind the branches.  
It is like a treasure-moon  
Enclosed in a beautiful emerald.  
Now I understand this Mani-jewel  
And my gain is the gain of everyone endlessly.*

*The moon shines on the river,  
The wind blows through the pines,--  
Whose providence is this long beautiful evening?  
The Buddha-nature jewel of morality  
Is impressed on the ground of my mind,  
And my robe is the dew, the fog, the cloud, and the mist.*

*A bowl once calmed dragons  
And a staff separated fighting tigers;*

*The rings on this staff jingle musically.  
 The form of these expressions is not to be taken lightly;  
 The treasure-staff of the Tathagata  
 Has left traces for us to follow.*

*The awakened one does not seek truth--  
 Does not cut off delusion.  
 Truth and delusion are both vacant and without form,  
 But this no-form is neither empty nor not empty;  
 It is the truly real form of the Tathagata.*

*The mind-mirror is clear, so there are no obstacles.  
 Its brilliance illuminates the universe  
 To the depths and in every grain of sand.  
 Multitudinous things of the cosmos  
 Are all reflected in the mind,  
 And this full clarity is beyond inner and outer.*

*To live in nothingness is to ignore cause and effect;  
 This chaos leads only to disaster.  
 The one who clings to vacancy, rejecting the world of  
 things,  
 Escapes from drowning but leaps into fire.*

*Holding truth and rejecting delusion--  
 These are but skillful lies.  
 Students who do zazen by such lies  
 Love thievery in their own children.*

*They miss the Dharma-treasure;  
 They lose accumulated power;  
 And this disaster follows directly upon dualistic thinking.  
 So Zen is the complete realization of mind,  
 The complete cutting off of delusion,*

*The power of wise vision penetrating directly to the unborn.*

*Students of vigorous will hold the sword of wisdom;  
The prajna edge is a diamond flame.  
It not only cuts off useless knowledge,  
But also exterminates delusions.*

*They roar with Dharma-thunder;  
They strike the Dharma-drum;  
They spread clouds of love, and pour ambrosial rain.  
Their giant footsteps nourish limitless beings;  
Sravaka, Pratyeka, Bodhisattva--all are enlightened;  
Five kinds of human nature all are emancipated.*

*High in the Himalayas, only fei-ni grass grows.  
Here cows produce pure and delicious milk,  
And this food I continually enjoy.  
One complete nature passes to all natures;  
One universal Dharma encloses all Dharmas.*

*One moon is reflected in many waters;  
All the water-moons are from the one moon.  
The Dharma-body of all Buddhas has entered my own nature,  
And my nature becomes one with the Tathagata.*

*One level completely contains all levels;  
It is not matter, mind nor activity.  
In an instant eighty-thousand teachings are fulfilled;  
In a twinkling the evil of eons is destroyed.*

*All categories are no category;  
What relation have these to my insight?*

*Beyond praise, beyond blame, --  
Like space itself it has no bounds.*

*Right here it is eternally full and serene,  
If you search elsewhere, you cannot see it.  
You cannot grasp it, you cannot reject it;  
In the midst of not gaining,  
In that condition you gain it.*

*It speaks in silence,  
In speech you hear its silence.  
The great way has opened and there are no obstacles.  
If someone asks, what is your sect  
And how do you understand it?  
I reply, the power of tremendous prajna.*

*People say it is positive;  
People say it is negative;  
But they do not know.  
A smooth road, a rough road --  
Even heaven cannot imagine.  
I have continued my zazen for many eons;  
I do not say this to confuse you.*

*I raise the Dharma-banner and set forth our teaching;  
It is the clear doctrine of the Buddha  
Which I found with my teacher, Hui Neng,  
Mahakashyapa became the Buddha-successor,  
Received the lamp and passed it on.  
Twenty-eight generations of teachers in India,  
Then over seas and rivers to our land  
Bodhi Dharma came as our own first founder,  
And his robe, as we all know, passed through six teachers  
here,*

*And how many generations to come may gain the path,  
No one knows.*

*The truth is not set forth;  
The false is basically vacant.  
Put both existence and non-existence aside,  
Then even non-vacancy is vacant,  
The twenty kinds of vacancy have no basis,  
And the oneness of the Tathagata-being  
Is naturally sameness.*

*Mind is the base, phenomena are dust;  
Yet both are like a flaw in the mirror.  
When the flaw is brushed aside,  
The light begins to shine.  
When both mind and phenomena are forgotten,  
Then we become naturally genuine.*

*Ah, the degenerate materialistic world!  
People are unhappy; they find self-control difficult.  
In the centuries since Shakyamuni, false views are deep,  
Demons are strong, the Dharma is weak, disturbances are many.*

*People hear the Buddha's doctrine of immediacy,  
And if they accept it, the demons will be crushed  
As easily as a roofing tile.  
But they cannot accept, what a pity!*

*Your mind is the source of action;  
Your body is the agent of calamity;  
No pity nor blame to anyone else.  
If you don't seek an invitation to hell,  
Never slander the Tathagata's true teaching.*

*In the sandalwood forest, there is no other tree.  
 Only the lion lives in such deep luxuriant woods,  
 Wandering freely in a state of peace.  
 Other animals and birds stay far away.*

*Just baby lions follow the parent,  
 And three-year-olds already roar loudly.  
 How can the jackal pursue the king of the Dharma  
 Even with a hundred-thousand demonic arts?*

*The Buddha's doctrine of directness  
 Is not a matter for human emotion.  
 If you doubt this or feel uncertain,  
 Then you must discuss it with me.  
 This is not the free rein of a mountain monk's ego.  
 I fear your training may lead to wrong views  
 Of permanent soul or complete extinction.*

*Being is not being; non-being is not non-being;  
 Miss this rule by a hair,  
 And you are off by a thousand miles.  
 Understanding it, the dragon-child abruptly attains  
 Buddhahood;  
 Misunderstanding it, the greatest scholar falls into hell.*

*From my youth I piled studies upon studies,  
 In sutras and sastras I searched and researched,  
 Classifying terms and forms, oblivious to fatigue.  
 I entered the sea to count the sands in vain  
 And then the Tathagata scolded me kindly  
 As I read "What profit in counting your neighbor's  
 treasure?"  
 My work had been scattered and entirely useless,*

*For years I was dust blown by the wind.*

*If the seed-nature is wrong, misunderstandings arise,  
And the Buddha's doctrine of immediacy cannot be  
attained.*

*Shravaka and Pratyeka students may study earnestly  
But they lack aspiration.  
Others may be very clever,  
But they lack prajna.*

*Stupid ones, childish ones,  
They suppose there is something in an empty fist.  
They mistake the pointing finger for the moon.  
They are idle dreamers lost in form and sensation.*

*Not supposing something is the Tathagata.  
This is truly called Kwan-Yin, the Bodhisattva who sees  
freely.  
When awakened we find karmic hindrances fundamentally  
empty.  
But when not awakened, we must repay all our debts.*

*The hungry are served a king's repast,  
And they cannot eat.  
The sick meet the king of doctors;  
Why don't they recover?  
The practice of Zen in this greedy world --  
This is the power of wise vision.  
The lotus lives in the midst of the fire;  
It is never destroyed.*

*Pradhanashura broke the gravest precepts;  
But he went on to realize the unborn.  
The Buddhahood he attained in that moment*

*Lives with us now in our time.*

*The incomparable lion roar of the doctrine!  
How sad that people are stubbornly ignorant;  
Just knowing that crime blocks enlightenment,  
Not seeing the secret of the Tathagata teaching.*

*Two monks were guilty of murder and carnality.  
Their leader, Upali, had the light of a glow-worm;  
He just added to their guilt.  
Vimalakirti cleared their doubts at once  
As sunshine melts the frost and snow.*

*The remarkable power of emancipation  
Works wonders innumerable as the sands of the Ganges.  
To this we offer clothing, food, bedding, medicine.  
Ten thousand pieces of gold are not sufficient;  
Though you break your body  
And your bones become powder, --  
This is not enough for repayment.  
One vivid word surpasses millions of years of practice.*

*The King of the Dharma deserves our highest respect.  
Tathagatas, innumerable as sands of the Ganges,  
All prove this fact by their attainment.  
Now I know what the Mani-jewel is:  
Those who believe this will gain it accordingly.*

*When we see truly, there is nothing at all.  
There is no person; there is no Buddha.  
Innumerable things of the universe  
Are just bubbles on the sea.  
Wise sages are all like flashes of lightning*

*However the burning iron ring revolves around my head,  
 With bright completeness of dhyana and prajna  
 I never lose my equanimity.  
 If the sun becomes cold, and the moon hot,  
 Evil cannot shatter the truth.  
 The carriage of the elephant moves like a mountain,  
 How can the mantis block the road?*

*The great elephant does not loiter on the rabbit's path.  
 Great enlightenment is not concerned with details.  
 Don't belittle the sky by looking through a pipe.  
 If you still don't understand,  
 I will settle it for you."*

*Cheng- Tao-Ko, The Song of the Realization of the Way,  
 Zhengdaoge, Translated by R. Aitken and the Diamond  
 Sangha, 1991*

*"Nan-ch'üan's Serenity  
 Drinking tea, eating rice,  
 I pass my time as it comes;  
 Looking down at the stream, looking up at the mountains,  
 How serene and relaxed I feel indeed!"*

*Essays in Zen Buddhism, First Series 264*

*"How wondrous this, how mysterious! I carry fuel, I draw  
 water."*

*Zen and Japanese Culture, 16*

*"Govern a great nation as you would cook a small fish."*

*The Sayings of Lao Tsu, Translated by Lionel Giles, 1905*

# CHAPTER FOUR

## A Vision of God – The People

“If untamed, I think of a God.” Mother, I cried, as the voice echoed into the night. A single flower emerged from the ground in front of me. I watched as the spirits of God poured water upon it and each drop of water instigated the growth of stems and greenery growing out of that flower into the ground, the air, the ether around me. It was such a beautiful act of creation, that my soul became enraptured in watching the growth which emerged so fast it was literally unfolding in aeons around my spirit. One flower literally extended as if into the universe, the greenery flushing against it as if by osmosis.

An invisible hand touched my face and pushed it up.

The stars were alit with a mystical wonder, I gazed at them and allowed their hypnotic trance to instill me anew.

“Hello?” The interior locution came from within my spirit with such a strong vibrato that it pounded me out off the vibrational state. “Mother?” I hailed. The voice had a very slight accent.

In an instant beyond waking, my spirit was swept into many a purgatorial realm, observing the configurations of human vice. Traveling with my mother in some of them, I was with entirely different souls in others.

The first realm was that of noise. My mother had gathered herself into a really nice small place here. Inside, it was clean and tidy. Outside, there was water seeping slowly into the place from a floodwater in the front yard and termites had eaten all the way through the wood. People were wandering around the place in various states of unconsciousness. It was very noisy, random sounds and voices talking about irrelevant matter. Even inside my mother's place you could not escape the noise. It seemed nice enough . . . except the noise, it barraged into the psyche like a battering ram and no peace could come of it.

The rooms in this home were chosen according to how big of a place in the heart of the deceased you had held. My mother had chosen a very small bedroom for me and one about four times the size for my brother. I saw this and smiled. I, it made sense, she had lived near my brother her whole life. But of course, I worried that I would not be able to get my entire library into the bedroom which had been chosen for me so I could do my work. An odd and giggly thought to have at such a moment. And again, the noise . . . you couldn't escape it.

I asked my mother if she was really content here for a time, and she nodded 'yes.' My spirit was urged to travel.

The next destination was a purgatorial zone wherein sexual vice and sexual vanity was outwardly apparent. A young priest had literally come here with many prostitutes, and one of them was sitting with her clitoris on his face. Another young girl had bared her breasts for him, but had put on a transparent shirt because she didn't want it to look as though she had bared them. Interestingly, for the young priest, there was a motherly older figure who was trying to redirect him from his vice and teach him virtue, and several younger whores; but both images caused lust to arise in him. The young girl with the breasts exposed was also here in a purgatorial state trying to garner lustful attention for herself. It was a sad sight for all involved. But they were eerily unaware of their plight, and were smiling in a sort of glee at their temptations being arranged in such a doleful manner before them.

Whispered to what appeared to be an island, it was literally covered in bodies. Half of the island was underwater, and the other half was filled with corpses which bled, dripped fluids and just lay there in a status of absolute death. These were the souls of those lived in death, those who gathered dust in pointless endeavors and those who never looked up to acknowledge their creator. Their lives had been a living death and remained so to this hour . . . a putrid smell overtook me in this realm.

Courted to yet another location, I observed a series of steep climbs up and down cliffs and mazes made of all sorts of woods, and waterfalls. Souls were here who were trying to find their way home. What was home? It seemed that these were souls who had lost touch with their roots, the roots given them in life by God, the roots of their immediate families upon birth. They'd lost touch with those to whom they'd been entrusted and to whom they were also given to entrust.

It was like an endless maze of up and down, back and forth . . . and although home was always in sight, it was always another obstacle course, cliff or waterfall away.

One thing to remember about these purgatories is that souls can travel through them and into others very quickly or very slowly, depending upon our prayers, their own impetus and the will of the Almighty God. So you will see movement within souls, and as you see them in one place, you can never be certain (unless ye be shown) whether they've transcended and moved onto the next or if they continue to remain.

These are stages and steps we all take in varying degrees during life, after death and beyond this.

Running and running, I was looking for somebody, I didn't yet know who. My own place of origin was within my grasp, but so many new pathways kept

emerging, popping up, gathering and sorting new obstacles for me to traverse.

Having seen my own place of origin within view in the distance for quite some time and throughout continuing to unravel manifold obstacles - out of sheer exhaustion - I pulled out of the maze and stood by its side. I realized it wouldn't be found here.

Hundreds of souls were continuing to move through my vision, through the obstacles, in various states of consciousness. Suddenly, I noticed my mother going towards the ethereal remnant of our origin and I reached out to wave towards her, calling her name, shouting in glee . . . but she could not recognize me at this moment. She did not know who I had been in her life for this moment. I turned to go . . . the steep climbs up and down the waterfalls, cliffs and wooden courses would continue without me.

My spirit was given to observe a young girl named Marie in the early 1900's. She was washing clothes in a river nearby her home completely oblivious to her imminent demise. She was going to drown in a few moments; for the river waters were preparing for an imminent and sudden rising that she would be caught up in and not survive.

For a moment, I was given to experience the simplicity and playfulness of that time. I was given to know that she had reincarnated but not yet passed through the imprinting of that former death on her

soul, and thus, had taken her own life already again through asphyxiation in the present day.

It was imminently important for souls, it was suggested to me by the invisible spirit who trod with me, to work through karmic and cellular memories of moments of death which held significant energetic impetus in our memory. If we were unwilling or simply unaware of these thrusts, they could lead souls into former habitual patterns which inhibited the express purpose of the reincarnation to move beyond an event of former thrust.

In her case, she had actually not known how to live beyond a young age. Sudden death at a young age was imprinted within her, so she played it out again rather than having to learn to live into different aspects of life which were unfamiliar to her - the aging and growth beyond young adulthood.

This could apply to someone who had died in battle being drawn again to wartime. It could apply to a soul drawn to the same type of man in previous existences, carrying that again into future incarnations and following a habitual attraction, rather than an eternal step which could be taken to go to something higher. Nodding in understanding, we moved again.

And then I saw another family, who had lost sight of the importance of humor, hugs and laughter in the purification process on earth. I was given to also see how the willingness of others to process the energetic

messes of others, even if its not their own, can oftentimes end up being the only hope for progress in families and cultural dynamics.

Seeing a family, in the spirit, several members appeared to me in the forms of previous incarnations, although I interiorly knew who they were in the current family dynamic of the age.

A father and two of his sons were making horrific messes and the mother was the only one in the family with the energetic capacity to actually clean them up. If she had not taken that torch, although it was not hers to carry, there was no other hope for these other members of her family. So I began to help her, but the angels aside again pointed out what had been shown to me prior. Sometimes, there is only one person who can actually do this particular service for specific souls in their own family. It is often a mother or a father. I could not help her clean it up, but was given entry to assist in another way.

This understanding showed the unique importance of the calling of parents.

In this case, the father and sons were literally helpless without her and had no hope of advancement. They didn't know how to clean up anything energetically, they had no ability to discern that which was inferior to that which was superior, and they were truly lost in what was an amalgam of anger, pride, stupidity and well-wasted blessings.

Meanwhile, there was a turkey in the oven, but the oven was not turned on. I turned to the father and two sons. My hand was turning on the oven. "If you don't let it cook," I said, "you can never eat it." This remained an allegory to accepting and receiving spiritual nourishment. "If this is so, you can certainly never complain that you are hungry, is this not so?" They all three looked at me bewildered.

The husband had formerly been a samurai, a very honorable man in previous incarnations, but had lost touch with that honor in his current incarnation.

There were floodwaters and debris all over the kitchen floor, sewage was mingling with it. Even food, like meats and sauces, were being thrown into the mess on the floor by the husband and the sons, which was an indication that they had not properly honored spiritual nourishment that had been given to them, but literally thrown it away as if it were equal to sewage.

I'd made a beautiful new curtain for their kitchen and had installed and placed it on the wall. The husband literally took his fists and smashed them into the new curtain, breaking it, but at the same time embedding the new bluidsh mantle into the wall. "This must be done," I said to him, as he continued to refuse to allow me or his wife to alter anything despite the putrid nature of he and his sons outflowings.

As he shoved it back into the wall, I looked at it and decided we would leave it like this, because that

would be acceptable, as the curtain even being battered into the wall demonstrated a bit of movement. We would accept this tiny alteration for now. "That will be fine," I stated.

They kept eating from their bounty, they had several pot roasts from which they were eating, but they wouldn't yet share.

"Let it cook," I said, "or it will never be finished." They kept eating the good stuff and throwing the rest in the pile of trash and sewage on the floor. Blaming me for the mess they were making, I spoke to them of cause and effect. But they kept taking it out, taking what they wanted and throwing everything else away into this pile of putrid filth. "Let it cook . . . or it will never be finished." I said again.

But they didn't yet understand, so I engaged them by saying, "I will go ahead and accept responsibility for this mess, it is now mine." As I did this, a power was funneled through me into the mother and wife to give her more impetus in the messes she now diligently tried to erase.

I took the father and sons out of the kitchen allowing for his wife to begin to clean up. Energetic inflow was coming from my hands to them for a very, very long time. And I was losing force, because I was tired and hungry. The three of them refused me food or sustenance because for a time they were angry at my presence. The wife was unallowed to offer it. But as

time marched on, changes began to emerge in their spirits in ways I could not have expected.

There were a lot of hugs given and received, and we started making light of their faults, their angers, their hindrances. Humor abounded, and it became clear as time went on that this was exactly what they needed. They had become defensive about their faults, and in so doing, not allowed the inflow of the reality of their human condition to override their inherent need to be right, to hold onto a fault for the sake of being right rather than allow transcendent and honorable energies to flow in to create alteration into a more harmonic station of being.

Cooperation replaced defiance and by the time it all came to an end, we were all literally singing and dancing. We were all very huggy, hugging a lot, and that was exactly what they had needed, a loving suggestion toward movement, rather than a tugging moralistic appeal.

My spirit became literally a rainbow . . . but my light was diminishing because I needed food. I had given them all of my energies, and I was starting to fail.

Because they had previously refused and still wouldn't allow me to share in their bounty of food, we all began staring at one another. They were being faced with the reality that I was fading because they were unwilling to share in their bounty, so that I might continue to share with them in mine.

This was a pivotal lesson for them, that they could not only receive . . . they must learn to be energetically malleable, so that in their interactions with family and others they would become mutually nourishing, rather than parasitic.

That would be a necessary and vital movement for this entire family to stretch forward.

And thus, it was finished. The father had reached forward to offer me sustenance, but it hadn't come in time.

In my weakness, an attack came from the dark side and my spirit was whisked away to a faraway and unknown location.

Holding onto a fast moving, old and black train, satanic forces now had full hold of me. I could barely hold on as I'd been in such a weakened state from gathering and harnessing all of the energies available to me to energize transformation within that family. We'd succeeded with them for their purpose, but the dark side had taken advantage of that moment before I'd had a chance to re-energize.

In that moment, I knew it was over. There was no chance I would escape their grasp. I didn't have it within me to fight this battle, they knew it, I knew it . . . it was over.

Holding onto a turret hanging over the black train, it was going so very fast across miles of city and

underground tunnels, so I prayed to make peace with God knowing there was no way to even find my way back from where I'd been swooped away. It had happened so fast, and I'd traveled so far . . . no strength, none left. It was over.

In the corner of my right eye's vision, I could see the ogre, satan; laughing hysterically, his red flaming face incredulously victorious, as ashes and burnt black remnants of his skin, fell untowardly in his absolute glee that he had garnered such a win over his counterpart, the all holy God.

But before I knew what had hit me, a samurai warrior of unimagineable strength literally came heralding in with a mighty impact, as he swung his samurai sword and released my spirit from the turret's grasp. Holding me tightly within his hands, the samurai had once again emerged within this father and gathered my soul to a final safety. What an ominous turn the events had taken.

Yay, it was the father who had come to my aid and utilized the energies I had given to garner such a triumphant exchange within his own, that he was able to rekindle that honorable samurai within and rescued me in death's wake.

An F-16 awaited, the sign of my eldest son, to gather my remnants to my home. The father and two sons apologized humbly before me for relenting so foolishly to having refused me spiritual nourishment

and allowing for such a rambunctious diminishing of my substance.

A fiery substance began to emerge within my spirit, as again, I became a rainbow of many lights.

The everflowing process of creation giving back to itself had played itself out in a way I could not have envisioned or fathomed this tarried eve.

As I stepped into the F-16 to be drawn homeward, the invisible spirit, who accompanies me on much of my journeying, handed me a small prayer book. It was my mother's, he said. And for a moment, I had to gather my memories to a time long past when indeed she did have this prayer book. With a smile, I grasped it, and took it with me hither.

The invisible spirit suddenly became visible. He was a giant guardian angel with perfunctorious wings, white and amiable. "My name is Wade," he said, "I am he who guides you invisibly, I am your guardian angel."

Nodding to Wade, I entered the aircraft and was hastened home . . . or so I thought I would be.

But heedless to say, he took me to yet another purgatorial ground of malcontent, the purgatory of haste.

As I entered, I noticed that souls were just rushing around, haste was like a wind within them. Asking

them what they were doing, they would say, "I'm keeping myself busy." Their eyes seemed focused on something just ahead, as if keeping themselves busy actually led to 'some' thing. When indeed, doing nothing hastily leads to 'no' thing. They were all like vaped souls, categorically wandering, doing anything to continue their wild-eyed distractions into vapor. As vaporous souls, they almost appeared like lines in the ether, constantly moving, arriving nowhere. Haste was very nonsensical.

Wade beckoned to me with his hands, that I must go elsewhere. He took me to what he called the ascendant and descendant.

Here was something that almost looked like a musical score of some type, except that it was not so, but rather, the ascendant and descendant pattern of incarnate life. My drawing is a meager comparison to what I saw which included, like music, many symbols and instructions. And the upward strike point of every consolation, is a consolation - which meant in my experience, that the consolation is the moment where enlightenment comes into potential to take place for that level or that pinnacle which began at the deceleration and desolation.

In incarnation, the soul reaches upwards for a time and then is often plunged into a deep. Then again, the soul much reach again for a circumspect ascendant to rise higher in his next algorithm of existential life. In the process of such ascendant/descendant cycles, the soul can rise upwards towards higher ascendants

(making progress), he can stay the same and relegate himself to a random pattern of habitual and repetitive patterns (stagnate), or he can descend (descendant thrusts). Most souls, except for those partitioned towards evil, will NOT go downward. However, the problem in the evolutionary pathway of the soul is that many do choose to remain in a static relevance. And by so doing, do not progress and remain stagnant.

The almighty God gives all souls in their incarnation consolations and desolations, which are ideally intended to raise the soul on each peak point as you will see in the diagram I have created to raise the entire system to a continually elevating system of ascendants. However, as is also shown, many souls will not do so, and will utilize the ascendant and descendant to remain in one position, which is counterintuitive to the evolutionary nature of what the soul must do in an earthly lifetime towards forward thrust.

*“The Lord makes these energies operative in those who believe in Him. That these energies, which are meant by the sending of the Holy Spirit, are made operative by the Lord in those who believe in Him, that is, that such are reformed, regenerated, renewed, vivified, sanctified, justified, purified from evils, and at length are saved by the Lord.”*

*True Christian Religion, Emanuel Swedenborg, 1771, Translated by John Ager, 1906*

Incessant pointless activity leads to such stagnant states, wherein the proper use of the ascendant and

descendant along with the consolations and desolations given by God to all forms of human life allows for the soul to continue on a pattern of rising which is the actual purpose of these functions in the evolutionary spectrum of incarnate life. If this is happening within a soul pattern, it would be called a 'consolium.'

In other words, use the tragedies and joys of life well . . . for they both contain within them the codes of the ascendant. In the codes of the descendant are the secrets to rising again in a higher glory. In our deepest sorrow and our highest joy, lie vibrations of infinite magnitude which relegate the soul to a pattern of merit and demerit.

*"You are given not only to suffer with our dear Saiour, but you will be joyful with Him too. But remain always submissive and childlike."*

*St. Therese of Lisieux to Therese Neumann*

Remember, then to observe that in these ascendant/descendant patterns there are movements of a sudden nature.

Wade bid me to look upon a soul within the realms of the earth below.

This young woman had spent her short life in service to others. In what seemed like a split second, her soul entered into unconsciousness, she was asleep.

What seemed like moments later, she awoke and rolled over on a very cold surface, in a drawer. Her spirit had jumped out of her body in anger, rage and fear as she looked upon a morgue filled with the bodies of the dead, all who had succumbed in an instant to the bullet of a sniper who in a descendant moment had taken the lives of many in an instant. In what would be deemed a horrendous use of the desolation which he had been traveling.

She was in shock. Sudden death had come upon her like a thief in the night. She was sorely unprepared. She was so mad, who had the right to do this to her? She had no idea where she was or to whence she should go.

In my heart, I could feel all that she was feeling. But it was the perfect example of the shortness of human life, and the ardour with which our soul will race to the finish line whence our bodies have been taken from us by illness, violence, war, terror or accident. It was a total shock to her, she was violently unprepared.

Wade very quietly turned my way and said, "Well, Carrie, I'd like you to meet Marilynn. Let us go back to 1967, shall we?"

Of course, the year of her birth. All now holding hands, we traveled to what Wade called 'The Purgatory of Many Worlds.'

Many souls had gathered in this purgatory and were dressed from the late 1800's to the many era's of the 1900's. There were rooms, I'd say thousands of rooms in what was like a huge mansion world. Each room held images, items, moments and gathered thoughts from the moments of people's lives. People were traveling not only through one life, but many lives; not just their own, but those of others. It was a fascinating world wherein there were teaching moments from the lives of many to travel within and learn from.

It seemed that the most important memories were often from the formative years of a soul's life in the human world, from childhood, and then from the prime of life. People remembered certain pivotal events in their formation from their lives, and whether they were good or bad, they remembered them with a sort of revelry. There was honor given to all such moments; ascendant/descendant, consolations/desolations.

Hundreds and thousands of configurations were in this one huge mansion, a room dedicated to every single one. Habitual behaviors were highlighted upon, as well as, the issues of nature (being that which inherent in the soul at birth) versus the nurture, or the manner of their upbringing.

The major difference in these mansions was that everything was out in the open for all to see, there were no longer any hidden motivations or

masquerades as to true intentions. For the wolves in sheeps clothing, the masquerade was off.

But again there was a particular quality of incessant pointless activity found active in so many purgatorial realms I'd wandered through this eve.

I yearned for the silence of the world's of God where everything falls away, and you stand in peace above creation itself - pure space. Standing 'in' love. Eternally present without awareness.

Again, Wade took my hand with great care, but we were hit with a rhythmic taunting of an energy blast beyond my scope.

Entering into a very big home, there were children who had not been properly taken care of, they were wading through rising waters with all manner of injuries upon their persons; broken limbs, bleeding wounds, sicknesses and the like. They were trying to get out but the waters were just too high. Reminiscent of my own experience as a younger person when I faced similar odds.

Taking one child at a time, I assisted many of them out to dry ground where they could finally catch their breath, assess their situation and accept that it was okay that they needed help. I say this again because it is so very important, they were caught between worlds because they felt it would be wrong to accept help. But they absolutely needed help, they couldn't

survive without it. These children needed a lot of hugs, and Wade and I gave out as many as we could.

What was truly interesting as regards the dynamic in this experience along with the troubled family was how much power could be transmitted in a singular hug. I'd had no idea, but it was a profoundly healing thing for all these children and had been for the previous family, as well.

The waters continued to rise, since this was a purgatory, it seemed that would likely not change. So we focused on pulling the kids out of the waters where they could get a more secure footing to begin their journey to the next worlds.

And then I was led into a series of aeons.

My mother and father had gone through some tribulations in their lives, and it was now time for them to deal with some of the energies behind these bizarre manifestations.

Entering a seedy motel, my mother was wandering around agitated. She knew my father was there, and she was angry at him for the sneaky ways he did things, how his issues kept bringing him back into her life, and the everpresence of the things he had done which had left permanent and lifelong scars.

Just outside, I was waiting for my mother to find his room and then I would follow.

But this place was very seedy, very rough and I knew it wasn't the safest of places. My father had brought some of this into our lives while growing up, and although it was uncomfortable, I knew I had to go in.

As I entered, I saw a group of people who were obviously in the process of kidnapping a young girl. For just a moment, I thought to myself, 'uh oh.' But before I had much further time to think out my plan, I saw a gun in one of their hands. Because I had seen what they had done, a single shot rang out and landed on the right side of my head.

I went down, I was shot in the head, it was over. I knew it was over, there was no coming back from this. I was dead, gone, done . . . it was over.

I lay in my own blood quietly.

After all, my father's actions were, in essence, 'death.'

He had brought death down upon us all, although he probably had no idea. And here in this purgatorial realm, he still played out the creepy, seedy side of his personality oblivious to the harm it would cause the rest of us, oblivious to my dead spirit lying in the hallway. He would likely never even have noticed.

And this was the true death, this is why it was over. Because it WAS death.

Suddenly, I opened my eyes. Scattered on the floor all around me were what looked to be hundreds of pamphlets. How had they gotten there?

Even though I should not have been able to, I reached out to look at some of these pamphlets and realized that they were all small excerpts of ancient sacred texts. Gathering them towards me, I could not contain my excitement.

Still lying on the floor in a pool of blood from the bullet wound to my head, I sat up. The sacred texts moved into me. And the seedy motel became my living room. My ceiling became open sky looking upon a mountain canyon. And I was completely healed.

In the canyon, I saw aeons of souls; gunfighters, young ladies, ranch hands, horse riders . . . they all gazed upon me in a ghostly manner. And as they turned their gaze which had been eye to eye with mine downwards, they walked off into the east and disappeared.

There are no words for what happened next, but I will use them anyway.

God came rumbling in like thunder in the mountains, an ominous roaring sound that touched and vibrated the horizon like a harp on the night sky. There was no fear as the rumbling continued to move closer, but a genuine thrill and excitement. This was God's thunder, and you knew it without question.

I was to undergo a series of visions. Each vision was preceded by this thunder of God. It rustled and rumbled until it was right at your footsteps and then barreled into you in a vibration of pure stillness. But LOUD, God's thunder was very LOUD.

In what seemed like a vision overlapping physical reality, I was on the phone with a friend. But when I saw and heard God's thunder rolling in from the northwest I said, "Can't talk right now, I'm having a vision." Inbetween each vision, I would catch that phone call and have to say the same thing as the next vision began to arise.

In the sky over the mountain canyon which had opened so majestically over my living room appeared four visions.

The first vision consisted of angels, who were wearing light blue gowns, had very large white wings, but who's aura's consisted of white and yellow light that formed perfect ovals around them.

Interestingly, as in several of these visions, only one angel appeared first and then others would open up the sky until there were hundreds and then thousands.

I understood these angels to be an integral part of the protection afforded me in my earthly life, in my home.

As this vision faded, I grabbed the phone to tell my friend, but immediately began to hear the roaring thunder of God and had to excuse myself again.

Another majestic oracle was to appear, again appearing with only one at first and then hundreds and then thousands. This time, they were extraterrestrial spacecraft. I was delighted to note that there were at least five different races of craft in the sky above my home, and again, I knew they were protecting me. By the time they had all manifested visually, you could barely see the sky through them. I was ecstatically excited and honored to know, and so thrilled to know there were many races working together with me.

The vision was majestic beyond words.

And again as the vision passed, I grabbed the phone to tell my friend, but heard God's thunder coming over the canyon and again excused myself.

This time, a vision of great sorrow appeared and encompassed the entire canyon overhead. The Blessed Virgin Mary, with tears of blood running down her face, was wearing a garment of deep red and blue with tiny golden four cornered stars. The blood from her tears stood out in a way I cannot describe, as if in technicolor. And they fell to the earth, soaked into the earth, and were borne unto the earth.

*"Psalm 51 – The Miserere*

*Prayer of Repentance (A psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him after his sin with Bathsheba.)*

1. *Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in your abundant compassion blot out my offense.*
2. *Wash Me thoroughly from mine iniquity; and cleanse me from my sin.*
3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*
4. *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightiest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.*
5. *Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
6. *Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*
7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.*
9. *Turn away Thy Face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities.*
10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*
11. *Cast me not away from Thy Presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*
12. *Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.*
13. *Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*

14. *Deliver me from blood guilt, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy justice.*

15. *O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall proclaim Thy praise.*

16. *For Thou desires not sacrifice else would I give it; Thou delights not in burnt offerings.*

17. *My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a heart contrite and humbled, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*

18. *Be bountiful, O Lord, to Sion in Thy kindness; by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.*

19. *Then shalt Thou be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and holocausts; then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar."*

*The Miserere, Psalm 51, Old Testament, The Holy Bible*

For a moment, I was given to see some of the meaning behind the Blessed Virgin's tears, private revelations were given to me regarding a persecution which could come towards me unless I followed her instructions precisely. And I had gotten myself too closely involved with certain people of the earth, which could cause great pain if not hindered.

I saw my car go over a cliff, but the angels caught the car, and allowed me to put it in rear and back up.

Inherently, I realized that when I had myself fallen off of a cliff recently, quite literally (not in my car, but while walking), it was these angels who had lifted me up despite my injuries and made it possible for me to climb back up despite the darkness of night and my

sprained ankle. They had protected me from something which could have and should have been a lot worse.

I felt gratitude and a bit of awe and wonder at the protection I'd been afforded.

I could say nothing.

*"While she was alone in a room she saw a beautiful woman who wore a violet dress and a white veil around the head suddenly arise. She looked very sad and had tears in his eyes tears that fell on the floor. Three large swords pierced her breast. "*

*The beautiful lady said only three words, moreover, what the Church since Christ has repeated insistently:*

*"Prayer – Penance – Reparation".*

*By saying these words she remained silent. Tears fell from her eyes sparkling in big drops. Shortly after she disappeared."*

*Pope John Paul II blessed the statue of Rosa Mystica in Rome on more than one occasion. He kept a statue in his private chapel during his pontificate . . . . Many of the Pilgrim Madonna statues worldwide have cried human tears – or tears of blood . . . The Holy Father's concern and urgency is understandable considering that it is alleged that presently more than 70 Rosa Mystica statues are weeping worldwide.*

*Pope John Paul II told Fr. Laux:*

*"I am receiving many reports from Cardinals, Bishops and Missions...reports of Rosa Mystica statues shedding tears, reports of cures and conversions through the Rosa Mystica, reports that people return to prayer and penance through the Rosa Mystica statue of Montichiari."*

*Messages of Rosa Mystica, Published on December 8, 2010 by Franz Sepeckbacher in Marian Private Revelation*

*"While she was praying in the chapel of the local hospital in Montichiari, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to nurse Pierina Gilli, dressed in mauve, very sad and with tears in Her eyes. Her heart was pierced by three swords."*

*The first sword symbolized the unworthy celebration of Holy Mass and Communion unworthily received; the second sword symbolized those who were unfaithful to, or gave up, their vocation as a priest or a religious; the third sword symbolized the betrayal of the Faith. Our Lady asked for "Prayer, Sacrifice, and Penance." These were her only words."*

*Messages of Rosa Mystica, Published on December 8, 2010 by Franz Sepeckbacher in Marian Private Revelation*

Finally, after having again tried to tell my friend what was happening and excusing myself for yet another round of God's thunder, I saw clouds.

They appeared in the sky, white and fluffy, but they began forming words in some type of hieroglyphic language. Many words passed by my vision, it was a vibrational event to take them in, but I had no idea what meaning they held, only that they were holy.

In the final sorrow, the clouds began forming a word in English. And it was in CAPS.

The word was LEAVE . . .

I needed to stay away for a week or so in order to allow God's angels to correct an energetic imbalance which was quickly coming to a less than favorable outcome. And I needed to also leave these situations of which I had gotten myself too closely involved with people on the earth, which could cause great pain if not hindered.

A thunderous sound peeled before my eyes.

I put my friend on hold and got up to leave.

My mother came in the room and wanted to talk to me, but my mission was clearly embedded in my soul. "Can't talk right now, I'm having a vision." I said as I whisped on my way out to leave. I ran past my father on the way . . . I felt badly because I had to do this, and I also knew my parents could not understand what it was I had to do.

But I had to LEAVE . . . after all, I had been called to a life of prayer and solitude. And it had to happen right now because the Blessed Mother was crying tears of blood in her sorrow for the sins of the world. And I had to leave behind worldly attachments which were a hindrance to my calling of prayer.

*"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep - All sin stupefies the sinner. All intoxicate the mind, bribe and pervert the judgment, dull the conscience, blind the soul and make it insensible to its own ills. All the passions, anger, vain glory, ambition, avarice and the rest are a spiritual drunkenness, inebriating the soul, as strong drink doth the body. : "They are called drunkards, who, confused with the love of this world, feel not the ills which they suffer. What then is meant by, "Awake, ye drunkards and weep," but, 'shake off the sleep of your insensibility, and oppose by watchful lamentations the many plagues of sins, which succeed one to the other in the devastation of your hearts?" God arouse those who will be aroused, by withdrawing from them the pleasures wherein they offended Him. Awake, the prophet cries, from the sottish slumber of your drunkenness; awake to weep and howl, at least when your feverish enjoyments are dashed from your lips. Weeping for things temporal may awaken to the fear of losing things eternal."*

**Notes on the Bible, Albert Barnes, Joel 1:5, 1902**

*"It happened one day, when the Saviour, our Master, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, was sitting along with His disciples, and they were all assembled on the Mount of Olives, that He said to them: O my brethren and friends, sons of the Father who has chosen you from all men, you know that I have often told you that I must be crucified, and must die for the salvation of Adam and his posterity, and that I shall rise from the dead. Now I shall commit to you the doctrine of the holy gospel formerly announced to you, that you may declare it throughout the whole world. And I shall endow you with power from on high, and fill you with the Holy Spirit. And you shall declare to all nations repentance and remission of sins. For a single cup*

*of water, if a man shall find it in the world to come, is greater and better than all the wealth of this whole world. And as much ground as one foot can occupy in the house of my Father, is greater and more excellent than all the riches of the earth. Yea, a single hour in the joyful dwelling of the pious is more blessed and more precious than a thousand years among sinners: inasmuch as their weeping and lamentation shall not come to an end, and their tears shall not cease, nor shall they find for themselves consolation and repose at any time for ever. And now, O my honoured members, go declare to all nations, tell them, and say to them: Verily the Saviour diligently inquires into the inheritance which is due, and is the administrator of justice . . . O Death! who makest all knowledge to vanish away, and raisest so many tears and lamentations."*

*Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VIII, The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, The Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages*

**"IN THE PRONAOS OF THE TEMPLE OF THE TRUE ROSY CROSS.**

*Our salvation is the life of Christ in us.*

*THE place or state wherein the true Rosicrucian lives is far too exalted and glorious to be described in words. When we enter the vestibule of the temple of the true Rosy Cross, we enter into a region of unalloyed bliss and happiness. There is an effulgence of super-terrestrial light, where all laborious thinking and exercise of the imagination for the purpose of drawing logical inferences about the unknown, ceases, for in that light is the realm of pure knowledge; to live there is to perceive, and to perceive is to know. Into .that paradise of celestial consciousness nothing impure can*

*enter. No room is there for terrestrial flesh and blood; but the spiritual beings which inhabit that realm are made of the flesh and body of "Christ," in other words, of the substance of the spiritual soul.*

*H. P. Blavatsky, in her "Key to Theosophy," says that there are beings having attained a state of spiritual consciousness which would entitle them to enter the state of Nirvana; nevertheless, out of compassion for mankind, they still remain residents of this earth, inhabiting invisibly for mortal eyes the astral plane of our planet. In that, she describes the true order of the Golden and Rosy Cross as a spiritual Brotherhood, and if one of these superior beings, for some purpose or other, reincarnates in a human body upon this planet, then will there be a real Rosicrucian in a visible form upon this earth.*

*The "history" of that "brotherhood" is the history of the evolution of the world, and that of the spiritual regeneration of the soul and the body of man; for although each of these individual beings had its own terrestrial history and experiences in passing through many incarnations upon this planet, nevertheless, in its essential points the history of all is alike, and consisted in the conquering of the low and the unfoldment of the high. They all had to bear the Cross of suffering before they could become crowned with victory; they all had to crucify their selfish and personal will, and die in regard to all that attracts the soul to the sphere of earthly desires and illusions before they could have the spiritual faculties of their souls unfolded like the Rose whose leaves are unfolded by the rays of the rising sun."*

*In the Pronaos of the Temple of Wisdom, by Franz Hartmann, 1890*

*"I am where I was before I was created: that place is purely God and God. There are neither angels nor saints, nor choir, nor this nor that. Many people speak of eight heavens and of nine choirs. They are not where I am. You should know that everything stated in such a way and presented to people in images is but an incitement to seek God. Realise that in God is nothing but God. You must also understand that no soul may come unto God before it has become God as it was before it was created. No one may come into the naked Godhead except the one who is naked as he was when he flowed out of God. The masters say that no one may enter here as long as he has any attachment to lower things, even if it is only as much as the tip of a needle can carry."*

*Sister Catherine Treatise: Trans Elvira Borgstaedt. Paulist Press 1986*

*"Creation is a book. Who wisely reads its lines  
Revealed therein completely the great Creator finds."*

*Angelus Silesius, 1624 -1677*

# CHAPTER FIVE

## A Vision of Creation - The Defilements

The strident souls marched forward in a never ending quest to receive their due . . . as doing the will of the Father had become quite defined and almost guaranteed as to outcome in a sense in their minds. If they were to do God's will, it seemed to them, they should surely receive recompense owed for such a gesture of mighty humility.

However, in God's estimation, such ends were never parlayed forth just for the effort, but rather, to the beneficence of the Universe as it readily handed out judgements and pardons according to its own infallible and elastic will.

In my view, was such a one who had practiced the tradecraft of law. In his own estimation, a guilty verdict against the one prosecuted in this matter would be a rather expected recompense for his efforts.

After all, had he not seen the vision of God which had announced His very will, "Complete the mission, complete the trial." If he was to do so, then, would it not indicate a certain victory? Did not the glorious cross which had been displayed in the heavens to his interiors shining in an absolute cycle of lights indicate

such victory? Or had he taken the words of Mission and enjoined upon them a victory which had not been foretold?

But as he conceded that things were not going in this manner, regardless of the guilt of man charged with such an dastardly offence, he became so angry that he literally picked up the 'child' which was being born of his efforts.

This child was not an ordinary child, so to speak, but rather an estimation of the new birth that was sparking due to this man's efforts, a new construct out of the world of the ethers to create for future residence.

But it did not make sense to the man that such a guilty man would be exonerated of such charges. It was not a correct outcome in proportion to his efforts.

Without any adieu, he took the 'child' (the construct) by the legs, and started banging its head against the floor.

Immediately, in a soul styled form, I intervened. I stopped him.

But still, he remained so distraught by the will of God, he went into another room and immediately began to drown himself.

Again, I stopped him.

“Stop drowning yourself in your own expectations of how God should weave,” I said, “Allow yourself to simply be the vessel of these works and surrender the outcome to the Lord Almighty, for He is the only knower of souls.”

But he felt in the deepest part of his heart, or so he thought (because it came from his egoic persuasion, not his love), that the only outcome which could possibly be conceived as the will of God could be victory.

Thus, he kept drowning himself in higher and broader expectations, doing more and more to vindicate and exonerate himself in the eyes of his peers, rather than to examine his own intentions and motives which had become corrupted due to his own inability to reckon with the standard of the cross.

Although the construct was just a babe, his blindness had bade him to see not the exquisiteness of the creation which had laid before him of what would come of these efforts through this construct which was entirely different than he'd thought it should be.

But as it is so . . . the man accepted that God's Will in this instance would contradict what might have been perceived as the correct outcome.

He felt that he hadn't received his due; been allowed to receive the accolades of a victory, seen justice in a clear cut case of something that had clearly been embarked upon by the defendant.

But what he didn't realize was that there were others who did not receive their due on earth, they were all around him.

Following the will of God is not a vindicator to 'success' in a worldly sense, but only the vain assumption that our actions – even if done for the holy purpose of the One Great Creator – are accursed and blessed for reasons of our own making.

The will of God would always lean towards mercy, when appropriate, even when justice might demand otherwise.

*“Once when I was totally exhausted, I felt that Jesus was not with me. Frightened, I started to cry. ‘My Jesus, where are You?’ Then Jesus answered. ‘I am always where you are, but you are not always where I am. Think about that!’ I thought about it and said: ‘My Jesus, blessed be Your true words.’ . . .*

*Jesus answered ‘If a soul lives in Me, then I am the perfection in it.’*

*Fiat.*

*Jesus said, ‘While on earth I repeated many times. ‘My Father, Thy will be done,’; thus you have no other task then to repeat what I said. What I did as a man I do even now in My divinity.’*

*When Jesus said this, ‘In my divinity’, He let me know the hidden meaning of the words. Only those who live in Him can perceive the meaning of this, because the hidden*

*meaning of this concept cannot be expressed in human terms. But I with His infinite grace, could rasp how He in Himself constantly lives this Fiat to which He often referred. At the moment when He says this Fiat [Latin = let it be done], I saw that His humanity and His divinity say it simultaneously; the whole Trinity is united with the Father's will at this moment. I saw clearly that the will of God would be carried out even if He had not created any creatures (since creatures are only the tools of His will), I saw that God's Fiat has no beginning nor end. I know that this Fiat originated with God and it is in Him. This Fiat is the incarnation of His will and power, which is nothing else but love. In one word I saw the work of the Most Holy Trinity (although it is impossible to describe it in human terms).*

*I saw that this Fiat is a connecting thread to the creatures which originate from the will of God and that this Fiat had two separate lines. This ramification was made by the power of God and His will. In connection with souls, it means eternal salvation or eternal damnation. But the two were not achieved in the same way. While God pronounced freely the Fiat of eternal salvation, He pronounced reluctantly, and as if somewhat forced, the Fiat of Eternal damnation.*

*In connection with the Fiat the Saviour said the following: 'My daughter: I wanted to show you how the soul should carry out this Fiat. If a soul says it not only with words but with his whole life, then I unite Myself with it in the same manner as the three Persons of the Trinity are united. If I unite thus with a soul, such souls do not want to know, to see, to own, to love and enjoy anything outside of Myself. If such a soul stands by Me loyally, I will communicate*

*Myself to that soul. In such communication, a soul can know Me as I know Myself. Such a soul will see heaven and taste it, because I am heaven itself, and wherever I am and live, I will find My glory there. I will share My happiness and joy with those who are My glory”*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

Looking elsewhere, I saw the mechanisms of a couple who were in the process of hiring someone to kill their own daughter. Perhaps it was a wanton act of abortion, or a more deviously planned attempt to avoid conception with the aid of contraceptive devices; but the evil of their acts was unwarranted and unfathomable in this sphere of influence.

Trying to fashion their own method of redemption, rather than allowing God to determine that which would gather their insights into a more fruitful sphere, they successfully thwarted the birth of female child who’s advent would have altered the course of their spiritual ascent with rapidity.

They succeeded in their intentions, God’s will in their lives was completely averted. And they were none the wiser for it.

*“When I prayed before the tabernacle on day in 1944, I saw once again the Queen of the World. On her face I saw unspeakable pain, as she looked at our country, her clothes were white, and over them she wore a scarlet mantle. Her whole figure was covered with a transparent black veil. On her head, instead of the crown that I had seen before, was a*

*crown of thorns. Her bare feet were also covered with thorns. Under them I saw the crushed head of the serpent. Her hands were folded in prayer, while tears rolled from her eyes. On either side stood a majestic angel. They were dressed in black. Their eyes were downcast and they cried silently. Their beauty was so majestic it cannot be compared to that of any earthly person. The Holy Virgin said, "The Church should make a place for me where I can descend to call the people and tell the whole world to convert, to do penance."*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

Flash . . . and my spirit was elsewhere. Standing at the top of a very tall skyscraper, I was given to lie down and crawl to the side of the building. Looking over the side, I saw that down below on a ledge laid the body of my mother. It was dismembered demonstrating a certain prescribed purification of such a state in the spirit.

Sometimes such dismemberment is just disjointed thoughts and thinking. It can also happen at times to be reminiscent of hypocritical intentions which jar all souls during their lives as they try to live in accordance with a certain belief, a certain way of life; battling their human nature along the way. Dismemberment can also just be ill-united elements of the spirit along the earthly journey which must needs be rectified and recompensed.

*"I have come to thee, that I may purify thee, that I may cleanse thee,. that I may revivify thee, that I may assemble*

*for thee thy bones, that I may collect for thee thy flesh, that I may assemble for thee thy dismembered limbs."*

*The Pyramid Texts, 1684a - c, Translation by Samuel B. Mercer, 1959*

I wished so much to reach her, but was not given permission to go further. Having turned to head back, I was preparing to attend her funeral in the spirit realms. But someone had stolen all of my clothing and I had nothing appropriate to wear to such an occasion. So I went naked.

As I awaited the funereal events in the mystical church, I turned to my right side.

Flows of souls were moving towards the applied altar as I was praying the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy. They turned upright, forward and up . . . and another subsequent forward and up into heaven.

*"Disciple. But it is very hard to be always looking forwards into eternity; and consequently to attain to this single eye, and simplicity of divine vision. The entrance of a soul naked into the will of God, shutting out all imaginations and desires, and breaking down the strong partition which you mention, is indeed somewhat very terrible and shocking to human nature, as in its present state. O what shall I do, that I may reach this which I so much long for?*

*Master. My son, let not the eye of nature with the will of the wonders depart from that eye which is introverted into the divine liberty, and into the eternal light of the holy majesty: But let it draw to thee those wonders by union with that heavenly internal eye, which are externally*

wrought out and manifested in visible nature. For while thou art in the world, and hast an honest employment, thou art certainly by the order of providence obliged to labour in it, and to finish the work given thee, according to thy best ability, without repining in the least; seeking out and manifesting for God's glory, the wonders of nature and art. Since let the nature be what it will, it is all the work and art of God: And let the art also be what it will, it is still God's work; and his art, rather than any art or cunning of man. And all both in art and nature serveth but abundantly to manifest the wonderful works of God; that he for all, and in all, may be glorified. Yea, all serveth, if thou knowest rightly how to use them, but to recollect thee more inwards, and to draw thy spirit into that majestic light, wherein the original patterns and forms of things visible are to be seen. Keep therefore in the centre, and stir not out from the presence of God revealed within thy soul; let the world and the devil make never so great a noise and bustle to draw thee out, mind them not; they cannot hurt thee. It is permitted to the eye of thy reason to seek food, and to thy hands, by their labour, to get food for the terrestrial body: But then this eye ought not with its desire to enter into the food prepared, which would be covetousness; but must in resignation simply bring it before the eye of God in thy spirit, and then thou must seek to place it close to this very eye, without letting it go. Mark this lesson well.

Let the hands or the head be at labour, thy heart ought nevertheless to rest in God. God is a Spirit; dwell in the Spirit, work in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, and do everything in the Spirit; for remember thou also art a spirit, and thereby created in the image of God: Therefore see thou attract not in thy desire matter unto thee, but as much as possible abstract thyself from all matter whatever; and so,

*standing in the centre, present thyself as a naked spirit before God, in simplicity and purity; and be sure thy spirit draw in nothing but spirit.*

*Thou wilt yet be greatly enticed to draw matter, and to gather that which the world calls substance, thereby to have somewhat visible to trust to: But by no means consent to the tempter, nor yield to the lustings of thy flesh against the spirit. For in so doing thou wilt infallibly obscure the divine light in thee; thy spirit will stick in the dark covetous root, and from the fiery source of thy soul will it blaze out in pride and anger; thy will shall be chained in earthliness, and shall sink through the anguish into darkness and materiality; and never shalt thou be able to reach the still liberty, or to stand before the majesty of God. Since this is opening a door for him who reigneth in the corruption of matter, possibly the devil may roar at thee for this refusal; because nothing can vex him worse than such a silent abstraction of the soul, and introversion thereof to the point of rest from all that is worldly and circumferential: But regard him not; neither admit the least dust of that matter into thee which he may pretend any claim to. It will be all darkness to thee, as much matter as is drawn in by the desire of thy will: It will darken God's majesty to thee; and will close the seeing eye, by hiding from thee the light of his beloved countenance. This the serpent longeth to do; but in vain, except thou permittest thy imagination, upon his suggestion, to receive in the alluring matter; else he can never get in. Behold then, if thou desirest to see God's light in thy soul, and be divinely illuminated and conducted, this is the short way that thou art to take; not to let the eye of thy spirit enter into matter, or fill itself with anything whatever, either in heaven or earth; but to let it enter by a naked faith into the light of the majesty; and so receive by*

*pure love the light of God, and attract the divine power into itself, putting on the divine body, and growing up in it to the full maturity of the humanity of Christ."*

*The Signature of All Things, Jacob Boehme, 1575-1624, Translated in 1912*

Having been laden with heavy burdens this eve, my soul was thrust into something yet unexpected on such a starry and profound night of investiture.

With the circular wave of a hand, the angel aside me thrust my spirit into a vision of my own lusts and vanities which still remained on my spirit despite my many years of fighting against it.

Two things were brought out to me in great fervor, 1.) it was shown to me that my daughters were watching, and I felt so ashamed of this, and 2.) what was most disturbing was that I was enjoying it so much.

Observing that my spirit was demonstrated as if in a hospital awaiting another surgical intervention regarding a recurrent physical problem I'd had. I had glued two identical icons of Sophia, Lady Wisdom, on my front teeth.

I was very quickly made aware that these symbols were indicative of me having utilized wisdom in a vain manner, to entertain the attention of a particular individual for whom I'd developed some inordinate feelings.

My heart literally sank to the ground and then below it to see what I had done.

As I looked at myself in the hospital bearing the signs of such a blasphemous use of wisdom in the pursuit of vain phantasms, an older woman all dressed in white rode by on a white horse going back to win the heart of the man she loved.

Noticing how old she looked and realizing the ridiculousness of this same vain search, the lack of nobility in the same, I ripped the icons off of my teeth to notice that this action had just caused big gaping holes in the front of my teeth.

At that moment, I realized the pointless nature of the pursuit. Age waits for no one, we all age and decay as we get older and anything based on false appearances cannot last.

I felt a bit of disgust at myself, for I was being vain about spiritual accomplishments. There was something very gross about that . . . even in this moment of my own foggy eyed disturbance.

But as I trembled at the thought of what I had done, my spirit flew towards a symphonic stage. My mother waited for me behind the orchestra and I was joining her in death. Flying towards a certain crevasse behind the conductor's podium, I could hear my mother's thoughts reiterating how short our lives on earth remain and that no time should be wasted on vanity.

Quiet ensued, a cosmic quiet, as if all the stars had been suddenly turned off . . . mists fell, and my attentions were drawn elsewhere.

An angel came to me. She wore a pale blue, glittering with silver gown, had the large white light type wings, and wore a huge smile. She was blonde, and her hair came down just below her shoulders, it was curly like mine is . . . . She had penetrating blue eyes, and she exuded a very loving and joyful type of vibration.

She looked towards me, raised her hand which disbursed a lot of silvery glittery light towards me. "Marilyn," she said, "tell them, I've never met a grudge worth keeping." Then she winked at me with her left eye and smiled.

*"In the eyes of my Heavenly Father, the life of a person is only an empty page if that person does not strive to save souls."*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

Hours were passed in cleaning out voodoo camps, troves of souls caught up in some type of parasitic afterlife experience.

When suddenly, a Satan and a Lucifer appeared.

They were two definitively distinct beings of destruction moving around purgation realms tearing

everything apart. The destruction was so intense, I feared the possibility of being possessed.

Turning to my left, I asked for help from some very deeply religious souls, but they would not help anyone. I could hear them saying over and over to themselves, "If you don't see it, it doesn't exist. If you don't see it, it doesn't exist. If you don't acknowledge it, it still does not exist. If you don't look, it doesn't exist."

My soul felt rather disappointed and also a bit disgusted by the passive nature of these souls who should, according to their own leanings, have been among the first to help in cleaning up this purgatorial realm.

As previously stated, there were two evil spirits, one was referred to as 'a Satan,' the other as 'the Lucifer.' The Lucifer had long dirty blonde hair, wore a red dusty burgundy veil and cape, and I found it very scary to be in the presence of his energy. The Satan was an equally quantifiably terrifying creature, but a little more reptilian and pith than his counterpart. I remember seeing ash follow him wherever he would go.

There was little that could be done for the souls residing here as they could not differentiate between good and evil OR God and Lucifer. Traps had been laid in every nook and cranny of this wretched and torn up whirlwind of ruination. And souls fell for them left and right. It was as if all hellish elements

went in circles. Destruction kept on going on everywhere, it continued to destroy. And that which had been destroyed would then be empowered to also destroy, it was a pointless cyclone of absolute horrific chaos. But it was black and dark brown, too. There was no light. It was darkness incarnate; and there was no end to its embittered cyclonic and circular annihilation of all that was good. And there was not a single soul that would do anything to empower the good, or to salvage that which was lost. Souls accepted little piddly ruminations from the demons in place of graces, not unlike accepting an ash in place of gold or diamonds. It was awful.

And then several souls started arguing about Christ's nature. Whether He was human or divine became the embittered struggle of the beasts for the hour.

Lucifer reappeared and took it all over. He loved it when these souls argued about abstractions regarding the Messianic Saviour who could've and did all that could be done to save them had they not gotten lost in the forest for the trees. They continued arguing about Gnosticism and natures as I wandered away slowly as if in a dream, tortured by this experience and drifting away almost as if it had made me catatonic for a time.

From a distance now, I could see that the anti-Christ had now appeared to them and was discoursing to all of them about the very same thing. They had no idea who he was, I watched in horror. The anti-Christ spewed false theology as if it were true, and they knew it not.

My spirit, in its fatigue, was to receive no rest.

Gathered for a moment in a new place, I stood in a lightswirl in the center of it. Outside of my quarters and down below was a circling bog of filth. Souls were gathered in its cyclonic rage, many of them grabbed a hold of my garment and tried to hold onto me for dear life.

But from my vantage point I could see that the swirling bog only went out for approximately seven feet. It was imperative that they let go and take the two to three steps through the bog in order to climb out to what appeared to be a calm and sunny meadow.

Shouting to them, I had received instructions from a young man orbiting higher than my lightswirl. "You must gather yourselves, let go, and take two to three steps to your liberation!" The souls were unable to see how close they were to the edge of the darkness. But, heeding my words, several began to conquer their fear and tally forth into the indignities of the contamination in order to seek to a higher place.

My lightswirl became more and more like a wooden bedroom above the bog, as it slowly morphed into a mobile space mimicking in exact detail my own bedroom on earth. It was portrayed as a sort of launch pad rather than a bedroom, a holy cell from whence I could do my work. Turning to look behind me, I saw my mother as she might have looked at about thirty five years of age. She was lying in my bed watching

me at my computer desk, observing how the spirit world was infusing me with information. It was something she had never seen before, and she looked with deep interest.

Again, a flash of light . . . my soul traveled through several purgatory schools, and it wandered into a purgatory of stupid interests followed by a purgatory of pointless interests.

It was very chaotic but colorful, there seemed to be almost a blurry movement of activity that also went in circles as had the previous purgatory which held so much of that which was black and brown. A young man with dark hair approached me, grabbed my hand and led me beyond it.

*“One night Jesus asked me to care for the souls in Purgatory. It was 4:30 a.m. and I wanted to finish writing my diary when Jesus called on me. ‘My child! Although I respect your tiredness, I want to ask you not to go to sleep until you have written down the state of the suffering souls in Purgatory. I want My priest brothers to join the life of sacrifice and prayer crusade for the suffering souls. Now I want to help those who during their life often asked Me and My Mother, often in prayer, to have pity on them when they die and go to the place of suffering.*

*He brought me to a huge place, the end of which I could see, and although it was dark, the souls there seemed calm. Countless souls were there. They wore black robes and huddled, packed close to each other. They all were alike, motionless, speechless and very sad. My heart almost broke on seeing them. I learned that these souls had not received*

*any help from anybody on earth (prayer, sacrifice). They knew the hour of help had not yet arrived for them. But they hoped that help would not be delayed very long.*

*After that Jesus led me to another similar place. The souls similarly shivered side by side in their black robes, but when I entered with Jesus, all started to move. I have had a rosary in my hand to pray for them. When they saw the beads, all started to cry: 'Pray for me, pray for me dear sister, pray for me!' They tried to out-shout each other as they solicited my prayers, like bees coming toward you in cloud formation. Although all cried at one time, yet you could hear the voice of each one separately. I recognized many, those with whom I was in contact while they were alive. I saw some Sisters from orders other than mine. I was shocked when a Mother Superior turned to me, and asked me meekly to pray for her. After that a Sister of my acquaintance came toward me with her hand joined: she grabbed the rosary and begged me: 'For me, for me!' I do not know how, whether in soul or in body, but perspiration ran all over her.*

*Then Jesus went to a third place and I went after Him. Countless Sisters stood there motionless. As in the first room the perspiration just ran from all of them. They turned toward me. They asked me to say the Rosary for them. In this room there was light. I started to think, why do they ask only for the rosary? Then Jesus showed me a rosary, the beads of which were flowers. In each flower I saw a drop of Jesus' blood shining. When we pray the rosary, the blood of Jesus will fall on the person for whom we offer it. The inhabitants of Purgatory implored the saving blood of Jesus."*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts  
Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

Suddenly, I was hanging out with a deceased musician in a calm and peaceful cemetery. In the distance, I saw the Dalai Lama burying Buddhist monks at a distance back.

The musician told me to see my music as a fun thing, not as a performance art. If I were to use it in the future, it would be at the church and to record; which would require overlapping tracks, etc., rather than live performance. He told me to view my writing as he would view his live performance; both as artful ventures, but different expressions of a similar spirit of creation.

He then changed the subject to spiritual things I had written about in my books of which he held great interest. We exchanged pleasantries, smiled at one another and prepared for me to again be whisked away into the afterwind of the night.

A familiar mountain was looming in the foreground as I found my soul gliding rapidly towards the snow-capped monument in the sky.

Coming in towards the locality, my spirit came down from high speed into a low hover as I noticed that a huge rack of ancient sacred texts the size of a building was looming up ahead. I could see it but it was off in the distance.

As the spirit of flight let go of my soul, I began to walk through what became almost a dozen monasteries. Monks were praying in a standing position all about the grounds in their drab brown robes. Each prayed in different directions towards the sky, the galactic night sky was filled with their quiet but profound praise.

After passing through and observing this for a fortnight, I came upon the rack of huge books that indeed was a building.

At this juncture, I assumed when I entered, I would find more monks praying to the all holy God in various formations. But as I slowly opened a very large double door ornamented with iron, my eyes were hit with a color of resplendency that for a moment all I could see was this color against a backdrop of light.

But as my eyes adjusted, I realized that there was a community of dozens of women all wearing a very transcendent gown of a high frequency bluish, sea-blue - iridescent in every way - like the blue poinsettias of a light blue shade which come out near Christmastime.

Without any words being exchanged, I instantly knew that this was a community of women who had been consecrated to the Blessed Mother. But it was not a nun's habit, but rather, a very modest but intricately designed gown made with many fabrics, laces and glittery and starry elements I had never seen before.

The 'mother' came forward towards me, and put her hands on my shoulders.

Another one of the women came forward with a stack of ancient sacred texts which she gently placed into my hands after a very stately bow.

Bowing back, I also nodded in appreciation.

The 'mother' said, "You found us."

And as she did, my spirit was taken at the speed of light on a journey of infinite proportions back to my body.

*"In God's design this is the Age of Mary! I saw the Holy Trinity talk about the fate of the world now immersed in sin. Angels, saints, and all of heaven prostrated this time, worshipped them in deep quiet.*

*The Heavenly Father said, 'The world immersed in sin has to be destroyed according to My justice.'" Then I saw Jesus, the Merciful Love, close to the Father, supplicating; He prostrated Himself before the Father and though united to Him, He still was a separate being, and said:*

*'My Father, I am your Son. You ordered Me to die for this world!' Then He showed His wounds that burned like fire.*

*The hand of the Heavenly Father – which now seemed not as a Fatherly hand, but as a heavy, just and punishing hand weighed heavily on the world. Then Jesus put His wounded hand under His Father's and asked:*

*'Please have mercy for a while . . . '*

*'No, My Son. Sin is crying out for vengeance!'*

*This was a terrible vision, because it seemed like justice would prevail over Merciful Love. Then Jesus glanced at His Mother at His side and shouted"*

*'My Immaculate Mother, come help Me to hold up the hand of My Heavenly Father. My hand is not enough!'*

*At the moment when the Blessed Virgin put her hand under Jesus, the Heavenly Father lifted up His hand and said:*

*'My Son! Mercy has prevailed. The sinful world has gained mercy on account of the supplication of the Immaculate Mother of God. We will entrust the saving work of the world to her.*

*'To save the world, she needs power. Therefore we endow the Immaculate Mother of God with the powers of Queen. Her title will be: the Victorious Queen of the World. As Co-Redemptrix of the world, mankind, which is condemned to die because of its sins, will receive grace and salvation through her. We place under her command the host of angels."*

*As the Heavenly Father pronounced these words, the heavenly hosts shouted with joy, celebrating Mary. The Virgin Mother was decorated with her three greatest virtues when she appeared: Immaculate purity, flaming love, and deep humility. Seeing it – although He gave it to her – even God was amazed.*

*Her heart was filled with happiness that the words, 'the humble will be exalted' which as an unknown little girl from Nazareth she pronounced in the Magnificat, had been fulfilled in her. The Holy Trinity crowned her. The glittering crown had three pieces, signifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

*When her royal mantle was brought, I saw that there was a life in its decorated buckle. This also signified her relationship with the Holy Trinity. It contained the following: Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son and Spouse of the Holy Spirit.*

*God in Three Persons worked in the Immaculate Mother, as if the Holy Spirit had overshadowed her again, that she might give Jesus to the world again. The Heavenly Father showered her with a flood of graces. From the son, unspeakable happiness and love radiated toward her, as if He would congratulate her while He said:*

*'My Immaculate Mother, the Victorious Queen of the World, show your power! This time you will be the savior of humanity. As you were part of My saving work as Co-Redemptrix according to My will, so I want to share with you My power as King. With this I entrust you with the saving work of sinful humanity; You can do it with your power as Queen. It is necessary that I share with you everything, that you become comparable to Me. You are the Co-Redemptrix of humanity.'*

*Then I saw that her mantle was saturated with the blood of Jesus, and this gave it a scarlet color. My attention then was drawn to the angels, who surrounded their Queen with great reverence. The angels wore white, red and black. I*

*understood that white symbolized the future purity of the world, red the martyrdom of cleansing in blood, black the mourning over the fate of the damned souls.*

*Then the Virgin Mother started to walk gently and yet stately, toward the world. I could not see the end of her train, but I knew it was with the Father. I saw the world as a giant sphere that was squeezed by a crown of thorns, and was full of sin. Satan, as a serpent coiled around it and all sin and dirt came out of him.*

*The Virgin Mother stood on the globe as the Victorious Queen. Her first act as Queen was to cover it with her mantle, saturated with the blood of Jesus. Then she blessed the world, and I saw that at the same time the Holy Trinity also blessed the world.*

*The satanic serpent then attacked her with terrible hatred and determination: flames came out of its open mouth. I was afraid that her mantle would catch on fire and burn, but the flame was not even able to touch it. The Virgin Mother was calm, as if she were not in a fight, and quietly stepped on the serpent's neck. The serpent did not cease to spew forth flames, the symbol of hatred and revenge, but he was not able to do any more damage, while the crown of thorns, made of sin, had disappeared from around the world, and from the center a lily came forth and started to bloom.*

*I saw also that the blessing of the Virgin Mother had fallen on every nation and person. Her voice was indescribably gentle and majestic when she said:*

*'I am coming!*

*'I will help!*

*'I will bring discipline and peace! I will save you!''*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts  
Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

“Ember Hold Stature,” were the words were left in my spirit as the dimensions of creation and the mysterious women disappeared from my view, and faded to three dimensional space within the earthly realm of spheres.

*“If My priests could see the world in the light of truth, they would see that I maintain the world only because of the reparation of the just. The prayers and reparations of the just move My Heart to have mercy on My people and shorten the well-deserved sufferings and chastisement.”*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts  
Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

*“It is necessary that a soul recognize who it is without Me.”*

*The Victorious Queen of the World, Sr. Natalia of Hungary, Two Hearts  
Books & Publishers, Mountain View, CA 1992*

## CHAPTER SIX

# A Vision of Mary - The Purification

Floating about in the ethereal winds, my spirit was being drawn into an energy that could not be described but only felt as an inner space of being beyond all treasure. The Blessed Mother was taking me on this journey in order to teach me further of the laws of alteration and the heightened states of it.

Flowing into what I understood to be the Rosicrucian Mysteries, my spirit became almost totally still. But yet, within that stillness lay a vibration which would pulse without ceasing at ever heightened rates of frequency.

Mary continued to look deeply into my eyes as I continued to go deeper into this trancelike state of total submission and quiet.

My eyes were tightly closed as if I were asleep. Yet my internal vision was clear and focused. I could see all that lay around me in every sphere which meant multidimensionally.

The Blessed Mother directed me towards several souls who had been gathered in their own subconscious sleeping this night and taken here for

alteration. She gently took my hand and placed it on the heart of the soul.

As I did so, alterations began to be made upon these souls without effort; without movement, suggestion, communication, words, thoughts, ideas, etc. It was a different level of alteration and it was resplendent in its results.

It also was a less harmful way to accede an alteration by being able to do so without suppression and aggression from the souls themselves.

When we were finished, the Blessed Lady took me deeply into the line of the Old Testament Queens as if I were an heir to them; their energy, their purpose, their destiny, their vibration.

It was an energy superfluous to anything I had ever before experienced. Filled with the power and rule of fate, the energies were defined by lines of evolution and spiritual progress.

There was a single thread which ran through all of them which had to do with their purpose as a line of destiny.

Interestingly, great focus was placed on teaching me how to rule, how to be a matriarch, how to hold fast the crown.

And a royal wedding took place . . . Mary smiled at me and vanished. I recalled that in the Old Testament,

the king did not consider his wife to be the queen, but yet, his mother.

Suddenly, I was given to enter into the reality of a man who was surrounded by clutter. This was his purpose and life, and he wasn't bringing anything to a conclusion.

Directed forward to assist this soul, I noticed there was a mountain which had been only partially painted among his four lines of destiny. Sitting quietly, I painted his mountain and gathered his articles, placing them in order and finally directing them to an acceptable conclusion to the Lord. His work was important, it could not be lost in cluttered thinking . . . or missing the forest for the trees.

When I was finished, the four lines were now clear. They had all turned a light blue. The mountain was painted and represented one line. The second line had become a book by the revered Bishop Fulton Sheen. The third and fourth were summarized and brought to conclusion. My work was finished here, the soul would be pre-empted in his thinking to finalize the conclusion by cleaning up on the ground.

*"Love is a mutual self-giving which ends in self-recovery . . .  
 . Show me your hands. Do they have scars from giving?  
 Show me your feet. Are they wounded in service? Show me  
 your heart. Have you left a place for divine love? . . .  
 "Patience is power.  
 Patience is not an absence of action;  
 rather it is "timing"  
 it waits on the right time to act,*

*for the right principles  
and in the right way."*

*Bishop Fulton Sheen*

Suddenly, I was swept into what seemed like a maze or something . . . my soul got lost in the spirit world, many cities, towns, trails, mountains and valleys which kept flickering into other places.

In this instance, I was being given to experience how it felt for a soul who could not make progress or move forward. It was a very frustrating, but at times almost terrifying, sense.

In the maze of thousands of worlds, I stayed within a single vibration; earthly physical delusion. With each hop, skip and jump from one reality to yet another, I would find myself again in something of equal caliber, as if I no longer knew how to escape the maze of worlds.

It almost seemed like something was lacking, like a switch had been flipped to off without which no one could ever actually see clearly to the answers they of which they were in such desperate need.

*"In Heaven, God handed me a pair of glasses. I put them on and then God said, 'Now Look.' For the first time in my life I could see . . . "*

*Dying to Fit in, Erica McKenzie BSN, RN Createspace, 2016*

*"Be careful not to assume that the mind and the brain, while exceedingly intricate, are one and the same, because*

*my NDE taught me that, while each is important, they are very different . . . The brain sides with the body and the mind sides with the spirit. The mind encapsulates and flows freely throughout the limited compartments of the brain. In fact, they each have very different jobs which are both vital components to sustain authentic human life. "*

*Dying to Fit in, Erica McKenzie BSN, RN Createspace, 2016*

*"In Amos Comenius' 1631 'Labyrinth of the World' the Saviour appears in person to the pilgrim at the end of his wanderings: 'I saw you when you wandered; but, my dear son, I wanted no longer to wait for you; so I brought you to yourself and into your own heart.' So that he may see the world from the correct perspective, he is given a new pair of spectacles. 'Its frame was the word of God, the glass was the Holy Spirit."*

*D.A. Freher, Paradoxa Emblemata, manuscript 18th Century, From Alchemy & Mysticism, The Hermetic Museum, Compiled by Alexander Roob, Taschen Publishers, London, 2011*

Before I could reckon to despair over my newfound situation, the Blessed Mother returned and in a flash of light I was delivered into something spectacular.

Looking around me, I was in awe of what had just transpired. My spirit stood upon a trail in a high mountain . . . but this was not just any mountain, this was the Mountain of Mary.

Her voice was again with me as she told me that this was the mountain I had built due to the rosaries I had been praying . . . I was astonished, really. It was a beautiful mountain with a long trail which traveled

the ascent. Upon the trail were many caverns, and at the mountain's top was a pristine meadow of high country trees and flowers.

*“Elizabeth also, hearing that her son John was about to be searched for, took him and went up unto the mountains, and looked around for a place to hide him; And there was no secret place to be found. Then she groaned within herself, and said, O mountain of the Lord, receive the mother with the child. For Elizabeth could not climb up. And instantly the mountain was divided and received them. And there appeared to them an angel of the Lord, to preserve them.”*

*The Lost Books of the Bible, The Protoevangelion; or, An Historical Account of the Birth of Christ, and the Perpetual Virgin Mary, his Mother, by James the Lesser, Cousin and Brother of the Lord Jesus, chief Apostle and first Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem, Chapter XVI,  
1926*

Nothing more was said or spoken. Alone, I walked up the mountain to its height. I reveled in the air of purity and grace, leaping through the meadows and reaching my hands to heaven. It motivated me in realizing what praying the rosary, which was a true prayer on the Gospel of Our Lord had created in this mystical realm. It was so beautiful, a true monument to the power of prayer. And this praying on the Gospel had indeed created an icon to the Holy Spirit which I knew I could travel in the mystical realms at will.

And then I saw that the trail would be descending back into the valleys yet again and I would need to go. Just for this moment, I stayed at the pinnacle, the

peak, and allowed the vibrations of this higher world to flow into my spirit.

*"From the heights we leap and flow  
To the valleys down below  
Sweetest urge and sweetest will,  
To go lower, lower still.*

*Suddenly, she understood. She was beholding a wondrous and glorious truth; 'A great multitude whom no man could number' brought like herself by the King to the Kingdom of Love and to the High Places so that they could now pour out their lives in gladdest abandonment, leaping down with him to the sorrowful desolate places below, to share with others the life which they had received. She herself was only one drop among that glad, exultant throng of Self-givers, the followers of the King of Love, united with him and with one another, each one equally blessed and beloved as herself."*

*Hinds Feet on High Places, Hannah Hurnard, Living Books, Tyndale House Publishers, 1975, Wheaton, Illinois, USA*

Taking the equally beautiful trail to descend the Mountain of Mary; as I reached the bottom, a singular hand manifested out of the ether and handed me a book which contained the secret knowledges of Mary. I accepted it with a bow.

*"Peter said to Mary, "Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than other women [cf. John 11:5, Luke 10:38-42]. Tell us the words of the Savior which you have in mind since you know them; and we do not, nor have we heard of them."*

*Mary answered and said, "What is hidden from you I will impart to you." And she began to say the following words to them. "I," she said, "I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision.' He answered and said to me, 'Blessed are you, since you did not waver at the sight of me. For where the mind is, there is your countenance' [cf. Matt. 6:21]. I said to him, 'Lord, the mind which sees the vision, does it see it through the soul or through the spirit?' The Savior answered and said, 'It sees neither through the soul nor through the spirit, but the mind, which is between the two, which sees the vision, and it is...'"*

*"...and Desire said, 'I did not see you descend; but now I see you rising. Why do you speak falsely, when you belong to me?' The soul answered and said, 'I saw you, but you did not see me or recognize me; I served you as a garment and you did not recognize me.' After it had said this, it went joyfully and gladly away. Again it came to the third power, Ignorance. This power questioned the soul: 'Whither are you going? You were bound in wickedness, you were bound indeed. Judge not' [cf. Matt. 7:1]. And the soul said, 'Why do you judge me, when I judged not? I was bound, though I did not bind. I was not recognized, but I recognized that all will go free, things both earthly and heavenly.' After the soul had left the third power behind, it rose upward, and saw the fourth power, which had seven forms. The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth the arousing of death, the fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the wisdom of the folly of the flesh, the seventh is wrathful wisdom. These are the seven participants in wrath. They ask the soul, 'Whence do you come, killer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?' The soul answered and said, 'What seizes me is*

*killed; what turns me about is overcome; my desire has come to an end and ignorance is dead. In a world I was saved from a world, and in a "type," from a higher "type" and from the fetter of the impotence of knowledge, the existence of which is temporal. From this time I will reach rest in the time of the moment of the Aeon in silence.'*"

*When Mary had said this, she was silent, since the Savior had spoken thus far with her . . . The Savior said, "All natures, all formed things, all creatures exist in and with one another and will again be resolved into their own roots, because the nature of matter is dissolved into the roots of its nature alone. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." [cf. Matt. 11:15, etc.]"*

*Excerpts from the Gospel of Mary, The Apocryphal New Testament, This fragment, of disputed authenticity, puts the relationship between Mary Magdalen, Jesus and the Apostles in a radically different perspective than traditional beliefs.*

And as I walked forward, again the energy of the Rosicrucians furrowed deeply into my soul as two books were handed to me regarding their wisdom.

#### *"THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE WORLDS*

*(Occultism is defined as the study of secret worlds.)*

*THE first step in Occultism is the study of the invisible Worlds. These Worlds are invisible to the majority of people because of the dormancy of the finer and higher senses whereby they may be perceived, in the same way that the Physical World about us is perceived through the physical senses. The majority of people are on a similar footing in regard to the superphysical Worlds as the man who is born*

*blind is to our world of sense; although light and color are all about him, he is unable to see them. To him they are non-existent and incomprehensible, simply because he lacks the sense of sight wherewith to perceive them. Objects he can feel; they seem real; but light and color are beyond his ken. So with the greater part of humanity. They feel, and see objects and hear sounds in the Physical World, but the other realms, which the clairvoyant calls the higher Worlds, are as incomprehensible to them as light and color are to the blind man. Because the blind man cannot see color and light, however, is no argument against their existence and reality. Neither is it an argument, that because most people cannot see the super-physical Worlds no one can do so. If the blind man obtains his sight, he will see light and color. If the higher senses of those blind to the super-physical Worlds are awakened by proper methods, they also will be able to behold the Worlds which are now hidden from them.*

#### THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE WORLDS

*While many people make the mistake of being incredulous concerning the existence or reality of the supersensuous Worlds, there are also many who go to the other extreme, and, having become convinced of the verity of invisible Worlds, think that when a person is clairvoyant all truth is at once open to him; that when one can "see," he at once "knows all about" these higher Worlds. This is a great mistake. We readily recognize the fallacy of such a contention in matters of everyday life. We do not think that a man who was born blind, but has obtained his sight, at once "knows all about" the Physical World. Nay, more; we know that even those of us who have been able to see the things about us all our lives are far from having a universal knowledge of them. We know that it requires arduous study*

*and years of application to know about even that infinitesimal part of things that we handle in our daily lives, and reversing the Hermetic aphorism, "as above, so below," we gather at once that it must be the same in the other Worlds. At the same time it is also true that there are much greater facilities for acquiring knowledge in the superphysical Worlds than in our present dense physical condition, but not so great as to eliminate the necessity for close study and the possibility of making a mistake in observation. In fact, all the testimony of reliable and qualified observers prove that much more care in observation is needed there than here. Clairvoyants must first be trained before their observations are of any real value, and the more proficient they become the more modest they are about telling of what they see; the more they defer to the versions of others, knowing how much there is to learn and realizing how little the single investigator can grasp of all the detail incident to his investigations. This also accounts for the varied versions, which superficial people think are an argument against the existence of the higher Worlds. They contend that if these Worlds exist, investigators must necessarily bring back identical descriptions. If we take an illustration from everyday life, the fallacy of this becomes apparent. Suppose a newspaper sends twenty reporters to a city with orders to "write it up." Reporters are, or ought to be, trained observers. It is their business to see everything and they should be able to give as good descriptions as can be expected from any source. Yet it is certain that of the twenty reports, no two would be exactly alike. It is much more likely that they would be totally different. Although some of them might contain leading features in common, others might be unique in quality and quantity of description. Is it an argument against the existence of the city that these reports*

differ? Certainly not! It is easily accounted for by the fact that each saw the city from his own particular point of view and instead of these varying reports being confusing and detrimental, it is safe to say that a perusal of them all would give a fuller, better understanding and description of the city than if only one were read and the others were thrown in the wastebasket. Each report would round out and complement the others. The same is true regarding accounts made by investigators of the higher Worlds. Each has his own peculiar way of looking at things and can describe only what he sees from his particular point of view. The account he gives may differ from those of others, yet all be equally truthful from each individual observer's viewpoint. It is sometimes asked, Why investigate these Worlds? Why is it not best to take one World at a time; to be content for the present with the lessons to be learned in the Physical World, and, if there are invisible Worlds why not wait until we reach them before investigating? "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!" Why borrow more? If we knew without doubt that at some time, sooner or later, each one of us must be transported to a far country where, under new and strange conditions, we must live for many years, is it not reasonable to believe that if we had an opportunity to learn of that country in advance of our removal to it we would gladly do so? Knowledge would render it much easier for us to accommodate ourselves to new conditions. There is only one certainty in life and that is – Death! As we pass into the beyond and are confronted by new conditions, knowledge of them is sure to be of the greatest help. But that is not all. To understand the Physical World, which is the world of effects, it is necessary to understand the super-physical World, which is the world of causes. We see street cars in motion and we hear the clicking of telegraph instruments, but the mysterious force

*which causes phenomena remains invisible to us. We say it is electricity, but the name gives us no explanation. We learn nothing of the force itself; we see and hear only its effects. If a dish of cold water be placed in an atmosphere of a sufficiently low temperature ice crystals immediately begin to form and we can see the process of their formation. The lines along which the water crystallizes were in it all the time as lines of force but they were invisible until the water congealed. The beautiful "frost flowers" on a windowpane are visible manifestations of currents of the higher Worlds which operate upon us all the time, unrecognized by most of us, but none the less potent. The higher Worlds are thus the worlds of causes, of forces; and we cannot really understand this lower World unless we know the others and realize the forces and causes of which all material things are but the effects. As to the reality of these higher Worlds compared with that of the Physical World, strange as it may seem, these higher Worlds, which to the majority appear as mirages, or even less substantial, are, in truth, much more real and the objects in them more lasting and indestructible than the objects in the Physical World. If we take an example we shall readily see this. An architect does not start to build a house by procuring the material and setting the workmen to laying stone upon stone in a haphazard way, without thought or plan. He "thinks the house out." Gradually it takes form in his mind and finally there stands a clear idea of the house that is to be – a thought-form of a house. This house is yet invisible to all but the architect. He makes it objective on paper. He draws the plans and from this objective image of the thought-form the workmen construct the house of wood, iron, or stone, accurately corresponding to the thought-form originated by the architect. Thus the thought-form becomes a material reality. The materialist would assert*

*that it is much more real, lasting and substantial than the image in the architect's mind. But let us see. The house could not have been constructed without the thought-form. The material object can be destroyed by dynamite, earthquake, fire, or decay, but the thought-form will remain. It will exist as long as the architect lives and from it any number of houses similar to the one destroyed may be constructed. Not even the architect himself can destroy it. Even after his death this thought-form can be recovered by those who are qualified to read the memory of nature, which will be dealt with later. Having thus seen the reasonableness of such Worlds existing around and about us, and having satisfied ourselves of their reality, their permanency, and of the utility of a knowledge concerning them, we shall now examine them severally and singly, commencing with the Physical World.*

#### CHEMICAL REGION OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

*In the Rosicrucian teaching the universe is divided into seven different Worlds, or states of matter, as follows: 1 – World of God. 2 – World of Virgin Spirits. 3 – World of Divine Spirit. 4 – World of Life Spirit. 5 – World of Thought. 6 – Desire World. 7 – Physical World. The division is not arbitrary but necessary, because the substance of each of these Worlds is amenable to laws which are practically inoperative in others. For instance, in the Physical World, matter is subject to gravity, contraction and expansion. In the Desire World there is neither heat nor cold, and forms levitate as easily as they gravitate. Distance and time are also governing factors of existence in the Physical World, but are almost non-existent in the Desire World. The matter of these worlds also varies in density, the Physical World being the densest of the seven.*

Each World is subdivided into seven Regions or subdivisions of matter. In the Physical World, the solids, liquids and gases form the three denser subdivisions, the remaining four being ethers of varying densities. In the other Worlds similar subdivisions are necessary, because the matter of which they are composed is not of uniform density. There are still two further distinctions to be made. The three dense subdivisions of the Physical World – the solids, liquids and gases – constitute what is termed the Chemical Region. The substance in this Region is the basis of all dense Form. The Ether is also physical matter. It is not homogeneous, as material science alleges, but exists in four different states. It is the medium of ingress for the quickening spirit which imparts vitality to the Forms in the Chemical Region. The four finer or etheric subdivisions of the Physical World constitute what is known as the Etheric Region. In the World of Thought the three higher subdivisions are the basis of abstract thought, hence they, collectively, are called the Region of Abstract Thought. The four denser subdivisions supply the mind-stuff in which we embody and concrete our ideas and are therefore termed the Region of Concrete Thought. The careful consideration given by the occultist to the characteristics of the Physical World might seem superfluous were it not that he regards all things from a viewpoint differing widely from that of the materialist. The latter recognizes three states of matter – solids, liquids, and gases. These are all chemical, because derived from the chemical constituents of Earth. From this chemical matter all the forms of mineral, plant, animal, and man have been built, hence they are as truly chemical as the substances which are commonly so termed. Thus whether we consider the mountain or the cloud that envelops its top, the juice of the plant or the blood of the animal, the spider's thread, the wing of the butterfly or the bones of the

*elephant, the air we breathe or the water we drink – all are composed of the same chemical substance. What is it then which determines the conformation of this basic substance into the multiplex variety of Forms which we see about us? It is the One Universal Spirit, expressing Itself in the visible world as four great streams of Life, at varying stages of development. This fourfold spiritual impulse molds the chemical matter of the Earth into variegated forms of the four Kingdoms – mineral, plant, animal, and man. When a form has served its purpose as a vehicle of expression for the three higher streams of life, the chemical forces disintegrate that form so that the matter may be returned to its primordial state, and thus made available for the building of new forms. The spirit or life which molds the form into an expression of itself is, therefore, as extraneous to the matter it uses as a carpenter is apart from and personally independent of the house he builds for his own occupancy. As all the forms of mineral, plant, animal, and man are chemical, they must logically be as dead and devoid of feeling as chemical matter in its primitive state, and the Rosicrucian asserts that they are. Some scientists contend that there is feeling in all tissue, living or dead, to whatever kingdom it belongs. They include even the substances ordinarily classed as mineral in their category of objects having feeling, and to prove their contentions they submit diagrams with curves of energy obtained from tests. Another class of investigators teach that there is no feeling even in the human body, except in the brain, which is the seat of feeling. They say it is the brain and not the finger which feels the pain when the latter is injured. Thus is the house of Science divided against itself on this as on most other points. The position taken by each is partly right. It depends upon what we mean by “feeling.” If we mean simply response to impacts, such as the rebound of a rubber*

*ball that is dropped to the ground, of course it is correct to attribute feeling to mineral, plant, and animal tissue; but if we mean pleasure and pain, love and hate, joy and sorrow, it would be absurd to attribute them to the lower forms of life, to detached tissue, to minerals in their native state, or even to the brain, because such feelings are expressions of the self-conscious immortal spirit, and the brain is only the keyboard of the wonderful instrument upon which the human spirit plays its symphony of life, just as the musician expresses himself upon his violin. As there are people who are quite unable to understand that there must be and are higher Worlds, so there are some who, having become slightly acquainted with the higher realms, acquire the habit of undervaluing this Physical World. Such an attitude is as incorrect as that of the materialist. The great and wise Beings who carry out the will and design of God placed us in this physical environment to learn great and important lessons which could not be learned under other conditions, and it is our duty to use our knowledge of the higher Worlds in learning to the best of our ability the lessons which this material world has to teach us. In one sense the Physical World is a sort of model school or experiment station to teach us to work correctly in the others. It does this whether or not we know of the existence of those other worlds, thereby proving the great wisdom of the originators of the plan. If we had knowledge of none but the higher Worlds, we would make many mistakes which would become apparent only when physical conditions are brought to bear as a criterion. To illustrate: Let us imagine the case of an inventor working out his idea of a machine. First he builds the machine in thought, and in his mind he sees it complete and in operation, performing most beautifully the work it is designed to do. He next makes a drawing of the design, and in doing so perhaps finds that*

*modifications in his first conception are necessary. When, from the drawings, he has become satisfied that the plan is feasible, he proceeds to build the actual machine from suitable material. Now it is almost certain that still further modifications will be found necessary before the machine will work as intended. It may be found that it must be entirely remodeled, or even that it is altogether useless in its present form, must be discarded and a new plan evolved. But mark this, for here is the point: the new idea or plan will be formulated for the purpose of eliminating the defects in the useless machine. Had there been no material machine constructed, thereby making evident the faults of the first idea, a second and correct idea would not have been formed. This applies equally to all conditions of life—social, mercantile, and philanthropic. Many plans appear excellent to those conceiving them, and may even look well on paper, but when brought down to the actual test of utility they often fail. That however, should not discourage us. It is true that “we learn more from our mistakes than from our successes,” and the proper light in which to regard this Physical World is as a school of valuable experience, in which we learn lessons of the utmost importance.*

#### THE ETHERIC REGION OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

*As soon as we enter this realm of nature we are in the invisible, intangible World, where our ordinary senses fail us, hence this part of the Physical World is practically unexplored by material science. Air is invisible, yet modern science knows that it exists. By means of instruments its velocity as wind can be measured; by compression it can be made visible as liquid air. With ether, however, that is not so easy. Material science finds that it is necessary to account in some way for the transmission of electricity,*

*with or without wires. It is forced to postulate some substance of a finer kind that it knows, and it calls that substance "ether." It does not really know that ether exists, as the ingenuity of the scientist has not, as yet, been able to devise a vessel in which it is possible to confine this substance, which is altogether too elusive for the comfort of the "wizard of the laboratory." He cannot measure, weigh, nor analyze it by any apparatus now at his disposal. Truly, the achievements of modern science are marvelous. The best way to learn the secrets of nature, however, is not by inventing instruments, but by improving the investigator himself. Man has within himself faculties which eliminate distance and compensate for lack of size to a degree as much greater than the power of telescope and microscope as theirs exceeds that of the naked eye. These senses or faculties are the means of investigation used by occultists. They are their "open sesame" in searching for truth. To the trained clairvoyant ether is as tangible as are the solids, liquids, and gases of the Chemical Region to ordinary beings. He sees that the vital forces which give life to the mineral forms of plant, animal and man flow into these forms, by means of the four states of ether. The names and specific functions of these four ethers are as follows. (1) Chemical Ether – This ether is both positive and negative in its manifestation. The forces which cause assimilation and excretion work through it. Assimilation is the process whereby the different nutritive elements of food are incorporated into the body of plant, animal and man. This is carried on by forces with which we shall become acquainted later. They work along the positive pole of the chemical ether and attract the needed elements, building them into the forms concerned. These forces do not act blindly nor mechanically, but in a selective way (wellknown to scientists by its effects) thereby accomplishing their purpose, which is the growth and*

*maintenance of the body. Excretion is carried on by forces of the same kind, but working along the negative pole of the chemical ether. By means of this pole they expel from the body the materials in the food which are unfit for use, or those which have outlived their usefulness in the body and should be expurgated from the system. This, like all other processes independent of man's volition, is also wise, selective, and not merely mechanical in its operation, as seen, for instance, in the case of the action of the kidneys, where only the urine is filtered through when the organs are in health; but it is known that when the organs are not in health, the valuable albumen is allowed to escape with the urine, the proper selection not being made because of an abnormal condition. (2) Life Ether – As the chemical ether is the avenue for the operation of the forces the object of which is the maintenance of the individual form, so the life ether is the avenue for the operation of the forces which have for their object the maintenance of the species – the forces of propagation. Like the chemical ether, the life ether also has its positive and negative pole. The forces which work along the positive pole are those which work in the female during gestation. They enable her to do the positive, active work of bringing forth a new being. On the other hand the forces which work along the negative pole of the life ether enable the male to produce semen. In the work on the impregnated ovum of the animal and man, or upon the seed of the plant, the forces working along the positive pole of the life ether produce male plants, animals and men; while the forces which express themselves through the negative pole generate females. (3) Light Ether – This ether is both positive and negative, and the forces which play along its positive pole are the forces which generate the blood heat in the higher species of animal and in man, which makes them individual sources of heat. The forces*

which work along the negative pole of the light ether are those which operate through the senses, manifesting as the passive functions of sight, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. They also build and nourish the eye. In the cold-blooded animals the positive pole of the light ether is the avenue of the forces which circulate the blood, and the negative forces have the same functions in regard to the eye as in the case of the higher animals and man. Where eyes are lacking, the forces working in the negative pole of the light ether are perhaps building or nourishing other sense organs, as they do in all that have sense organs. In plants the forces which work along the positive pole of the light ether cause the circulation of the juices of the plant. Thus in winter, when the light ether is not charged with sunlight as in summer, the sap ceases to flow until the summer sun again invests the light ether with its force. The forces which work along the negative pole of the light ether deposit the chlorophyll, the green substance of the plant and also color the flowers. In fact, all color, in all the kingdoms is deposited by means of the negative pole of the light ether. Therefore animals have the deepest color on the back and flowers are deepest colored on the side turned towards the light. In the polar regions of the earth, where the rays of the sun are weak, all color is lighter and in some cases is so sparingly deposited that in winter it is withdrawn altogether and the animals become white. (4) Reflecting Ether – It has heretofore been stated that the idea of the house which has existed in the mind can be recovered from the memory of nature, even after the death of the architect. Everything that has ever happened has left behind it an ineffaceable picture in this reflecting ether. As the giant ferns of the childhood of the Earth have left their pictures in the coal beds, and as the progress of the glacier of a bygone day may be traced by means of the trail it has left upon the

*rocks along its path, even so are the thoughts and acts of men ineffaceably recorded by nature in this reflecting ether, where the trained seer may read their story with an accuracy commensurate with his ability. The reflecting ether deserves its name for more than one reason, for the pictures in it are but reflections of the memory of nature. The real memory of nature is found in a much higher realm. In this reflecting ether no thoroughly trained clairvoyant cares to read, as the pictures are blurred and vague compared to those found in the higher realm. Those who read in the reflecting ether are generally those who have no choice, who, in fact, do not know in what they are reading. As a rule ordinary psychometrists and mediums obtain their knowledge through the reflecting ether. To some slight extent the pupil of the occult school in the first stages of his training also reads in the reflecting ether, but he is warned by his teacher of the insufficiencies of this ether as a means of acquiring accurate information, so that he does not easily draw wrong conclusions. This ether is also the medium through which thought makes an impression upon the human brain. It is most intimately connected with the fourth subdivision of the World of Thought. This is the highest of the four subdivisions contained in the Region of Concrete Thought and is the homeworld of the human mind. There a much clearer version of the memory of nature is found than in the reflecting ether.*

#### THE DESIRE WORLD

*Like the Physical World, and every other realm of nature, the Desire World has the seven subdivisions called "Regions," but unlike the Physical World, it does not have the great divisions corresponding to the Chemical and*

*Etheric Regions. Desire-stuff in the Desire World persists through its seven subdivisions or regions as material for the embodiment of desire. As the Chemical Region is the realm of form and as the Etheric Region is the home of the forces carrying on life activities in those forms, enabling them to live, move and propagate, so the forces in the Desire World, working in the quickened dense body, impel it to move in this or that direction. If there were only the activities of the Chemical and Etheric Regions of the Physical World, there would be forms having life, able to move, but with no incentive for so doing. This incentive is supplied by the cosmic forces active in the Desire World and without this activity playing through every fiber of the vitalized body, urging action in this direction or that, there would be no experience and no moral growth. The functions of the different ethers would take care of the growth of the form, but moral growth would be entirely lacking. Evolution would be an impossibility, both as to form and life, for it is only in response to the requirements of spiritual growth that forms evolve to higher states. Thus we at once see the great importance of this realm of nature. Desires, wishes, passions, and feelings express themselves in the matter of the different regions of the Desire World as form and feature express themselves in the Chemical Region of the Physical World. They take forms which last for a longer or shorter time, according to the intensity of the desire, wish, or feeling embodied in them. In the Desire World the distinction between the forces and the matter is not so definite and apparent as in the Physical World. One might almost say that here the ideas of force and matter are identical or interchangeable. It is not quite so, but we may say that to a certain extent the Desire World consists of force-matter. When speaking of the matter of the Desire World, it is true that it is one degree less dense than the*

*matter of the Physical World, but we entertain an entirely wrong idea if we imagine it is finer physical matter. That idea, though held by many who have studied occult philosophies, is entirely erroneous. The wrong impression is caused principally by the difficulty of giving the full and accurate description necessary for a thorough understanding of the higher worlds. Unfortunately, our language is descriptive of material things and therefore entirely inadequate to describe the conditions of the super-physical realms, hence all that is said about these realms must be taken tentatively, as similes, rather than as accurate descriptions. Though the mountain and the daisy, the man, the horse, and a piece of iron, are composed of one ultimate atomic substance, we do not say that the daisy is a finer form of iron. Similarly it is impossible to explain in words the change or difference in physical matter when it is broken up into desire-stuff. If there were no difference it would be amenable to the laws of the Physical World, which it is not. The law of matter of the Chemical Region is inertia – the tendency to remain in status quo. It takes a certain amount of force to overcome this inertia and cause a body which is at rest to move, or to stop a body in motion. Not so with the matter of the Desire World. That matter itself is almost living. It is in unceasing motion, fluid, taking all imaginable and unimaginable forms with inconceivable facility and rapidity, at the same time coruscating and scintillating in a thousand ever-changing shades of color, incomparable to anything we know in this physical state of consciousness. Something very faintly resembling the action and appearance of this matter will be seen in the play of colors on an abalone shell when held in the sunlight and moved to and fro. That is what the Desire World is – ever-changing light and color – in which the forces of animal and man intermingle with the forces of*

*innumerable Hierarchies of spiritual beings which do not appear in our Physical World, but are as active in the Desire World as we are here. Some of them will be dealt with later and their connection with man's evolution described. The forces sent out by this vast and varied host of Beings molds the ever-changing matter of the Desire World into innumerable and differing forms of more or less durability, according to the kinetic energy of the impulse which gave them birth. From this slight description it may be understood how difficult it is for a neophyte who has just had his inner eyes opened to find his balance in the World of Desire. The trained clairvoyant soon ceases to wonder at the impossible descriptions sometimes brought through by mediums. They may be perfectly honest, but the possibilities of getting the parallax out of focus are legion, and of the subtlest nature, and the real wonder is that they ever communicate anything correctly. All of us had to learn to see, in the days of our infancy, as we may readily find by watching a young babe. It will be found that the little one will reach for objects on the other side of the room or the street, or for the Moon. He is entirely unable to gauge distances. The blind man who has been made to see will, at first, often close his eyes to walk from one place to another, declaring, until he has learned to use his eyes, that it is easier to walk by feeling than by sight. So the one whose inner organs of perception have been vivified must also be trained in the use of his newly acquired faculty. At first the neophyte will try to apply to the Desire World the knowledge derived from his experience in the Physical World, because he has not yet learned the laws of the world into which he is entering. This is the source of a vast amount of trouble and perplexity. Before he can understand, he must become as a little child, which imbibed knowledge without reference to any previous experience. To*

arrive at a correct understanding of the Desire World it is necessary to realize that it is the world of feelings, desires, and emotions. These are all under the domination of two great forces—Attraction and Repulsion, which act in a different way in the three denser Regions of the Desire World from that in which they act in the three finer or upper Regions, while the central Region may be called neutral ground. This central Region is the Region of feeling. Here interest in or indifference to an object or an idea sways the balance in favor of one of the two previously mentioned forces, thereby relegating the object or idea to the three higher or the three lower Regions of the Desire World, or else they will expel it. We shall see presently how this is accomplished. In the finest and rarest substance of the three higher Regions of the Desire World the force of Attraction alone holds sway, but it is also present in some degree in the denser matter of the three lower Regions, where it works against the force of Repulsion, which is dominant there. The disintegrating force of Repulsion would soon destroy every form coming into these three lower Regions were it not that it is thus counteracted. In the densest or lowest Region, where it is strongest, it tears and shatters the forms built there in a way dreadful to see, yet it is not a vandalistic force. Nothing in nature is vandalistic. All that appears so is but working towards good. So with this force in its work in the lowest Region of the Desire World. The forms here are demoniac creations, built by the coarsest passions and desires of man and beast. The tendency of every form in the Desire World is to attract itself all it can of a like nature and grow thereby. If this tendency to attraction were to predominate in the lowest Regions, evil would grow like a weed. There would be anarchy instead of order in the Cosmos. This is prevented by the preponderating power of the force of

*Repulsion in this Region. When a coarse desire form is being attracted to another of the same nature, there is a disharmony in their vibrations, whereby one has a disintegrating effect upon the other. Thus, instead of uniting and amalgamating evil with evil, they act with mutual destructiveness and in that way the evil in the world is kept within reasonable bounds. When we understand the working of the twin forces in this respect we are in a position to understand the occult maxim, "A lie is both murder and suicide in the Desire World." Anything happening in the Physical World is reflected in all the other realms of nature and, as we have seen, builds its appropriate form in the Desire World. When a true account of the occurrence is given, another form is built, exactly like the first. They are then drawn together and coalesce, strengthening each other. If, however, an untrue account is given, a form different from and antagonistic to the first, or true one, is created. As they deal with the same occurrence, they are drawn together, but as their vibrations are different they act upon each other with mutual destructiveness. Therefore, evil and malicious lies can kill anything that is good, if they are strong enough and repeated often enough. But, conversely, seeking for the good in evil will, in time, transmute the evil into good. If the form that is built to minimize the evil is weak, it will have no effect and will be destroyed by the evil form, but if it is strong and frequently repeated it will have the effect of disintegrating the evil and substituting the good. That effect, be it distinctly understood, is not brought about by lying, nor denying the evil, but by looking for the good. The occult scientist practices very rigidly this principle of looking for good in all things, because he knows what a power it possesses in keeping down evil. There is a story of Christ which illustrates this point. Once when walking*

with His disciples they passed the decaying and ill-smelling carcass of a dog. The disciples turned in disgust, commenting upon the nauseating nature of this sight; but Christ looked at the dead body and said "Pearls are not whiter than its teeth." He was determined to find the good, because He knew the beneficial effect which would result in the Desire World from giving it expression. The lowest Region of the Desire World is called "the Region of Passion and Sensual Desire." The second subdivision is best described by the name of "Region of Impressionability." Here the effect of the twin forces of Attraction and Repulsion is evenly balanced. This is a neutral Region, hence all our impressions which are built of the matter of this Region are neutral. Only when the twin feelings, which we shall meet in the fourth Region, are brought to bear, do the twin forces come into play. The mere impression of anything, however, in and of itself, is entirely separate from the feeling it engenders. The impression is neutral and is an activity of the second Region of the Desire World, where pictures are formed by the forces of senseperception in the vital body of man. In the third Region of the Desire World, the force of Attraction – the integrating, upbuilding force – has already gained the upper hand over the force of Repulsion, with its destructive tendency. When we understand that the mainspring in this force of Repulsion is self-assertion, a pushing away of all others that it may have room, we shall understand that it gives way most easily to a desire for other things, so that the substance of the third Region of the Desire World is principally dominated by the force of Attraction towards other things, but in a selfish way, and therefore this is the Region of Wishes. The Region of Coarse Desires may be likened to the solids in the Physical World; the Region of Impressionability to the fluids; and th e fluctuating,

*evanescent nature of the Region of Wishes will make that compare with the gaseous portion of the Physical World. These three Regions give the substance for the forms which make for experience, soul growth and evolution, purging the altogether destructive and retaining the materials which may be used for progress. The fourth Region of the Desire World is the "Region of Feeling." From it comes the feeling concerning the already described forms and upon the feeling engendered by them depends the life which they have for us and also their effect upon us. Whether the objects and ideas presented are good or bad in themselves is not important at this stage. It is our feeling, whether of Interest or Indifference that is the determining factor as to the fate of the object or idea. If the feeling with which we meet an impression of an object or an idea is Interest, it has the same effect upon that impression as sunlight and air have upon a plant. That idea will grow and flourish in our lives. If, on the other hand, we meet an impression or idea with Indifference, it withers as does a plant when put in a dark cellar. Thus from this central Region of the Desire World come the incentive to action, or the decision to refrain therefrom (though the latter is also action in the eyes of the occult scientist), for at the present stage of our development the twin feelings, Interest and Indifference furnish the incentive to action and are the springs that move the world. At a later stage these feelings will cease to have any weight. Then the determining factor will be duty. Interest starts the forces of Attraction or Repulsion. Indifference simply withers the object or idea against which it is directed, so far as our connection with it is concerned. If our interest in an object or an idea generates Repulsion, that naturally causes us to expurgate from our lives any connection with the object or idea which roused it; but there is a great difference between the action of the force of*

*Repulsion and the mere feeling of Indifference. Perhaps an illustration will make more clear the operation of the twin Feelings and the twin Forces. Three men are walking along a road. They see a sick dog; it is covered with sores and is evidently suffering intensely from pain and thirst. This much is evident to all three men – their senses tell them that. Now Feeling comes. Two of them take an “interest” in the animal, but in the third there is a feeling of “indifference.” He passes on, leaving the dog to its fate. The others remain; they are both interested, but each manifests it in a quite different way. The interest of one man is sympathetic and helpful, impelling him to care for the poor beast, to assuage pains and nurse it back to health. In him the feeling of interest has aroused the force of Attraction. The other man's interest is of a different kind. He sees only a loathsome sight which is revolting to him and wishes to rid himself and the world of it as quickly as possible. He advises killing the animal outright and burying it. In him the feeling of interest generates the destructive force of Repulsion. When the feeling of Interest arouses the force of Attraction and it is directed toward low objects and desires, these work themselves out in the lower Regions of the Desire World, where the counteracting force of Repulsion operates, as previously described. From the battle of the twin forces – Attraction and Repulsion – results all the pain and suffering incident to wrongdoing or misdirected effort, whether intentional or otherwise. Thus we may see how very important is the Feeling we have concerning anything, for upon that depends the nature of the atmosphere we create for ourselves. If we love the good, we shall keep and nourish as guardian angels all that is good about us; if the reverse, we shall people our path with demons of our own breeding. The names of the three upper Regions of the Desire World are “Region of Soul-Life,”*

*“Region of Soul-Light,” and “Region of Soul-Power.” In these abide Art, Altruism, Philanthropy, and all the activities of the higher soul-life. When we think of these Regions as radiating the qualities indicated by their names, into the forms of the three lower Regions, we shall understand correctly the higher and lower activities. Soul-power, however, may for a time be used for evil purposes as well as for good, but eventually the force of Repulsion destroys vice and the force of Attraction builds virtue upon its shattered ruins. All things, in the ultimate, work together for GOOD. The Physical and the Desire Worlds are not separated from each other by space. They are “closer than hands and feet.” It is not necessary to move to get from one to the other, nor from one Region to the next. Just as solids, liquids, and gases are all together in our bodies, interpenetrating one another, so are the different Regions of the Desire World within us also. We may again compare the lines of force along which ice-crystals form in water to the invisible causes originating in the Desire World, which appear in the Physical World and give us the incentive to action, in whatever direction it may be. The Desire World, with its innumerable inhabitants, permeates the Physical World, as the lines of force do the water – invisible, but everywhere present and potent as the cause of everything in the Physical World.*

#### THE WORLD OF THOUGHT

*The World of Thought also consists of seven Regions of varying qualities and densities, and, like the Physical World, the World of Thought is divided into two main divisions – the Region of Concrete Thought, comprising the four densest Regions; and the Region of Abstract Thought, comprising the three Regions of finest substance.*

*This World of Thought is the central one of the five Worlds from which man obtains his vehicles. Here spirit and body meet. It is also the highest of the three Worlds in which man's evolution is being carried forward at the present time, the two higher Worlds being practically in abeyance as yet, so far as man is concerned. We know that the materials of the Chemical Region are used in building all physical forms. These forms are given life and the power of motion by the forces at work in the Etheric Region, and some of these living forms are stirred into activity by means of the twin Feelings of the Desire World. The Region of Concrete Thought furnishes the mind-stuff in which ideas generated in the Region of Abstract Thought clothe themselves as thought-forms, to act as regulators and balance wheels upon the impulses engendered in the Desire World by impacts from the phenomenal World. Thus we see how the three Worlds, in which man is at present evolving, complement one another, making a whole that shows forth the Supreme Wisdom of the Great Architect of the system to which we belong, and Whom we reverence by the holy name of God. Taking a more detailed view of the several divisions of the Region of Concrete Thought we find that the archetypes of physical form no matter to what kingdom they may belong, are found in its lowest subdivision, or the "Continental Region." In this Continental Region are also the archetypes of the continents and the isles of the world, and corresponding to these archetypes are they fashioned. Modifications in the crust of the Earth must first be wrought in the Continental Region. Not until the archetypal model has been changed can the Intelligences which we (to hide our ignorance concerning them) call the "Laws of Nature," bring about the physical conditions which alter the physical features of the Earth according to the modifications designed by the Hierarchies in charge of*

*evolution. They plan changes as an architect plans the alteration of a building before the workmen give it concrete expression. In like manner are changes in the flora and fauna due to metamorphoses in their respective archetypes. When we speak of the archetypes of all the different forms in the dense world it must not be thought that these archetypes are merely models in the same sense in which we speak of an object constructed in miniature, or in some material other than that appropriate for its proper and final use. They are not merely likenesses nor models of the forms we see about us, but are creative archetypes; that is, they fashion the forms of the Physical World in their own likeness or likenesses, for often many work together to form one certain species, each archetype giving part of itself to build the required form. The second subdivision of the Region of Concrete Thought is called the "Oceanic Region." It is best described as flowing, pulsating vitality. All the forces that work through the four ethers which constitute the Etheric Region are there seen as archetypes. It is a stream of flowing life, pulsating through all forms, as blood pulsates through the body, the same life in all forms. Here the trained clairvoyant sees how true it is that "all life is one." The "Aerial Region" is the third division of the Region of Concrete Thought. Here we find the archetype of desires, passions, wishes, feelings, and emotions such as we experience in the Desire World. Here all the activities of the Desire World appear as atmospheric conditions. Like the kiss of summer breeze come the feelings of pleasure and joy to the clairvoyant sense; as the sighing of the wind in the tree-tops seem the longings of the soul and like flashes of lightning the passions of warring nations. In this atmosphere of the Region of Concrete Thought are also pictures of the emotions of man and beast. The "Region of Archetypal Forces" is the fourth division of the Region of*

*Concrete Thought. It is the central and most important region in the five Worlds wherein man's entire evolution is carried on. On the one side of this Region are the three higher Regions of the World of Thought, the World of Life Spirit and the World of Divine Spirit. On the other side of this Region of Archetypal Forces are the three lower Regions of the World of Thought, the Desire and the Physical Worlds. Thus this Region becomes a sort of "crux," bounded on one side by the Realms of Spirit, on the other by the Worlds of Form. It is a focusing point, where Spirit reflects itself in matter. As the name implies, this Region is the home of the Archetypal Forces which direct the activity of the archetypes in the Region of Concrete Thought. From this Region Spirit works on matter in a formative manner. Diagram 1 shows the idea in a schematic way, the forms in the lower World being reflections of the Spirit in the higher Worlds. The fifth Region, which is the one nearest to the focusing point on the Spirit side, reflects itself in the third Region, which is nearest the focusing point on the Form side. The sixth Region reflects itself in the second and the seventh reflects itself in the first. The whole of the Region of Abstract thought is reflected in the World of Desire; the World of Life Spirit in the Etheric Region of the Physical World; and the World of Divine Spirit in the Chemical Region of the Physical World. Diagram 2 will give a comprehensive idea of the seven Worlds which are the sphere of our development, but we must carefully keep in mind that these Worlds are not placed one above another, as shown in the diagram. They interpenetrate – that is to say, that as in the case where the relation of the Physical World and the Desire World was compared, where we likened the Desire World to the lines of force in freezing water and the water itself to the Physical World, in the same way we may think*

of the lines of force as being any of the seven Worlds, and the water, as in our illustration, would correspond to the next denser World in the scale. Another illustration may perhaps make the subject clearer. Let us use a spherical sponge to represent the dense earth – the Chemical Region. Imagine that sand permeates every part of the sponge and also forms a layer outside the sponge. Let the sand represent the Etheric Region, which in a similar manner permeates the dense earth and extends beyond its atmosphere. Let us further imagine this sponge and sand immersed in a spherical glass vessel filled with clear water, and a little larger than the sponge and sand. We place the sponge and sand in the center of the vessel as the yolk is placed in the center of an egg. We have now a space of clear water between the sand and the vessel. The water as a whole will represent the Desire World, for just as the water percolates between the grains of sand, through every pore of the sponge, and forms that clear layer, so the Desire World permeates both the dense Earth and the ether and extends beyond both of these substances. We know there is air in water, and if we think of the air in the water (in our illustration), as representing the World of Thought, we shall have a fair mental picture of the way in which the World of Thought, being finer and more subtle, interpenetrates the two denser Worlds. Finally, imagine that the vessel containing the sponge, sand and water is placed in the center of a large spherical vessel; then the air in the space between the two vessels would represent that part of the World of Thought which extends beyond the Desire World. Each of the planets in our solar system has three such interpenetrating Worlds, and if we think of each of the planets consisting of three Worlds as being individual sponges, and of the fourth World, the World of Life Spirit, as being the water in a large vessel where these

*threefold separate sponges swim, we shall understand that as the water in the vessel fills the space between the sponges and percolates through them, so the World of Life Spirit pervades interplanetary space and interpenetrates the individual planets. It forms a common bond between them, so that as it is necessary to have a boat and be able to control it, if we wish to sail from America to Africa, so it is necessary to have a vehicle correlated to the World of Life Spirit under our conscious control in order to be able to travel from one planet to another. In a manner similar to that in which the World of Life Spirit correlates us to the other planets in our own solar system does the World of Divine Spirit correlate us to the other solar systems. We may regard the solar systems as separate sponges, swimming in a World of Divine Spirit, and thus it will be apparent that in order to travel from one solar system to another it would be necessary to be able to function consciously in the highest vehicle of man, the Divine Spirit."*

*The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception, By Max Heindel, The Rosicrucian Fellowship, Oceanside, CA and England, 1909, L.N. Fowler & Co., Ltd., London*

My spirit was gathered with five other souls to bring statues of St. Francis, the Child Jesus and four others to a shrine in New Mexico, and then light them up. We were to do this in the ethers at night to keep the shrine alive.

The Shrine was dedicated to a female saint and silent Monks lived within its walls. I did not know where this special place might be in the physical worlds.

It was important to come into the shrine very quietly at night as the monks who lived there would get very upset if we were loud. We went back throughout the night every few days or so bringing back and lighting up the statues in the ethereal realms.

On a sojourn to the shrine, one of our members had been accidentally left behind. The other members of our spirit group wished to leave her behind, but I refused to let them do this. Planning a rescue, we got there in what seemed like an hours time. But in the time we had been gone, she and the monks had been working to install a beautiful new shrine to the saint of whom I still could not discern.

They had installed a beautiful statue of this young saint, a girl who was in dancing posture with red lights all around her and the room; like stars in a night sky. Her her blue dress was half a length long, being halfway down her calves, and there were gold stars on it. There was a white cowl at the top of the dress and her hair was mid shoulder, a deep brown. She looked towards heaven, her arms were up and out, and only one foot touched the ground as she was portrayed as dancing.

Turning to our spiritual partner who had been left behind, I asked, "How long have you been here?" She quietly replied, "Twenty One days."

We looked at her accomplishments in awe and all tarried in the question of how this could have been done in what seemed like an hour.

After our work in trying to help[ with the preservation of a shrine, the six of us were asked to show our special retreat places in the stars to a group of souls who wanted to film and preserve them.

We all had these beautiful cavernous apartments which all shared a common thread in that the hallways were created out of rivers and they all led to a beautiful master bedroom, which denoted the launch pad for souls like these.

The apartments were also at the very top of high rise buildings, and this was somehow a necessary part of their function. Most of the apartments were done in a wilderness type theme with the exception of one spirits launch pad which had solemn tones of white and tan shielding a very simple design.

Some of the apartments had half an acre yards of which you could not see the end of; traversing into wilderness or meadows. There was a holographic nature to them.

You could not hear anything, or any other people, when you were inside the cavernous launch pad units.

My launch pad was not shown, as it had been erased. It was secret.

*“Then he said, “Now you may go home and make your preparations for leaving. You are not to take anything with*

*you, only leave everything in order. Do not tell anyone about it, for a journey to the High Places needs to be a secret matter. I cannot now give you the exact time when we are to start for the mountains, but it will be soon, and you must be ready to follow me whenever I come to the cottage and call. I will give you a secret sign. I shall sing one of the Shepherd's songs as I pass the cottage, and it will contain a special message for you. When you hear it, come at once and follow me to the trysting place."*

*Hinds Feet on High Places, Hannah Hurnard, Living Books, Tyndale House Publishers, 1975, Wheaton, Illinois, USA*

Suddenly, without warning, my spirit leapt through a series of mazes. There was a man helping me to get through them. And once I did, he turned into a woman.

Huge apocalypses occurred all around me, a high rise building was falling into the river. Everything had turned gray; lightning, thunder . . . all became a stormy thought form.

All I had with me was a bike, and I had to get back to my launch pad in order to work on the energies of these cataclysmic events. I was exhausted and unsure I could make it.

And suddenly, I was back, I was there at the launch pad. But only for a moment as my soul was swept into an ancient mansion which would hold secrets I had not yet fathomed.

In the old house which appeared to have been built sometime in the 1800's and yet remodeled several times in the 1900's (probably in the 1930's and the 1980's based on décor) I was wandering quietly through the dark rooms observing that the bedrooms were of many different colors.

It seemed so empty, I doubted that there was anything here for me to do. So I began looking for the exit so that I might tarry elsewhere.

But then it started . . . one soul materialized, then two, then three . . . they came in spurts. So, I thought I was alone in the house before the ghosts of many people began to appear.

Each one was so polite I was a bit shocked, because usually when I go into purgatories, I anticipate being abused a bit before the work is done. But these were really good people; kind, charitable, thoughtful, and they were so well-mannered.

One was talking about her shampoo, she really loved her 'Vidal Sassoon,' and I knew she had been here since about the 1980's. She continued to wash her hair over and over and over again.

Another woman was quietly cleaning up her kitchen . . . over and over and over again.

There was one exception to the good behavior, but it was a little old lady who had suffered from dementia when she neared her death. She was in a very tiny

bedroom in a dark blue. Repeating to herself over and over and over again, "Nothing ever works out, nothing ever works out."

As it unraveled, people began penetrating and becoming visible by the tens and then hundreds. I'd say that in the end there about 300 souls in the mansion. It started with the one person, and then I'd start seeing more and more people.

There were a bunch of men who were working on large and heavy equipment, there were cowboys who had obviously been there at least 150 years. There was a singular woman from Jamaica in her early thirties. Everyone else was white, some of them had matted down hair in the style I would expect in the 1930's.

At first, I thought they were all from the same family, but then as more and more appeared, I didn't think so anymore.

The mansion was unkempt. Necessary maintenance had not been done. The spirits were abuzz with conversation, with one another and with me. There were holes in some of the floorboards, you could actually fall through them if you weren't careful. And there had been a huge fire.

The people from these parts told me that after the fire, the families had abandoned the house because it was beyond repair. But some of these places were being worked on by groups of men who appeared to be from the early 1900's. Others who were in less

favorable parts of the mansion knew nothing of such works.

But there was a huge portion of the mansion which had been through an unfathomably huge fire, those rooms were uninhabitable even to the spirits.

The spirits told me, "So they had to let the place go (sell it or abandon it) because there was not enough money to restore it after the fire and you could fall through the floor."

Watching these souls, I noticed that they were each doing something specific in a cyclic fashion over and over and over again. There was no room for movement forward. But they were kind and polite to me and to one another. These were very good people.

But these were good people who had never had God in their life.

In this 'Limbo of the Lost', God was absolutely absent. Without God, there is no movement forward, they could not progress. God IS movement.

They were stagnant, vaporous and I cannot even muster the words which would be required to describe the level of tragedy I felt for these souls in this moment.

And thence the darkness which carried a continuous gray, smoky, hazy, icky feeling . . .

There was a young man who was chipping off the ice over and over and over again on one corner of the mansion.

Other women and men stood gaily in the ballroom experiencing a lovely dance . . . over and over and over again.

A baby, thought to have been put in a crib, had actually been put in a bathtub and submerged. She seemed to have died, but I pulled her out and she lived. It seemed to be a reference to the life inherently contained within Baptism, but it was mysterious and bold.

'Limbo of the Lost?' This seemed to be a place where good souls, really good people, very kind, polite, caring - not scary at all, went. They had never been interested in God, in death, they remained in a very circular pattern which was quite the same as what they had done in life. Just kept doing the same things over and over and over again.

It felt overwhelming, how could we possibly help so many in such a pointless situation? But then Mary descended, it was Christmas Eve. "You and I will go into this limbo tomorrow, and release them." She said. We will offer them 'The Office of the Dead.'"

Pointing to the exit of this odd purgatorial realm, I saw that the only way to exit required each soul to go through a 'Christ Room,' which was heavenly laden with art and images of Our Lord. In going through

this room, God would enter into their souls and they would have that switch turned back on which would allow for forward movement. That switch was the presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit within them and it was literally a darkness which nothing else could fill.

Bowing to the Blessed Virgin, I took two souls with me through the Christ Room, and as we exited the mansion, we were gathered into a small rowboat with other souls leaving this hallowed Christmas Eve.

A young girl sat in front of me. As she began speaking and telling stories of redemption, she said, "You are a mother to souls. You must bring the souls of the children to birth." I was a mother, but not of these. It was an ethereal thing . . .

The boat began moving downstream, the little girl continued to speak. "I never lost a moment," she said, "because I never walked without God. These souls had many moments which remained empty because they never walked with God."

Turning to my side, there was now a bulletin board in the boat with news clippings of the Dalai Lama's from throughout time. For a moment, I remembered the holiness of the moment when I was given to touch the gilded casket held within the initiatory portals in the mystical dimension years ago and how I had bowed in such honor.

And then a thunderous crashing sound occurred as I saw a giant golden foot step into the water. Looking upwards, the Golden Buddha soared about 300 meters high, standing in the river waters. Suddenly, the Buddha lost his footing and began to fall creating a massive swell in the riverbed. As his entire body submerged underneath the waters, one golden hand came above and rested in its slumber. The rest of his body was submerged.

An interior locution was offered to me indicating that this meant that the Buddha had given a hand in salvation, but his teachings were not the body of salvation.

Holding tight to the few we had gotten out tonight, I prepared to return and to do the Office of the Dead. In Mary's demeanor, I knew inherently of the importance of praying for the souls of those who have passed. And I was in awe of her mercy and desire to empty out the Limbo of the Lost I had wandered into this night.

I began to pray the Office of the Dead . . .

*"Catholic tradition has defended the existence of the limbus patrum as a temporary state or place of happiness distinct from Purgatory."*

*Patrick Toner, (1910). Limbo. The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company, Volume 9*

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## A Vision of Color – The Movement of God

Returning after a night and day of prayer with the Office of the Dead, my spirit was returned to the Limbo of the Lost with the Blessed Mary in order that we might get to work on the underlying problems of the realm and those who inhabited it.

There was a basic foundational problem in this dreary mansion. Part of the building was hanging over the river and looked as if it could fall into the water at any moment.

But we focused on those things which we could change, and in essence, we started painting everything in, around, outside of the mansion and did so in the brightest of colors. We were painting with our minds and hearts, not with paint brushes. Where there was dead wood, we replaced it with new. Where water had come in and flood, dried it out and rebuilt it. Where the grass was dead, we enlivened it with thought and green in its fullest color. It was as if things were going from black and white to color. But yet, the foundational problem was not something we could fix, and I retained concern about this issue. Because the lack of the presence of God in life, is a foundational problem.

*“In the Pythagorean tetractys--the supreme symbol of universal forces and processes--are set forth the theories of the Greeks concerning color and music. The first three dots represent the threefold White Light, which is the Godhead containing potentially all sound and color. The remaining seven dots are the colors of the spectrum and the notes of the musical scale. The colors and tones are the active creative powers which, emanating from the First Cause, establish the universe. The seven are divided into two groups, one containing three powers and the other four a relationship also shown in the tetractys. The higher group--that of three--becomes the spiritual nature of the created universe; the lower group--that of four--manifests as the irrational sphere, or inferior world.”*

*The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall, the Pythagorean Theory of Music and Color, 1928*

As the house was changing color to a bright pink, I looked at all we had done just by projecting brighter, happier thoughts into the this limbo. Horses were now stabled in a beautiful blue barn with white trim. There were playhouses which erupted in a sunny yellow, even though I don't recall seeing any children there to play in them.

The foundation was not something I was given to solve, but everything else had been redone to reflect a joy and colorfulness which permeated the soul's of the lost who remained here. Frowns became smiles, dimness became light, a languid sorrow became a playful joy.

So our reciting of the Office of the Dead had opened a pathway within them to embrace this energizing, this enlivenment, this vibrational surge into their realm.

The edge of the mansion, of this limbo, still dangled over the river with nothing to support it. But everything else had been rethought into full color.

It was not given me to do more yet at this time; but I enjoyed seeing the once sullen and hopeless faces which had been circling in repetitive patterns now smiling with an interior joy and happiness previously unseen in this place. And the inhabitants were now thinking new thoughts, creating new ideas, bringing forward happiness . . . and thus, it was my time to traverse elsewhere.

In an instant, my spirit had been transported into what was almost like a blacked out hotel skyscraper.

This purgatorial realm was a place of aloneness. Souls were all sitting alone in the darkness unable to reach out or speak to anybody else there, even though they could see that they were there. I was not given to speak to them, but rather sent to yet another realm.

Suddenly standing in a high-rise office building, there was a woman sitting behind a desk of high position. Several underlings were sitting before her desk. Pictures were on the wall which had written in exquisite detail her misdeeds. She had been given power over others in her earthly life, and had misused it.

Ordering the others to cover up the pictures, she manifested various random images which had no words upon them, but rather, with plain images. It was done without anyone saying a word in dispute.

She continued to boss the others around in a merry go round of pointless pursuit of inherent worth; a worth she would never find until she embraced the humility which she would find when someday she had the courage to remove the false images and read of the deeds she had done for her own gain rather than utilizing the gifts God had given her for the betterment of all.

But again, I was not given any power to assist, just to observe.

Taken yet to another place, I saw a soul who had been given all God's gifts in her life to finally end her cycle of reconstructions into the material plane. She could have served an eternal function had she accepted the gifts with gratitude rather than arrogance. But she had not, a formerly chosen soul who had fallen from grace, she was . . .

A sad sight indeed, until I saw what could only make it more ugly.

The fallen soul had taken into her alignment two other souls who were chosen yet above and beyond herself. They were greater than she could ever have been. But she had deceived them through their youth and naivete and brought them into her fold.

Her artifice was so complete, that these souls who had once been under my care, would no longer hear me.

This was a serious sin in the eyes of God. I could only bow my head. In an instant, I looked behind me . . .

There he was, the plant that had been placed within one of the chosen soul's paths. He was a good guy, a good person, did good things with his life. But he didn't believe in God. In fact, there was almost a hatred of God within his soul so perfunctory that it emanated from him very quietly so that only a mystic could hear. For a mystic, however, it was loud, dark, black and foul.

Without even his own knowledge, he'd been deceived into luring one of these chosen souls off of her path. And it had worked. She was now willing to give up everything God had given her for what amounted in the eternal sense to 'nothing.'

But I couldn't help them anymore, they were gone. They could yet save themselves, if they would choose to do so, but I could no longer intervene.

My mother and father were now waiting for me in one of the homes we lived in when we were growing up. There was a record player in the room and I went over to it almost instinctually. I saw a playlist of songs and music yet to be written or played, and instinctively began to record everything I saw onto

the record. My mother pointed out the piccolo I had recently acquired along with other instruments, many of them exotic and said, "You should continue this path." In this moment, I knew there was purpose to all that was coming to pass with my experimentation with sound and tone.

Another young man entered the room. He had drawn a perfect image of my mother; a line drawing which depicted her as one would see her had they known her as she lived upon the earth.

But I turned around and realized I, too, had been doing my own artwork on my mother. There was a lot of fuchsia and pink in it, very modern art, it was . . . abstract. I had painted my mother's psychedelic self, her multidimensional being.

We compared our works, both were extremely accurate, but we chuckled at how we were given the gift to see entirely different aspects of who she had been, who she was now, and who she would always be.

"The story of a woman is a thing to behold." He said quietly, as I smiled in acknowledgement of its truth.

My spirit was suddenly plummeted into the spirit of Mary, after she stepped out of my ethereal form, she turned around and looked at me. I felt her at the core of my being. And then . . .

St. James appeared, his coming so honorable that I could only mark his dreary robe which had so many holes in it which had been patched up. He said something, but I was so entranced by his coming, I couldn't recall his words.

Insistent, he shook my shoulders and repeated his words, telling me I must remember them and bring them back to the physical realm.

But again, I was still processing the fact that it was St. James who stood before me. This happened a few more times, until the sixth time, I really focused on his words and prepared to write them down.

"The Support of Faith  
Is the Pillar of Life  
The Support of the Soul  
Is the Pillar of Freedom"  
St. James

Mary and St. James remained quietly.

I was sitting in a circle of sound. There was a bass sound that was reminiscent of a certain tone I had heard coming from my Russian Bayan. A lithe little spirit, like a faerie, appeared over my eyes and said, "This sound keeps the 'wild animals' away." Inherently, I knew the 'wild animals' were the untamed spirits, the souls in the purgatories and lower realms who had not banished the chaos from their peace.

Fascinated by this, I took note that this sound had a prayerful purpose, but it also had energetic alteration capability.

The faerie acknowledged how difficult it was to set up such a circle, and that I had worked very hard to create this circle of protection. "The circle of protection," she said, "is called an 'Ocarina.'" I almost gasped in shock as I had just begun to play the Ocarina, one of the oldest flutes in the world - an ancient wind musical instrument. The Ocarina had a very lithe and timbrous tone. It was a medieval sound, because it was an original sound, conceived from honing holes in the body of nut casings millennia ago. It was a high pitched twill, that apparently also held protective, energetic significance.

My circle of sound was called an 'Ocarina.' Now I had two tones which I knew had protective qualities to souls upon the earth, which could set up a circle of protection from all these invasions from 'wild animals' that were causing the fall of many souls, even the chosen ones.

Remembering the liturgies of the church, it occurred to me that they were prayed with both words and chant, in tones . . . I realized that the liturgical music utilized tones to bring the earthbound soul into a higher frequency of sound and light which could eventually accelerate its vibration and that a single tone could have significant hidden energetic impetus.

*"Harmony is the manifesting expression of the Will of the eternal Good . . . The most sublime but least known of all the Pythagorean speculations was that of sidereal harmonics. It was said that of all men only Pythagoras heard the music of the spheres. Apparently the Chaldeans were the first people to conceive of the heavenly bodies joining in a cosmic chant as they moved in stately manner across the sky. Job describes a time "when the stars of the morning sang together," and in The Merchant of Venice the author of the Shakesperian plays writes: "There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st but in his motion like an angel sings."*

*The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall, the Pythagorean Theory of Music and Color, 1928*

*"Pythagoras conceived the universe to be an immense monochord, with its single string connected at its upper end to absolute spirit and at its lower end to absolute matter--in other words, a cord stretched between heaven and earth. Counting inward from the circumference of the heavens, Pythagoras, according to some authorities, divided the universe into nine parts; according to others, into twelve parts. The twelvefold system was as follows: The first division was called the empyrean, or the sphere of the fixed stars, and was the dwelling place of the immortals. The second to twelfth divisions were (in order) the spheres of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury, and the moon, and fire, air, water, and earth. This arrangement of the seven planets (the sun and moon being regarded as planets in the old astronomy) is identical with the candlestick symbolism of the Jews--the sun in the center as the main stem with three planets on either side of it.*

*The names given by the Pythagoreans to the various notes of the diatonic scale were, according to Macrobius, derived from an estimation of the velocity and magnitude of the planetary bodies. Each of these gigantic spheres as it rushed endlessly through space was believed to sound a certain tone caused by its continuous displacement of the æthereal diffusion. As these tones were a manifestation of divine order and motion, it must necessarily follow that they partook of the harmony of their own source. "The assertion that the planets in their revolutions round the earth uttered certain sounds differing according to their respective 'magnitude, celerity and local distance,' was commonly made by the Greeks. Thus Saturn, the farthest planet, was said to give the gravest note, while the Moon, which is the nearest, gave the sharpest. 'These sounds of the seven planets, and the sphere of the fixed stars, together with that above us [Antichthon], are the nine Muses, and their joint symphony is called Mnemosyne.'" (See The Canon.) This quotation contains an obscure reference to the ninefold division of the universe previously mentioned.*

*The Greek initiates also recognized a fundamental relationship between the individual heavens or spheres of the seven planets, and the seven sacred vowels. The first heaven uttered the sound of the sacred vowel A (Alpha); the second heaven, the sacred vowel E (Epsilon); the third, H (Eta); the fourth, I (Iota); the fifth, O (Omicron); the sixth, Y (Upsilon); and the seventh heaven, the sacred vowel Ω (Omega). When these seven heavens sing together they produce a perfect harmony which ascends as an everlasting praise to the throne of the Creator. (See Irenæus' Against Heresies.) Although not so stated, it is probable that the planetary heavens are to be considered as ascending in the*

*Pythagorean order, beginning with the sphere of the moon, which would be the first heaven.*

*Many early instruments had seven Strings, and it is generally conceded that Pythagoras was the one who added the eighth string to the lyre of Terpander. The seven strings were always related both to their correspondences in the human body and to the planets. The names of God were also conceived to be formed from combinations of the seven planetary harmonies. The Egyptians confined their sacred songs to the seven primary sounds, forbidding any others to be uttered in their temples. One of their hymns contained the following invocation: "The seven sounding tones praise Thee, the Great God, the ceaseless working Father of the whole universe." In another the Deity describes Himself thus: "I am the great indestructible lyre of the whole world, attuning the songs of the heavens. (See Nauman's History of Music.)*

*The Pythagoreans believed that everything which existed had a voice and that all creatures were eternally singing the praise of the Creator. Man fails to hear these divine melodies because his soul is enmeshed in the illusion of material existence. When he liberates himself from the bondage of the lower world with its sense limitations, the music of the spheres will again be audible as it was in the Golden Age. Harmony recognizes harmony, and when the human soul regains its true estate it will not only hear the celestial choir but also join with it in an everlasting anthem of praise to that Eternal Good controlling the infinite number of parts and conditions of Being.*

*The Greek Mysteries included in their doctrines a magnificent concept of the relationship existing between*

*music and form. The elements of architecture, for example, were considered as comparable to musical modes and notes, or as having a musical counterpart. Consequently when a building was erected in which a number of these elements were combined, the structure was then likened to a musical chord, which was harmonic only when it fully satisfied the mathematical requirements of harmonic intervals. The realization of this analogy between sound and form led Goethe to declare that "architecture is crystallized music."*

*In constructing their temples of initiation, the early priests frequently demonstrated their superior knowledge of the principles underlying the phenomena known as vibration. A considerable part of the Mystery rituals consisted of invocations and intonements, for which purpose special sound chambers were constructed. A word whispered in one of these apartments was so intensified that the reverberations made the entire building sway and be filled with a deafening roar. The very wood and stone used in the erection of these sacred buildings eventually became so thoroughly permeated with the sound vibrations of the religious ceremonies that when struck they would reproduce the same tones thus repeatedly impressed into their substances by the rituals.*

*Every element in Nature has its individual keynote. If these elements are combined in a composite structure the result is a chord that, if sounded, will disintegrate the compound into its integral parts. Likewise each individual has a keynote that, if sounded, will destroy him. The allegory of the walls of Jericho falling when the trumpets of Israel were sounded is undoubtedly intended to set forth the arcane significance of individual keynote or vibration . . . In the Pythagorean concept of the music of the spheres, the*

*interval between the earth and the sphere of the fixed stars was considered to be a diapason--the most perfect harmonic interval. "*

*The Secret Teachings of All Ages, Manly P. Hall, the Pythagorean Theory of Music and Color, 1928*

Outside my circle of protection, I was suddenly given to notice that something was going on. Some very official looking people had gone into the woods to find some extraterrestrials that they believed had fled from among them. But I was guided by the faerie to look at my feet.

At my feet were two beings who looked like a mix between a mouse and a hamster. One was brown and white, the other was pink and white and told me his name was 'Fameron.' They spoke to me in perfect English, telling me that they lived and nested in fluids on their home planet, and that was one thing that made them different from similar species on our earth who usually lived and nested in wooden chips.

Fameron motioned for me to follow him, and I ran after him with glee as he was so cute and adorable. I couldn't help thinking how funny it was that the others had gone into the forest to find the extraterrestrials primarily because they did not expect them to be so small and look like hamsters.

Fameron led me to a small cove below the earth wherein I immediately saw about sixteen archives, rusty colored reels which contained within them

something of great importance that Fameron expected me to save and resurrect.

“The world of delay asks your pardon.” Fameron said. Suddenly, I understood what he was trying to get across. There were so many souls in need of prayer, of help, of guidance, of vibration . . . but they could not achieve that of themselves. The world of delay, wherein these archives had come, knew that there could be no further delay in resurrecting the Record of the Books of God.

Blessed Mary and St. James still stood silently by my circle as I picked up an archive and held it in my hand. It was rusty as if it had taken many aeons to get them here safely into my care. But they weren't mine, they belonged to the ages.

As they stood there, and Fameron waited on all fours for me to take them from his hands, to take this torch, so to speak . . . I instantly just understood. Grasping hold of the archives, the reality around me began to swirl as if a mirage of wind undulating within the sands of time.

The winds picked me up into their torrential and circular flow. Within moments, my spirit was dropped at a place of pilgrimage. That place of pilgrimage was my own cell, my launch pad, my bedroom . . . the Record of the Books of God fell open before me as I began to pray the words. The ancients had received them, and modern man had rejected them.

A force held me fast in a position of steady prayer; the prayers for the sick, the dying and the dead hadn't been lost, just forgotten by too many. It became evidently clear to my spirit how powerful these prayers were - a single focused soul praying in a holy manner - for those who were in need of them.

Although it had seemed that I was alone when arriving here at my holy place of prayer, souls began to manifest in and out of reality all around me, tens, then hundreds, then thousands . . . several began coming forward.

Those souls who came forward were ready to receive a singular grace, that of focus.

And for each one who came forward to receive that grace, a deep blue rose would fall upon my singularly white garment like medal of honor, or a triumphant hymn of praise.

Before long, the beautiful deep blue roses were showering upon me. I saw the movement within the multitudes of souls. Some were coming forward, and receiving focus, moving onward. Others were stirring, although yet unready to gather.

And in that moment, I realized that the 'movement' had been restored. And I also realized that praying - in a holy and focused manner - from the Record of the Books of God, was the manner in which it had been revived.

These were the ancient Western Books of the Dead, the Divine Liturgy . . . Catholic Funerary Texts, the Office of the Dead, and the Prayers for the sick, the dying and funereal.

St. Paul said, that to pray for the dead is a good thing. Blessed Mary had shown us why, for as Co-Redemptrix and Mother to Our Beloved Lord, she IS the Limb. Prayer is also the limb, because this is how we reach for her hand. Tone is also the limb because it transports our consciousness elsewhere, to a mystical world.

Focus is the means by which souls may attain forward and on towards salvation. Knowing, loving and serving God provides the movement, for all things move only in Him, with Him, for Him or through Him.

We end with prayers to lead you into service. For the Mystical Body of Christ consists not only of the living, but of the dead.

*“The Church came into being when Christ died on the Cross, but it was formally inaugurated on Pentecost, when He sent the Holy Spirit as He had promised. St. Paul speaks of all Christians as members of Christ, so that with Him, they form one Mystical Body (Cf. 1 Cor 12:12-31; Col 1:18; 2:18-20; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19; 4:13) . . . The Church, the Mystical Body, exists on this earth, and is called the Church militant, because its members struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. The Church suffering means the souls in Purgatory. The Church triumphant is the Church in heaven. The unity and cooperation of the*

*members of the Church on earth, in Purgatory, in Heaven is also called the Communion of Saints."*

*The Basic Catholic Catechism, PART FIVE: The Apostles' Creed IX-XII,  
Ninth Article: "The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints",  
William G. Most, 1990*

*"My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love Thee! I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love Thee . . . Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy."*

*Prayers from Fatima*

*"PRAISES*

*Here are begun the Praises which the most blessed Father Francis composed; and he said them at all the Hours of the day and night and before the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, beginning thus: "Our Father, most holy, who art in heaven," etc., with "Glory be to the Father." Then the Praises, Holy, Holy, etc., are to be said.*

*Our Father, most holy, our Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter.*

*Who art in heaven, in the angels and in the saints illuminating them unto knowledge, for Thou, O Lord, art light; inflaming them unto love, for Thou, O Lord, art Love; dwelling in them and filling them with blessedness, for Thou, O Lord, art the highest Good, the eternal Good from whom is all good and without whom is no good.*

*Hallowed be Thy Name: may Thy knowledge shine in us that we may know the breadth of Thy benefits, the length of*

*Thy promises, the height of Thy majesty, and the depth of Thy judgments.*

*Thy Kingdom come, that Thou mayest reign in us by grace and mayest make us come to Thy Kingdom, where there is the clear vision of Thee, the perfect love of Thee, the blessed company of Thee, the eternal enjoyment of Thee.*

*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that we may love Thee with the whole heart by always thinking of Thee; with the whole soul by always desiring Thee; with the whole mind by directing all our intentions to Thee and seeking Thy honor in all things and with all our strength, by spending all the powers and senses of body and soul in the service of Thy love and not in anything else; and that we may love our neighbors even as ourselves, drawing to the best of our power all to Thy love; rejoicing in the good of others as in our own and compassionating [them] in troubles and giving offence to no one.*

*Give us this day, through memory and understanding and reverence for the love which He had for us and for those things which He said, did, and suffered, for us, – our daily bread, Thy Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*And forgive us our trespasses, by Thy ineffable mercy in virtue of the Passion of Thy Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the merits and intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary and of all Thy elect.*

*As we forgive their that trespass against us, and what we do not fully forgive, do Thou, O Lord, make us fully forgive, that for Thy sake we may truly love our enemies and devoutly intercede for them with Thee; that we may*

*render no evil for evil, but in Thee may strive to do good to all.*

*And lead us not into temptation, hidden or visible, sudden or continuous.*

*But deliver us from evil, past, present, and to come. Amen. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.*

**St. Francis of Assisi**

*“Knock,  
And He’ll open the door.  
Vanish,  
And He’ll make you shine like the sun.  
Fall,  
And He’ll raise you to the heavens.  
Become nothing,  
And He will turn you into everything!”*

**Rumi**

*“In the solitude and silence of the wilderness..., for their labor in the contest, God gives his athletes the reward they desire: a peace that the world does not know and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

**St. Bruno, Founder of the Carthusian Order**

# The Western Book of the Dead

Or the Record of the Books of God  
Edited and Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

*From the Roman Breviary Reformed by Order of the Holy Ecumenical Council of Trent, Published by Order of Pope St. Pius V and Revised By Clement VIII, Urban VIII and Leo XIII Together with the Offices Since Granted and the Martyrology, 1908, with notes on Recent Councils from iBreviary, Edited for the Catholic Funerary Rituals and the Office of the Dead by Marilyn Hughes, 2017*



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“O God, Whose property is always to have mercy and to spare, we humbly beseech Thee for the soul of Thy servant N..., which Thou hast this day commanded to depart out of this world, that Thou wouldst not deliver it into the hands of the enemy, nor forget it unto the end, but wouldst command it to be received by the Holy Angels, and conducted to Paradise, its true country; that as in Thee it hath hoped and believed, it may not suffer the pains of hell, but may take possession of eternal joys. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

A Prayer to Say on the Day of Someone’s Death or Burial,  
Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Image, New  
York, 2007 USCCB

Key

- + - This Means to Make the Sign of the Cross (In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit)
- For the Priest or Presider
- \* - For the Congregation, also Used as a Guide for Multiple Readers
- E.T. – To be Said at Easter Time



## RITE FOR EMERGENCIES

Note: An (L) indicates that a text is also provided in Latin, after the English.

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### INTRODUCTION

259. There are extreme circumstances in which not even the continuous rite can be celebrated. These occur when the danger of death from injury or illness is sudden and unexpected or when the priest is not called to exercise his ministry until the person is at the point of death.

260. In such a situation of emergency the priest should offer every possible ministry of the Church as reverently and expeditiously as he can. He may be able to provide only the barest minimum of sacramental rites and forms of prayer, but even then he should add other appropriate prayers to help the dying person and those who may be present.

261. If the dying person wishes, the sacrament of penance is celebrated first. If necessary, the confession may be generic. Because of the emergency situation, Viaticum follows immediately. Christians in danger of death are bound by the precept to receive communion. If there is still sufficient time, the Anointing of the Sick may then be celebrated. The brief rite which follows has been provided for the celebration of these sacraments in such a situation. The priest should judge, in light of the particular circumstances, how much or how little of this rite is possible.

262. After the celebration of the abbreviated rite for emergencies, the priest should continue in prayer with the dying person, if possible, and with the family and friends,

as suggested in the “Commendation of the Dying”. When death has occurred, some of the prayers suggested at the end of the “Commendation of the Dying” may be said with the family and friends.

263 When a priest has been called to attend a person who is already dead, he is not to administer the sacrament of anointing. Instead, he should pray for the dead person, asking that God forgive his or her sins and graciously receive him or her into the kingdom. It is appropriate that he lead the family and friends, if they are present, in some of the prayers suggested at the end of the “Commendation of the Dying,” as already mentioned. Sometimes the priest may find it necessary to explain to the family of the person who has died that sacraments are celebrated for the living, not for the dead, and that the dead are effectively helped by the prayers of the living.

If the priest has reason to believe that the person is still living, he may anoint him or her conditionally with the words: “If life is in you:...”

#### SACRAMENT of PENANCE

264. If the sick person so wishes, the sacrament of penance is celebrated; in case of necessity, the confession may be generic.

The priest extends his hands over the penitent’s head (or at least extends his right hand) and says:

God, the Father of mercies,  
 through the death and resurrection of his Son  
 has reconciled the world to himself  
 and sent the Holy Spirit among us  
 for the forgiveness of sins;

through the ministry of the Church  
 may God give you pardon and peace,  
 and I absolve you from your sins  
 in the name of the Father, and of the Son, +  
 and of the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Deus, Pater misericordiárum,  
 qui per mortem et resurrecti6nem Fílii sui  
 mundum sibi reconciliávit  
 et Spíritum Sanctum effúdit in remissi6nem peccatórum,  
 per ministérium Ecclesiæ indulgéntiam tibi tríbuat et  
 pacem.  
 Et ego te absólvo a peccátis tuis  
 in nómine Patris et Fílii + et Spíritus Sancti.  
 R. Amen.]

#### APOSTOLIC PARDON

265. The priest may give the apostolic pardon for the dying:

Through the holy mysteries of our redemption,  
 may almighty God release you from all punishments  
 in this life and in the life to come.

May he open to you the gates of paradise  
 and welcome you to everlasting joy.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Per sancrosáncta humánæ reparati6nis mystéria,  
 remíttat tibi omnipotens Deus

omnes præsentis et futúre vitæ pœnas,  
 paradísi portas apériat  
 et ad gáudia te sempitérna perdúcat.  
 R. Amen.]

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

266. The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught us to call God our Father,  
 and so we have the courage to say:

All say:

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.

## COMMUNION as VIATICUM

267. The priest goes to the sick person and, showing the  
 blessed sacrament, says:

The body of Christ.

The sick person answers: Amen.

Then the priest says:

The blood of Christ.

The sick person answers: Amen.

Immediately, or after giving Communion to the sick person, the priest adds the form for viaticum:

May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you  
and lead you to eternal life.

R. Amen.

Others present who wish to receive Communion then do so in the usual way.

#### PRAYER before ANOINTING

268. The priest says

Let us ask the Lord to come our brother/sister N. with his merciful love, and grant him/her relief through this holy anointing. In faith we pray:

R. Lord hear our prayer.

#### ANOINTING

(If the oil is not blessed, the priest blesses it, saying:

Bless, + Lord, your gift of oil  
and our brother/sister N.,  
that it may bring him/her relief.

[Latin:

Benedic, + Dómine, hanc Ólei creatúram  
et ipsum étiam infirmum (ipsam étiam infirmam)  
qui (quæ) hoc leniménto perúngitur. ])

269. The priest anoints the sick person with blessed oil. [If the priest is anointing the sick person conditionally, the sacramental form is introduced with the words: If life is in you:]

First, he anoints the forehead, saying

Through this holy anointing  
may the Lord in his love and mercy help you  
with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

[Latin:

Per istam sanctam Unctiónem  
et suam piíssimam misericórdiam,  
ádiuuet te Dóminus grátia Spíritus Sancti. R. Amen.]

Then he anoints the hands, saying:

May the Lord who frees you from sin  
save you and raise you up.

R. Amen.

[Latin:

Ut a peccátis liberátum (liberátam)  
te saluet atque propítius állevet. R. Amen.]

The sacramental form is said only once, for the anointing of the forehead and hands, and is not repeated.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

270. The priest says one of the following prayers:

A

Father,  
 you readily take into account  
 every stirring of good will,  
 and you never refuse to pardon the sins  
 of those who seek your forgiveness.

Have mercy now on your servant N.  
 who has now entered the struggle of his/her final agony.  
 May this holy anointing and our prayer of faith  
 comfort and aid him/her in body and soul.  
 Forgive all his/her sins  
 and protect him/her with your loving care.

We ask this, Father, through your Son Jesus Christ,  
 because he has won the victory over death,  
 opened the way to eternal life  
 and now lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

B

When anointing and viaticum are given together:

Lord God, merciful Father,  
 comforter of the afflicted,  
 look kindly on your servant N. who trusts in you.  
 Though now weighed down with grievous distress,  
 may he/she find relief through this holy anointing;  
 and may the food he/she has received,  
 the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
 refresh and strengthen him/her  
 for his/her journey to life.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## BLESSING

271. The priest blesses the sick person:

May the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,  
come upon you and remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

[Latin:

Benedíctio Dei omnipoténtis,  
Patris + et Fílii et Spíritus Sancti,  
descéndat super vos, et máneat semper.

R. Amen.]

## SIGN OF PEACE

272. The priest and the others present may then give the sick person the sign of peace.

273. If the person recovers somewhat, the priest or other minister may continue to give further pastoral care, bringing viaticum frequently, and using other prayers and blessings from the rite of visiting the sick.

274. When death has occurred, prayers may be offered for the dead person and for the family and friends. This may be done in any suitable place, including a hospital chapel or prayer room.

## VISITS TO THE SICK

### INTRODUCTION

I was sick and you visited me.

54. The prayers contained in this chapter follow the common pattern of reading, response, prayer, and blessing. This pattern is provided as an example of what can be done and may be adapted as necessary. The minister may wish to invite those present to prepare for the reading from Scripture, perhaps by a brief introduction or through a moment of silence. The laying on of hands may be added by the priest, if appropriate, after the blessing is given.

55. The sick should be encouraged to pray when they are alone or with their families, friends, or those who are for them. Their prayer should be drawn primarily from Scripture. The sick person and others may help to plan the celebration, for example, by choosing the prayers and readings. Those making these choices should keep in mind the condition of the sick person.

The passages found in this chapter and speak of the mystery of human suffering in the words, works, and life of Christ. Occasionally, for example, on the Lord's Day, the sick may feel more involved in the worship of the community from which they are separated if the readings used are those assigned for that day in the lectionary. Prayers may also be drawn from the psalms or from other prayers or litanies. The sick should be helped in making this form of prayer, and the minister should always be ready to pray with them.

56. The minister should encourage the sick person to offer his or her sufferings in union with Christ and to join in prayer for the Church and the world. Some examples of particular intentions which may be suggested to the sick person are: for peace in the world; for a deepening of the life of the Spirit in the local Church; for the pope and the bishops; for people suffering in a particular disaster.

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### Reading

57. The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the minister.

A Acts 3:1-10

In the name of Jesus and the power of his Church, there is salvation—even liberation from sickness.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Once, when Peter and John were going up to the temple area for the three o'clock hour of prayer, a man crippled from birth was carried and placed at the gate of the temple called "the Beautiful Gate" every day to beg for alms from the people who entered the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. But Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." He paid attention to them, expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean, rise and walk." Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. He leaped up, stood, and walked around, and went into the temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they

recognized him as the one who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with amazement and astonishment at what had happened to him.

The word of the Lord.

B Matthew 8:14-17

Jesus fulfills the prophetic figure of the servant of God taking upon himself and relieving the sufferings of God's people.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

Jesus entered the house of Peter, and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she rose and waited on him.

When it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet:

“He took away our infirmities  
and bore our diseases.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Response

58. A brief period of silence may be observed after the reading of the word of God. An appropriate psalm or one of the following psalms may be used.

A

## Psalm 102

R. O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.

O Lord, hear my prayer;  
 and let my cry come to you.  
 Hide not your face from me  
 in the day of my distress.  
 Incline your ear to me;  
 in the day when I call, answer me speedily.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.

He has broken down my strength in the way;  
 has cut short my days.  
 I say: O my God,  
 Take me not hence in the midst of my days.  
 through all generations your years endure.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.

Let this be written for the generation to come,  
 and let his future creatures praise the Lord:  
 “The Lord looked down from his holy height,  
 from heaven he beheld the earth,  
 To hear the groaning of the prisoners,  
 to release those doomed to die.”

R. O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry come to you.

B

## Psalm 27

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
 whom should I fear?  
 The Lord is my life's refuge;  
 of whom should I be afraid?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

One thing I ask of the Lord;  
 this I seek:  
 To dwell in the house of the Lord  
 all the days of my life,  
 that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord'  
 and contemplate his temple.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

For he will hide me in his abode  
 in the day of trouble,  
 He will conceal me in the shelter of his tent;  
 he will set me high upon a rock.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The minister may then give a brief explanation of the reading, applying it to the needs of the sick person and those who are looking after him or her.

The Lord's Prayer

59. The minister introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:

All say:

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.

60. The minister says a concluding prayer. One of the following may be used:

A

Father,  
 your Son accepted our sufferings  
 to teach us the virtue of patience in human illness.  
 Hear the prayers we offer for our sick brother/sister.  
 May all who suffer pain, illness, or disease  
 realize that they have been chosen to be saints  
 and know that they are joined to Christ  
 in his suffering for the salvation of the world.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B

All-powerful and ever-living God,  
 the lasting health of all who believe in you,  
 hear us as we ask your loving help for the sick;  
 restore their health,  
 that they may again offer joyful thanks in your Church.  
 Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

C

All-powerful and ever-living God,  
 we find security in your forgiveness.  
 Give us serenity and peace of mind;  
 may we rejoice in your gifts of kindness  
 and use them always for your glory and our good.  
 We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
 R. Amen.

Blessing

61. The minister may give a blessing. One of the following may be used.

A

All praise and glory is yours, Lord our God,  
 for you have called us to serve you in love.  
 Bless N.  
 so that he/she may bear this illness in union with your  
 Son's obedient suffering.  
 Restore him/her to health,  
 and lead him/her to glory.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B For an elderly person

All praise and glory are yours, Lord our God,  
 for you have called us to serve you in love.  
 Bless all who have grown old in your service  
 and give N. strength and courage  
 to continue to follow Jesus your Son.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

If the minister is a priest or deacon, he immediately concludes:

May the blessing of almighty God,  
The Father, and the Son + and the Holy Spirit,  
Come upon you and remain with you forever.

R. Amen.

The priest may lay hands upon the sick person's head.

A minister who is not a priest or deacon invokes God's blessing and makes the sign of the cross on himself or herself, while saying:

May the Lord + bless us,  
protect us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

The minister may then trace the sign of the cross on the sick person's forehead.

## ANOINTING OF THE SICK OUTSIDE OF MASS

### INTRODUCTION

He has borne our weakness and endured our suffering.

111. The rite which follows provides for the celebration of the sacrament of anointing outside Mass. This celebration takes place in the home, in a hospital or institution, or in church. Appropriate vestments should be worn by the priest.

112. The priest should inquire beforehand about the physical and spiritual condition of the sick person and he should become acquainted with the family, friends, and others who may be present. If possible, he should involve them in the preparation for the celebration, for example, in the choice of the readings and prayers, and he should explain to them the significance of the sacrament. Since the liturgical texts appear in the singular, they must be adapted in gender and number for a celebration in which two or more people are anointed.

113. If the sick person wishes to celebrate the sacrament of penance, it is preferable that the priest make himself available for this during a previous visit. If it is necessary for the sick person to confess during the celebration of the sacrament of anointing, this takes the place of the penitential rite.

114. If Communion is to be given during the celebration, this occurs after the liturgy of anointing.

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## INTRODUCTORY RITES

### GREETING

115. The priest greets the sick person and the others present. One of the following greetings may be used:

- A. The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- B. Peace be with you (this house) and with all who live here
- C. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- D. The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Response: And also with you. [NTRM: And with your spirit.]

If Communion is to take place during the rite, the priest then places the Blessed Sacrament on the table, and all join in adoration.

### SPRINKLING WITH HOLY WATER

If it seems desirable, the priest may sprinkle the sick person and those present with holy water. One of the following may be used:

A

The Lord is our shepherd  
and leads us to streams of living water

B

Like a stream in parched land,  
may the grace of the Lord refresh our lives.

C

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ,  
who by his death and resurrection has redeemed us.

### INSTRUCTION

117. Then he addresses those present in these or similar words:

My dear friends, we are gathered here in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is present among us. As the gospels relate, the sick came to him for healing; moreover, he loves us so much that he died for our sake. Through the apostle James, he has commanded us: “Are there any who are sick among you? Let them send for the priests of the Church, and let the priests pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick persons, and the Lord will raise them up; and if they have committed any sins, their sins will be forgiven them.” Let us therefore commend our sick brother/sister N. to the grace and power of Christ, that he may save him/her and raise him/her up.

If the sacrament of penance is now celebrated the penitential rite is omitted.

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After the confession of the penitent, the priest extends his hands over the penitent’s head (or at least extends his right

hand); care should be taken that this gesture is not confused with the laying on of hands during anointing. He says:

God, the Father of mercies,  
 through the death and reconciliation of his Son  
 has reconciled the world to himself  
 and sent the Holy Spirit among us  
 for the forgiveness of sins;  
 through the ministry of the Church  
 may God give you pardon and peace,  
 and I absolve you from your sins  
 in the name of the Father, and of the Son, +  
 and of the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Deus, Pater misericordiárum,  
 qui per mortem et resurrectiónem Fílii sui  
 mundum sibi reconciliávit  
 et Spíritum Sanctum effúdit in remissiónem peccatórum,  
 per ministérium Ecclésiæ indulgéntiam tibi tríbuat et  
 pacem.  
 Et ego te absolvo a peccátis tuis  
 in nómine Patris et Fílii + et Spíritus Sancti.  
 R. Amen.]

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#### PENITENTIAL RITE

118. The priest invites the sick person and all present to join in the penitential rite, using these or similar words:

A. My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this holy anointing, let us call to mind our sins.

B. My brothers and sisters, as we prepare to celebrate this holy sacrament, let us acknowledge our failings and ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

C. My brothers and sisters, let us turn with confidence to the Lord and ask his forgiveness for all our sins.

D. Coming together as God's family, with confidence let us ask the Lord's forgiveness, for he is full of gentleness and compassion.

After a brief period of silence, the penitential rite continues, using one of the following:

A All say:

I confess to almighty God,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have sinned through my own fault

They strike their breast:

in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done,  
and in what I have failed to do;  
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,  
all the angels and saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

[NTRM:

I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault,  
 through my most grievous fault;  
 Then they continue:  
 therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
 all the Angels and Saints,  
 and you, my brothers and sisters,  
 to pray for me to the Lord our God.]

B

Lord Jesus, you healed the sick:  
 Lord, have mercy.  
 R. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:  
 Christ, have mercy.  
 R. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you give us yourself  
 to heal us and bring us strength:  
 Lord, have mercy.  
 R. Lord, have mercy.

The priest concludes the penitential rite with the following:

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
 forgive us our sins,  
 and bring us to everlasting life.  
 R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

READING

119. The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the priest. An appropriate reading or one of the following readings may be used:

Matthew 11:25-30

Childlike confidence in the goodness of God will bring us the "rest" that only Jesus can give.

On one occasion, Jesus spoke thus: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, to you I offer praise; for what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest of children. Father, it is true. You have graciously willed it so. Everything has been given over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son—and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Mark 2:1-12

Much more important than the health of our bodies is the peace and consolation of the presence of Jesus who can forgive us our sins and reconcile us with God.

Jesus came back to Capernaum after a lapse of several days and word got around that he was at home. At that they began to gather in great numbers. There was no longer any

room for them, even around the door. While he was delivering God's word to them, some people arrived bringing a paralyzed man to him. The four who carried him were unable to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they began to open up the roof over the spot where Jesus was. When they had made a hole, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves: "Why does the man talk in that way? He commits blasphemy! Who can forgive sins except God alone?" Jesus was immediately aware of their reasoning, though they kept it to themselves, and he said to them: "Why do you harbor these thoughts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk again'? That you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (he said to the paralyzed man), "I command you: Stand up! Pick up your mat and go home." The man stood and picked up his mat and went outside in the sight of everyone. They were awestruck; all gave praise to God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

The Gospel of the Lord.

Luke 7:18b-23

The healing hand of Christ is a sign of the presence of God; that same hand is extended to us in this sacrament now, to console and strengthen us.

Summoning two of them, John sent them to ask the Lord, "Are you 'He who is to come' or are we to expect someone else?" When the men came to him they said, "John the Baptizer sends us to you with this question: 'Are you 'He who is to come' or do we look for someone else?'" (At that

time he was curing many of their diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits; he also restored sight to many who were blind.) Jesus gave this response: "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the good news preached to them. Blest is that man who finds no stumbling block in me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

## RESPONSE

120. A brief period of silence may be observed after the reading of the word of God.

The priest may then give a brief explanation of the reading, applying it to the needs of the sick person and those who are looking after him or her.

## LITURGY OF ANOINTING

### LITANY

121. The priest may adapt or shorten the litany according to the condition of the sick person.

My brothers and sisters, in our prayer of faith let us appeal to God for our brother/sister N.

Come and strengthen him/her through this holy anointing:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Free him/her from all harm:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Free him/her from sin and all temptation:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Relieve the sufferings of all the sick [here present]:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assist all those dedicated to the care of the sick:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Give life and health to our brother/sister N., on whom we lay our hands in your name:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

#### LAYING ON OF HANDS

122. In silence, the priest lays his hands on the head of the sick person.

#### PRAYER OVER THE OIL

123. The priest says a prayer of thanksgiving over blessed oil or he may bless the oil himself (see Gen. Introduction no. 21) using one of the following:

#### THANKSGIVING OVER BLESSED OIL

If the oil is already blessed, the priest says the following prayer of thanksgiving over it.

Praise to you, God, the almighty Father.

You sent your Son to live among us

and bring us salvation.

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

Praise to you, God the only-begotten Son.  
You humbled yourself to share in our humanity  
and you heal our infirmities,

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

Praise to you God, the Holy Spirit, the Consoler.  
Your unfailing power gives us strength  
in our bodily weakness.

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

God of mercy,  
ease the sufferings and comfort the weakness of your  
servant, N.,  
whom the Church anoints with this holy oil.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

Or:

#### BLESSING OF OIL

When the priest blesses the oil during the rite, he uses the following blessing:

God of all consolation,  
you chose and sent your Son to heal the world.  
Graciously listen to our prayer of faith:  
send the power of the Holy Spirit, the Consoler,  
into this precious oil, this soothing ointment,  
this rich gift, this fruit of the earth.  
Bless this oil + and sanctify it for our use.  
Make this oil a remedy for all who are anointed with it;

heal them in body, in soul, and in spirit,  
 and deliver them from every affliction.  
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

Skip to Anointing

[Latin:

Deus, totius consolati6nis Pater,  
 qui per F6lium tuum infirmantium langu6ribus mederi  
 voluisti,  
 orati6ni fidei adesto prop6tius:  
 emitte, quæsumus, Sp6ritum tuum Sanctum Par6clitum  
 de cælis in hanc pinguédinem Ólei,  
 quam de víridi ligno producere dignatus es  
 ad refecti6nem c6rporis,  
 ut tua sancta benedicti6ne +  
 sit omni, qui hoc unguento perúngitur,  
 tutámen c6rporis, ánimæ ac sp6ritus  
 ad evacuandos omnes dol6res, omnes infirmitates,  
 omnem ægritudinem.  
 Sit Óleum tuum sanctum, D6mine, nobis a te benédictum  
 in n6mine D6mini nostri Iesu Christi.  
 Qui tecum vivit et regnat in sæcula sæcul6rum.  
 R. Amen.]

Skip to Anointing

Or:  
 Bless, + Lord, your gift of oil  
 and our brother/sister N.  
 that it may bring him/her relief

[Latin:

Bénedic, + Dómine, hanc Ólei creatúram  
et ipsum étiam infirmum (ipsam étiam infirmam)  
qui (quæ) hoc leniménto perúngitur.]

Skip to Anointing

Or:

Praise to you, God, the almighty Father.  
You sent your Son to live among us  
and bring us salvation.

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

Praise to you, God the only-begotten Son.  
You humbled yourself to share in our humanity  
and you heal our infirmities,

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

Praise to you God, the Holy Spirit, the Consoler.  
Your unfailing power gives us strength  
in our bodily weakness.

R. Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.

Almighty God,  
come to our aid and sanctify this oil  
which has been set apart for healing your people.  
May the prayer of faith and the anointing with oil  
free them from every affliction.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

Adésto, Domine, propítius,  
 et hoc óleum,  
 fidelium tuorum curándis angoribus praepáratum  
 tua benedictióne sanctífica,  
 ut, fidei oratióne intercedénte,  
 quotquot eo ungantur,  
 ab omni qua detinéntur infirmitáte liberéntur.  
 Per Christum Dominum nostrum.  
 R. Amen.]

#### ANOINTING

124. The priest anoints the sick person with blessed oil.

First, he anoints the forehead, saying

Through this holy anointing  
 may the Lord in his love and mercy  
 help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Per istam sanctam Unctiónem  
 et suam piíssimam misericórdiam,  
 ádiuvet te Dóminus grátia Spíritus Sancti;  
 R. Amen.]

Then he anoints the hands, saying:

May the Lord who frees you from sin  
 save you and raise you up.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

ut a peccátiis liberátum (liberátam)  
te salvet atque propítius állevet.  
R. Amen.]

The sacramental form is said only once, for the anointing of the forehead and hands, and is not repeated.

Depending upon the culture and traditions of the place, as well as the condition of the sick person, the priest may also anoint additional parts of the body, for example, the area of pain or injury. He does not repeat the sacramental form.

#### PRAYER AFTER ANOINTING

125. The priest says one of the following prayers:  
PRAYER AFTER ANOINTING

The priest says one of the following prayers:

General    General    In extreme or terminal illness    In  
advanced age    Before surgery    For a child    For a young  
person

Let us pray.

A. General

Father in heaven,  
through this holy anointing  
grant N. comfort in his/her suffering.  
When he/she is afraid, give him/her courage,  
when afflicted, give him/her patience,  
when dejected, afford him/her hope,

and when alone, assure him/her of the support of your holy people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

#### B. General

Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,  
 by the grace of your Holy Spirit  
 cure the weakness of your servant N.  
 Heal his/her sickness and forgive his/her sins;  
 expel all afflictions of mind and body;  
 mercifully restore him/her to full health,  
 and enable him/her to resume his/her former duties,  
 for you are Lord for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

#### C. In extreme or terminal illness

Lord Jesus Christ,  
 you chose to share our human nature,  
 to redeem all people, and to heal the sick.  
 Look with compassion upon your servant N.,  
 whom we have anointed in your name  
 with this holy oil for the healing of his/her body and spirit.  
 Support him/her with your power,  
 comfort him/her with your protection,  
 and give him/her the strength to fight against evil.  
 Since you have given him/her  
 a share in your own passion,  
 help him/her to find hope in suffering,  
 for you are Lord for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

#### D. In advanced age

God of mercy,  
 look kindly on your servant who has grown weak  
 under the burden of years.  
 In this holy anointing  
 he/she asks for healing in body and soul.  
 Fill him/her with the strength of your Holy Spirit.  
 Keep him/her firm in faith  
 and serene in hope,  
 so that he/she may give us all an example of patience  
 and joyfully witness to the power of your love.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.  
 E. Before surgery

God of compassion,  
 our human weakness lays claim to your strength.  
 We pray that through the skills of surgeons and nurses  
 your healing gifts may be granted to N.  
 May your servant respond to your healing will  
 and be reunited with us at your altar of praise.  
 Grant this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

F. For a child

God our Father,  
 we have anointed your child N.  
 with the oil of healing and peace.  
 Caress him/her, shelter him/her,  
 and keep him/her in your tender care.  
 We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
 R. Amen.

G. For a young person

God our healer,

in this time of sickness  
 you have come to bless N. with your grace.  
 Restore him/her to health and strength,  
 make him/her joyful in spirit,  
 and ready to embrace your will.  
 Grant this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

126. The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

A. Now let us offer together the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us:

B. And now let us pray with confidence as Christ our Lord commanded:

All say:

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.

127. If the sick person does not receive communion, the rite concludes with a blessing as below.

### LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

## COMMUNION

The priest shows the Eucharistic Bread to those present saying:

A

This is the Lamb of God  
 who takes away the sins of the world.  
 Come to me all you that labor and are burdened  
 and I will refresh you.

B

These are God's holy gifts to his holy people:  
 receive them with thanksgiving.

C

This is the Bread of Life:  
 taste and see that the Lord is good

The sick person and all who are to receive communion say:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
 but only say the word and I shall be healed.

The Body of Christ [Latin: Corpus Christi]

The sick person answers: Amen.

Then the priest says: The Blood of Christ [Latin: Sanguis Christi]

The sick person answers: Amen, and receives communion.

Others present who wish to receive Communion then do so in the usual way. After the conclusion of the rite, the priest cleanses the vessel as usual.

#### SILENT PRAYER

128. Then a period of silence may be observed

#### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

129. The priest says a concluding prayer. One of the following may be used

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer, if this has not preceded

A

All-powerful God,  
 through the paschal mystery of Christ your Son  
 you have completed the work of our redemption.  
 May we, who in these sacramental signs  
 proclaim his death and resurrection,  
 grow in the experience of your saving power.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B

All-powerful God  
 we thank you for the nourishment you give us  
 through your holy gift.  
 Pour out your Spirit upon us  
 and in the strength of this food from heaven  
 keep us single-minded in your service.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
R. Amen.

C

All-powerful and ever-living God  
May the Body and Blood of Christ your Son  
be for our brother/sister N.  
a lasting remedy for body and soul.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

## CONCLUDING RITE

### BLESSING

130. The priest blesses the sick person and the others present, using one of the following blessings. If, however, any of the Blessed Sacrament remains, he may bless the sick person by making a sign of the cross with the blessed sacrament, in silence.

A

May the Lord be with you to protect you.  
R. Amen.

May he guide you and give you strength.  
R. Amen.

May he watch over you, keep you in his care, and bless you with his peace.  
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

[Latin:

Dóminus Iesus Christus apud te sit ut te deféndat.

R. Amen.

Ante te sit ut te dedúcat, post te sit ut te múníat.

R. Amen.

Te respíciat, te consérvet atque te benedícat.

R. Amen.

Et vos omnes, qui hic simul adéstitis,  
 benedícat omnípotens Deus,  
 Pater, et Fílius, + et Spíritus Sanctus. R. Amen.]

B

May God the Father bless you.

R. Amen.

May God the Son heal you.

R. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
 the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

C

May the God of all consolation  
 bless you in every way

and grant you hope all the days of your life.  
R. Amen.

May God restore you to health  
and grant you salvation.  
R. Amen.

May God fill your heart with peace  
and lead you to eternal life.  
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

Benedícat te Deus Pater.  
R. Amen.

Sanet te Dei Fílius.  
R. Amen.

Illúminet te Spíritus Sanctus.  
R. Amen.

Corpus tuum custódiat et ánimam tuam salvet.  
R. Amen.

Cor tuum collústret et te ad supérnam vitam perdúcat.  
R. Amen.

Et vos omnes, qui hic simul adéstis,  
benedícat omnípotens Deus,  
Pater, et Fílius, + et Spíritus Sanctus.  
R. Amen.]

D

May the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,  
come upon you and remain with you for ever.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

Benedíctio Dei omnipoténtis,  
Patris + et Fílii et Spíritus Sancti,  
descéndat super vos, et máneat semper.  
R. Amen.]

## COMMUNION OF THE SICK IN ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

In the light of verbal indications given to several episcopal Conferences, texts in this rite affected by the new translation of the Roman Missal into English are appended and indicated by the abbreviation 'NTRM'. Users are requested to consult their local Ordinary, or abide by guidelines issued by him, in determining which text to use.

### INTRODUCTION

---

Whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

72. Priests with pastoral responsibilities should see to it that the sick or aged, even though not seriously ill or in danger of death, are given every opportunity to receive the Eucharist frequently, even daily, especially during the Easter season. They may receive communion at any hour. Those who care for the sick may receive communion with them, in accord with the usual norms. To provide frequent communion for the sick, it may be necessary to ensure that the community has a sufficient number of ministers of communion. The communion minister should wear attire appropriate to this ministry.

The sick person and others may help to plan the celebration, for example, by choosing the prayers and readings. Those making these choices should keep in mind the condition of the sick person. The readings and the homily should help those present to reach a deeper understanding of the mystery of human suffering in relation to the paschal mystery of Christ.

73. The faithful who are ill are deprived of their rightful and accustomed place in the Eucharistic community. In bringing communion to them the minister of Communion represents Christ and manifests faith and charity on behalf of the whole community toward those who cannot be present at the Eucharist. For the sick the reception of communion is not only a privilege but also a sign of support and concern shown by the Christian community for its members who are ill.

The links between the community's Eucharistic celebration, especially on the Lord's Day, and the communion of the sick are intimate and manifold. Besides remembering the sick in the general intercessions at Mass, those present should be reminded occasionally of the significance of communion in the lives of those who are ill: union with Christ in his struggle with evil, his prayer for the world, and his love for the Father, and union with the community from which they are separated.

The obligation to visit and comfort those who cannot take part in the Eucharistic assembly may be clearly demonstrated by taking Communion to them from the community's Eucharistic celebration. This symbol of unity between the community and its sick members has the deepest significance on the Lord's Day, the special day of the Eucharistic assembly.

74. When the Eucharist is brought to the sick, it should be carried in a pyx or small closed container. Those who are with the sick should be asked to prepare a table covered with a linen cloth upon which the Blessed Sacrament will be placed. Lighted candles are prepared and, where it is customary, a vessel of holy water. Care should be taken to make the occasion special and joyful.

Sick people who are unable to receive under the form of bread may receive under the form of wine alone. If the wine is consecrated at a Mass not celebrated in the presence of the sick person, the Blood of the Lord is kept in a properly covered vessel and is placed in the tabernacle after Communion. The Precious Blood should be carried to the sick in a vessel which is closed in such a way as to eliminate all danger of spilling. If some of the Precious Blood remains, it should be consumed by the minister, who should also see to it that the vessel is properly purified.

75. If the sick wish to celebrate the sacrament of penance, it is preferable that the priest make himself available for this during a previous visit.

If it is necessary to celebrate the sacrament of penance during the rite of communion, it takes the place of the penitential rite.

#### Communion in Ordinary Circumstances

77. If possible, provision should be made to celebrate Mass in the homes of the sick, with their families and friends gathered around them. The Ordinary determines the conditions and requirements for such celebrations.

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### INTRODUCTORY RITES

#### Greeting

81. The minister greets the sick person and the others present. One of the following greetings may be used:

A. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

B. Peace be with you (this house) and with all who live here

C. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

D. The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Response: And also with you.[NTRM: And with your spirit.]

The minister then places the blessed sacrament on the table, and all join in adoration.

### Sprinkling with Holy Water

82. If it seems desirable, the priest or deacon may sprinkle the sick person and those present with holy water. One of the following may be used:

A

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ, who by his death and resurrection has redeemed us.

B

Like a stream in parched land,  
may the grace of the Lord  
refresh our lives.

### Penitential Rite

83. The minister invites the sick person and all present to join in the penitential rite, using these or similar words:

A. My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

B. My brothers and sisters, let us turn with confidence to the Lord and ask his forgiveness for all our sins.

After a brief period of silence, the penitential rite continues, using one of the following:

A. All say:

I confess to almighty God,  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have sinned through my own fault

They strike their breast:

in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done,  
and in what I have failed to do;  
and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,  
all the angels and saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

[NTRM:

I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;

Then they continue:

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.]

B

Lord Jesus, you healed the sick:  
Lord, have mercy.  
R. Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:  
Christ, have mercy.  
R. Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you give us yourself to heal us and bring us  
strength:  
Lord, have mercy.  
R. Lord, have mercy.

The minister concludes the penitential rite with the  
following:

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life.  
R. Amen.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reading

84. The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the minister.

- A. John 6:51
- B. John 6:54-58
- C. John 14:6
- D. John 15:5
- E. 1 John 4:16

A.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John 6:51

Jesus says:

“I myself am the living bread  
come down from heaven.  
If anyone eats this bread,  
he shall live forever;  
the bread I will give  
is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

B.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John 6:54-58

Jesus says:

“He who feeds on my flesh  
and drinks my blood  
has life eternal,  
and I will raise him up on the last day.  
For my flesh is real food

and my blood real drink.  
 The man who feeds on my flesh  
 and drinks my blood  
 remains in me, and I in him.  
 Just as the Father who has life sent me  
 and I have life because of the Father,  
 so the man who feeds on me  
 will have life because of me.  
 This is the bread that came down from heaven.  
 Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless  
 the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

C.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John  
 14:6

Jesus says,  
 “I am the way and the truth and the life;  
 no one comes to the Father but through me.

The Gospel of the Lord.

D.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John  
 15:5

Jesus says:  
 “I am the vine, you are the branches.  
 He who lives in me and I in him,  
 will produce abundantly,  
 for apart from me you can do nothing.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

E.

A reading from the first letter of Saint John  
4:16

We have come to know and to believe  
in the love God has for us.  
God is love,  
and he who abides in love  
abides in God  
and God in him.

The Word of the Lord.

Response

85. A brief period of silence may be observed after the reading of the word of God.

The minister may then give a brief explanation of the reading, applying it to the needs of the sick person and those who are looking after him or her.

General Intercessions

86. The general intercessions may be said. With a brief introduction, the minister invites all those present to pray. After the intentions the minister says the concluding prayer. It is desirable that the intentions be announced by someone other than the minister.

LITURGY of HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord's Prayer

87. The minister introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

A. Now let us pray as Christ the Lord has taught us:

B. And now let us pray with confidence as Christ our Lord commanded:

All say:

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.

Communion

88. The minister shows the eucharistic bread to those present, saying:

A

This is the Lamb of God  
 who takes away the sins of the world.  
 Happy are those who are called to his supper.

[NTRM: Behold the Lamb of God,  
 behold him who takes away the sins of the world.  
 Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.]

## B

This is the Bread of Life:  
taste and see that the Lord is good

The sick person and all who are to receive Communion say:

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

[NTRM:

Lord, I am not worthy  
that you should enter under my roof,  
but only say the word  
and my soul shall be healed.]

The minister goes to the sick person and, showing the  
blessed sacrament, says:

The body of Christ.

The sick person answers: Amen. and receives communion.

Then the minister says:

The blood of Christ.

The sick person answers: Amen and receives communion.

Others present who wish to receive Communion then do so  
in the usual way. After the conclusion of the rite, the  
minister cleanses the vessel as usual.

Silent Prayer

89. Then a period of silence may be observed.

Prayer after Communion

The minister says a concluding prayer.

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer, if this has not preceded.

A

All-powerful and ever-living God  
may the body and blood of Christ your Son  
be for our brother/sister N.  
a lasting remedy for body and soul.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

B

God our Father,  
you have called us to share the one bread and one cup  
and so become one in Christ.  
Help us to live in him  
that we may bear fruit,  
rejoicing that he has redeemed the world.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

C

All-powerful God  
we thank you for the nourishment you give us  
through your holy gift.

Pour out your Spirit upon us  
 and in the strength of this food from heaven  
 keep us single-minded in your service.  
 We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## CONCLUDING RITE

### Blessing

91. The priest or deacon blesses the sick person and the others present, using one of the following blessings. If, however, any of the blessed sacrament remains, he may bless the sick person by making a sign of the cross with the blessed sacrament, in silence.

#### A

May the Lord be with you to protect you.  
 R. Amen.

May he guide you and give you strength.  
 R. Amen.

May he watch over you, keep you in his care, and bless you  
 with his peace.  
 R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
 the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

#### B

May God the Father bless you.  
 R. Amen.

May God the Son heal you.

R. Amen.

May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

C

May the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,  
come upon you and remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

---

A minister who is not a priest or deacon invokes God's  
blessing and makes the sign of the cross on himself or  
herself, while saying:

A

May the Lord bless us,  
protect us from all evil,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

B

May the almighty and merciful God  
bless and protect us  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.”

## COMMENDATION OF THE DYING

Texts marked with an (L) indicate that a Latin text is available after the English text, and may be accessed by scrolling down after the English text.

### INTRODUCTION

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Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.

212. In viaticum the dying person is united with Christ in his passage out of this world to the Father. Through the prayers for the commendation of the dying contained in this chapter, the Church helps to sustain this union until it is brought to fulfillment after death.

213. Christians have the responsibility of expressing their union in Christ by joining the dying person in prayer for God's mercy and for confidence in Christ. In particular, the presence of a priest or deacon shows more clearly that the Christian dies in the communion of the Church. He should assist the dying person and those present with the recitation of the prayers of commendation and, following death, he should lead those present in the prayer after death. If the priest or deacon is unable to be present because of other serious pastoral obligations, other members of the community should be prepared to assist with these prayers and should have the texts readily available to them.

214. The minister may choose texts from among the prayer, litanies, aspirations, psalms and reading provided in this chapter or others may be added. In the selection of these texts, the minister should keep in mind the condition and piety of both the dying person and the members of the family who are present. The prayers are best said in a slow, quiet voice, alternating with periods of silence. If possible, the minister says one or more of the brief prayer formulas

with the dying person. These may be softly repeated two or three times.

215. These texts are intended to help the dying person, if still conscious, to face the natural human anxiety about death by imitating Christ in his patient suffering and dying. The Christian will be helped to surmount his or her fear in the hope of heavenly life and resurrection through the power of Christ, who destroyed the power of death by his own dying.

Even if the dying person is not conscious, those who are present will draw consolation from these prayers and come to a better understanding of the paschal character of Christian death. This may be visibly expressed by making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the dying person, who was first signed with the cross at baptism.

216. Immediately after death has occurred, all may kneel while one of those present leads the prayers after death given in this chapter.

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#### SHORT TEXTS

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One or more of the following short texts may be recited with the dying person. If necessary, they may be softly repeated two or three times.

Romans 8:35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

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

2 Corinthians 5:1 We have an everlasting home in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 We shall be with the Lord for ever.

1 John 3:2 We shall see God as he really is

1 John 3:14 We have passed from death to life  
because we love one another

Psalms 25:1 To you, Lord, I lift up my soul

Psalms 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation

Psalms 27:13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the  
Lord  
in the land of the living.

Psalms 42:3 My soul thirsts for the living God

Psalms 23:4 Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of  
death,  
I will fear no evil  
for you are with me

Matthew 25:34 Come, blessed of my Father,  
says the Lord Jesus,  
and take possession of the kingdom  
prepared for you.

Luke 23:43 The Lord Jesus says,  
today you will be with me in paradise.

John 14:2 In my Father's home,  
there are many dwelling places,  
says the Lord Jesus.

John 14:2-3 The Lord Jesus says,  
I go to prepare a place for you,  
and I will come again to take you to myself.

John 17:24 I desire that where I am,  
they also may be with me,  
says the Lord Jesus.

John 6:40 Everyone who believes in the Son  
has eternal life.

Psalm 31:5a Into your hands, Lord,  
I commend my spirit.

Holy Mary, pray for me.

Saint Joseph, pray for me.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph:  
assist me in my last agony.

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## READINGS

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The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or  
by the minister. Selections from Part III or one of the  
following readings may be used.

A. Job 19: 23-27

Job's act of faith is a model for our own; God is the God of  
the living

Job 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.

B. 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 when I walk in the dark valley,  
 I fear no evil: for you are at my side  
 With your rod and 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.

C. Psalm 25

To you I lift up my soul,  
 O Lord, my God.

Your ways, O Lord, make known to me;  
 teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
 for you are God my savior.  
 and for you I wait all the day

Remember that your compassion, O Lord,  
 and your kindness are from of old.

The sins of my youth and my frailties remember not;

in your kindness remember me  
because of your goodness, Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord,  
thus he shows sinners the way.  
He guides the humble to justice.  
he teaches the humble his way.  
All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy  
toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.  
For your name's sake, O Lord,  
you will pardon my guilt, great as it is.

#### D. 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 fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."  
For he will rescue you from snare of the fowler,  
from the destroying pestilence,  
With his pinions he will cover you,  
and under his wings that 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 not 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 your 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 be with him in distress;  
 I will deliver him and glorify him;  
 with length of days I will gratify him  
 and will show him my salvation.

E. Psalm 121

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

May he suffer not allow your foot to slip;  
 may he slumber not who guards you:  
 Indeed he neither slumbers not 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.

F. 1 John 4:16

We have come to know and to believe  
 in the love God has for us.  
 God is love,  
 and he who abides in love  
 abides in God  
 and God in him.

G. Revelation 21:1-5a, 6-7

God our Father is the God of newness and life; it is his  
 desire that we should come to share his life with him.

I, John saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former  
 heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea  
 was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,  
 coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride  
 adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the  
 throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human  
 race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people  
 and God himself will always be with them as their God. He  
 will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no  
 more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order  
 has passed away." The one who sat on the throne said,  
 "Behold, I make all things new. I am the Alpha and the  
 Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give  
 a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will  
 inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my  
 son."

H. Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus bids us be prepared for our ultimate destiny, which is  
 eternal life.

Jesus spoke this parable: “The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise ones replied, ‘No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’ While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, ‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’ But he said in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

#### I. Luke 22:39-46

Jesus is alive to our pain and sorrow, because faithfulness to his Father’s will cost him life itself.

Then going out Jesus went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, “Pray that you may not undergo the test.” After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, Jesus prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.” And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. Jesus was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of

blood falling on the ground. When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test.”

J. Luke 23:44-49

Jesus’ death is witnessed by his friends.

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”; and when he had said this he breathed his last. The centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, “This man was innocent beyond doubt.” When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; but all his acquaintances stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events.

K. Luke 24:1-8

Jesus is alive; he gives us eternal life with the Father.

At daybreak on the first day of the week the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were puzzling over this, behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed

over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day.”  
And the women remembered his words.

L. John 6:37-40

Jesus will raise his own from death and give them eternal life.

Jesus said to the crowds: “Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise them on the last day.”

M. John 14:1-6, 23, 27

The love of Jesus can raise us up from the sorrow of death to the joy of eternal life.

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. Where I am going you know the way.” Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. 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 hearts be troubled or afraid.”

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## LITANY of the SAINTS

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219. When the condition of the dying person calls for the use of brief forms of prayer, those who are present are encouraged to pray the litany of the saints—or at least some of its invocation—for him or her. Special mention may be made of the patron saints of the dying person, of the family and or the parish. The litany may be said or sung in the usual way. Other customary prayers may also be used.

One of the following litanies may be used:

A

Lord, have mercy.  
 Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.  
 Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.  
 Lord, have mercy.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for him/her

Holy angels of God, pray for him/her

Abraham, our father in faith, pray for him/her  
 David, leader of God’s people, pray for him/her  
 All holy patriarchs and prophets, pray for him/her

Saint John the Baptist, pray for him/her

Saint Joseph, pray for him/her

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, pray for him/her

Saint Andrew, pray for him/her

Saint John, pray for him/her

Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for him/her

Saint Stephen, pray for him/her

Saint Ignatius, pray for him/her

Saint Lawrence, pray for him/her

Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity, pray for him/her

Saint Agnes,

Saint Gregory, pray for him/her

Saint Augustine, pray for him/her

Saint Athanasius, pray for him/her

Saint Basil, pray for him/her

Saint Martin, pray for him/her

Saint Benedict, pray for him/her

Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, pray for him/her

Saint Francis Xavier, pray for him/her

Saint John Vianney, pray for him/her

Saint Catherine, pray for him/her

Saint Teresa, pray for him/her

Other saints may be included here.

All holy men and women, pray for him/her

Lord, be merciful, Lord, save your people.

From all evil, Lord, save your people.

From every sin, Lord, save your people.

From Satan's power, Lord, save your people.  
 At the moment of death, Lord, save your people.  
 From everlasting death, Lord, save your people.  
 On the day of judgment, Lord, save your people.

By your coming as man, Lord, save your people.  
 By your suffering and cross, Lord, save your people.  
 By your death and rising to new life, Lord, save your  
 people.  
 By your return in glory to the Father, Lord, save your  
 people.  
 By your gift of the Holy Spirit, Lord, save your people.  
 By your coming again in glory, Lord, save your people.

Be merciful to us sinners, Lord, hear our people.  
 Bring N. to eternal life, first promised to him/her in  
 baptism, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Raise N. on the last day, for he/she has eaten the Bread of  
 Life, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Let N. share in your glory, for he/she has shared in your  
 suffering and death, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Jesus, Son of the Living God, Lord, hear our prayer.

Christ, hear us. Christ, hear us.  
 Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

B

A brief form of the litany may be prayed. Other saints may  
 be added, including the patron saints of the dying person, of  
 the family, and of the parish; saints to whom the dying  
 person had a special devotion may also be included.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for him/her  
 Holy angels of God, pray for him/her  
 Saint John the Baptist, pray for him/her

Saint Joseph, pray for him/her  
 Saint Peter and Saint Paul, pray for him/her

Other saints may be included here.

All holy men and women, pray for him/her.

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PRAYER of COMMENDATION

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220. When the moment of death seems near, some of the following prayers may be said:

A.

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.

[Latin:

Proficiscere ánima cristiána de hoc mundo,  
 in nómine Dei Patris omnipoténtis, qui te creávit,  
 in nómine Iesu Christi Fílii Dei, qui pro te passus est.,  
 in nómine Spíritus Sancti, qui in te effúsus est;  
 hódie sit in pace locus tuus  
 et habitátio tua apud Deum in sancta Sion.

Cum sancta Dei Genetríce Vírgine María,  
cum sancto Ioseph,  
et omnibus Angelis et Sanctis Dei.]

B.

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.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

Comméndo te omnipoténti Deo, caríssime frater (caríssima  
soror),  
et ei, cuius es creatúra, commítto:  
ut, ad auctórem tuum,  
qui te de limo terræ formáverat, revertáris.  
Tibi itaque egrediénti de hac vita  
Líberet te Christus, qui pro te crucifíxus est,  
líberet te Christus, qui pro te mori dignátus est,  
constítuat te Christus, Fílius Dei vivi, intra paradísium suum  
et inter oves suas te verus ille Pastor agnóscat.  
Redemptórem tuum fácie ad fáciem vídeas,  
et contemplatiónis Dei potiáris in sæcula sæculórum.

R. Amen.]

C.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

Deliver your servant, Lord, from every distress.

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

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

R. Amen.

or: R. Lord, save your people.

[Latin:

Súscipe, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam)  
in locum sperándæ sibi salvatiónis a misericórdia tua.

R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam)  
ex ómnibus tribulatióibus. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam)  
sicut liberásti Noe de dilúvio. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Abraham de Ur Chaldæórum. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Iob de passióibus suis. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Móysen de manu Pharaónis. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Daniélem de lacu leónum. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti tres púeros de camíno ignis ardéntis,  
et de manu regis iníqui. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Susánnam de falso crímine. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti David de manu regis Saul,  
et de manu Golíæ. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
sicut liberásti Petrum et Paulum de carcéribus. R. Amen.

Líbera, Dómine, servum tuum (ancíllam tuam),  
Per Iesum Salvatórem nostrum,  
qui pro nobis mortem súbiit amáram  
nobisque vitam donávit ætérrnam.  
R. Amen.]

D.

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.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Commendámus tibi, Dómine, fámulum tuum N.  
 precamúrque te, Dómine Iesu Christe, Salvátor mundi,  
 ut, propter quam ad terram misericórditer descendísti,  
 in gáudium regni tui benígnus accípias.  
 Licet enim peccáverit,  
 Patrem, et Fílium, et Spíritum Sanctum non negávit,  
 sed crédidit,  
 et Deum, qui fecit ómnia, fidéliter adorávit.  
 R. Amen.]

E The following antiphon may be said or sung

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,  
 hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.  
 To thee do we cry, the children of Eve;  
 to you we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping  
 in this land of exile.  
 Turn, then, most gracious advocate,  
 your eyes of mercy toward us;  
 lead us home at last

and show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus:  
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

[Latin:

Salve Regína, máter misericórdiæ;  
víta, dulcédo et spes nóstra, sálve.  
Ad te clamámus éxsules filii Évæ.  
Ad te suspirámus, geméntes et fléntes  
in hac lacrimárum vátte.  
Eia ergo, advocáta nóstra,  
íllos túos misericórdes óculos  
ad nos convérte.  
Et Iésum, benedíctum frúctum véntris túi,  
nobis, post hoc exsílum osténde.  
O clémens, O pía, O dúlcis Vírgo María.]

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#### PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

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221. When death has occurred, one or more of the following prayers may be said.

A.

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.

The following prayer is added:

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 this world he/she has died:  
let him live with you for ever.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

R. Subveníte, Sancti Dei, occúrrite, Angeli Dómini,  
suscipiéntes ánimam eius,  
offeréntes eam in conspéctu Altíssimi.

V. Suscípiat te Christus, qui vocávit te,  
et in sinum Abrahae Angeli dedúcant te.

R. Suscipiéntes ánimam ejus, Offeréntes eam in conspéctu  
Altíssimi.

V. Réquiem aetérnam dona ei, Dómine,  
et lux perpétua lúceat ei.  
R. Offeréntes eam in conspéctu Altíssimi.

Orémus.

Tibi Dómine, commendámus fámulum tuum (fámulam  
tuam) N.  
ut defúnctus (defúncta) saéculo tibi vivat:  
et quae per fragilitátem humánae conversatiónis peccáta  
commisit,  
tu vénia misericordissime pietátis abstérge.  
Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.  
R. Amen.]

B.

R. My soul hopes in the Lord.

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I call to you, Lord;  
Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to my voice in supplication.

R. My soul hopes in the Lord.

I trust in the Lord,  
my soul trusts in his word.  
My soul waits for the Lord  
more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

R. My soul hopes in the Lord.

For with the Lord is kindness,  
with him is plenteous redemption,  
And he will redeem Israel  
from all their iniquities.

R. My soul hopes in the Lord.

The following prayer is added:

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 for ever with all your saints  
 in the glory of the resurrection.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

C.

Psalm 23

R. Lord, remember me in your kingdom.

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.

R. Lord, remember me in your kingdom.

He guides me in right paths  
 for his name's name.  
 Even when 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.

R. Lord, remember me in your kingdom.

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

R. Lord, remember me in your kingdom.

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.

R. Lord, remember me in your kingdom.

The following prayer is added:

Let us pray.

God of mercy,  
 hear our prayers and be merciful  
 to your son/daughter N.,  
 whom you have called from this life.  
 Welcome him/her into the company of your saints,  
 in the kingdom of light and peace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

D.

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.

[Latin:

Te, Dómine, sancte Pater, omnípotens aetérne Deus,  
supplices deprecámur pro anima famuli tui (ancíllæ tuæ)  
N.,  
quem (quam) de hoc sáeculo ad te venire iussísti;  
ut ei dignéris dare locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.  
Líceat ei portas mortis sine offensióne transíre  
et in mansiónibus sanctórum et in luce sancta permáneat,  
quam olim Abrahæ et eius sémini promisísti.  
Nullam eius ánima sustíneat læsionem,  
sed, cum magnus dies ille resurrectiόνis  
et remuneratiόνis advénerit,  
resuscitáre eum (eam), Dómine,  
una cum sanctis et eléctis dignéris;  
dimíttas ei ómnia delícta atque peccáta,  
tecúmque immortalitátis vitam  
et regnum consequátur æternum.  
Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.  
R. Amen.]

E.

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 for ever.

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.

[Latin:

Tibi, Dómine, fratrem nostrum (sorórem nostram)  
 humíliter commendámus,  
 ut, quem (quam) in hac vita mortáli  
 imménso semper es prosecútus amóre,  
 nunc, a malis ómnibus liberátum (liberátam),  
 in réquiem íngredi iúbeas sempitérnam.  
 Tuam ergo cleméntiam deprecámur,  
 ut, quia prima iam transiérunt,  
 illum (illam) in paradísium tuum benígne perdúcas,  
 ubi neque luctus, neque clamor, neque dolor erit ultra,  
 sed pax et gáudium, cum Filio tuo et Spíritu Sancto,  
 in sæcula sæculórum  
 R. Amen.]

F.

God of our destiny,  
 into your hands we commend our brother/sister.  
 We are confident that with all who have died in Christ  
 he/she will be raised to life on the last day  
 and live with Christ forever.

(We thank you for all the blessings  
 you gave him/her in this life  
 to show your fatherly care for all of us  
 and the fellowship which is ours with the saints  
 in Jesus Christ.)

Lord, hear our prayer:  
 welcome our brother/sister to paradise,  
 and help us to comfort each other  
 with the assurance of our faith  
 until we all meet in Christ  
 to be with you and with our brother/sister for ever.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R.Amen.

[Latin:

In manus tuas, clementíssime Pater,  
 fratris nostri (soróris nostræ) ánimam commendámus,  
 spe certa suffúlti eum (eam), sicut omnes in Christo  
 defúntos,  
 cum Christo esse resurrectúrum (resurrectúram) in  
 novíssimo die.  
 (Tibi grátias ágimus,  
 pro ómnibus beneficiis, quibus fámulum tuum (fámulam  
 tuam)  
 in hac vita mortáli ita cumulásti,  
 ut éadem nobis signa tuæ fíerent bonitátis  
 et beátæ sanctórum communiónis in Christo.)  
 Páteant ergo, Dómine, précibus nostris  
 aures misericórdiæ tuæ,  
 ut portæ paradísi aperiántur fámulo tuo (fámulæ tuæ),  
 et étiam nos, qui relínquimur,  
 ínvicem consolémur in verbis fidei  
 donec occurrámus omnes in Christo,  
 et sic semper tecum

et cum fratre nostro (soróre nostra) esse possímus.  
 Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.  
 R. Amen.]

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PRAYER for the FAMILY and FRIENDS

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222. One of the following prayers may be said:

A. For the family and friends

God of all consolation,  
 in your unending love and mercy for us  
 you turn the darkness of death  
 into the dawn of new life.  
 Show compassion to your people in their sorrow.

[Be our refuge and our strength  
 to lift us from the darkness of grief  
 to the peace and light of your presence.]

Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 by dying for us, conquered death  
 and by rising again, restored life.

May we then go forward eagerly to meet him,  
 and after our life on earth  
 be reunited with our brothers and sisters  
 where every tear will be wiped away.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:  
 Misericordiárum Pater et Deus totíus consolatiónis,  
 qui nos ætérno amóre proséqueris,  
 qui umbram mortis in vitæ vertis auróram,  
 réspice, quæ'sumus, fámulos tuos in tribulatióne geméntes.]

(Esto, Dómine, refúgium nostrum et virtus,  
 ut ex huius dolóris ténebris et luctu  
 ad præsentíæ tuæ lucem et pacem elevémur).  
 Et quia Fílius tuus Dóminus noster  
 mortem nostram moriéndo destrúxit  
 et vitam resurgéndo reparávit,  
 concéde, quæsumus, ut ad eum sic currámus,  
 ut post mortális vitæ cursum,  
 ibi aliquándo cum frátribus adunémur,  
 ubi omnes lácrimæ ab óculis abstergéntur.  
 Qui tecum vivit et regnat in sácula sæculórum.  
 R. Amen.

B. For the deceased person and for family and friends

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,  
 you willingly gave yourself up to death  
 so that all people might be saved  
 and pass from death into a new life.  
 Listen to our prayers;  
 look with love on your people  
 who mourn and pray for their dead brother/sister N.

Lord Jesus, you alone are holy and compassionate:  
 forgive N. his/her sins.  
 By dying you opened the gates of life  
 for those who believe in you;  
 do not let your brother/sister be parted from you,  
 but by your glorious power  
 give him/her light, joy, and peace in heaven  
 where you live for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Dómine, Redémptor noster,  
 qui teípsum morti tradidísti,

ut omnes hómines salvi fíerent  
 et ad vitam possent de morte transire,  
 clementissimam pietátem tuam humílter deprecamur,  
 ut digneris omnes servos tuos intueri lugentes  
 et pro amisso propinquo suo suppliciter exorantes.  
 Illi omnia peccata dimitte, Domine,  
 qui solus es sanctus et summe misericors,  
 qui per mortem tuam portas vitae tuis fidelis reserasti.  
 Ne fratrem nostrum a te separari, Rex aterne, permittas,  
 sed virtute gloriae tuae locum ei lucis, beatudinis et pacis  
 largire.  
 Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.  
 R. Amen.]

For the solace of those present the minister may conclude these prayers with a simple blessing or with a symbolic gesture, for example, signing the forehead with the sign of the cross. A priest or deacon may sprinkle the body with holy water.

## PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

Texts marked with an (L) indicate that a Latin text is available after the English text.

### INTRODUCTION

---

Blessed are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled  
 101. This rite provides a model of prayer that may be used when the minister first meets with the family following death. The rite follows a common pattern of reading, response, prayer, and blessing and may be adapted according to the circumstances.

102. The presence of the minister and the calming effect of familiar prayers can comfort the mourners as they begin to face their loss. When the minister is present with the family at the time death occurs, this rite can be used as a quiet and prayerful response to the death. In other circumstances, for example, in the case of sudden or unexpected death, this form of prayer can be the principal part of the first pastoral visit of the minister.

103. The initial pastoral visit can be important as the first tangible expression of the community's support for the mourners. A minister unfamiliar with the family or the deceased person can learn a great deal on this occasion about the needs of the family and about the life of the deceased. The minister may also be able to form some preliminary judgments to help the family in planning the funeral rites. If circumstances allow, some first steps in the planning may take place at this time.

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### INVITATION TO PRAYER

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104. Using one of the following greetings, or in similar words, the minister greets those present.

A

In this moment of sorrow  
the Lord is in our midst  
and consoles us with his word:  
Blessed are the sorrowful; they shall be comforted.

B

Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation!  
He comforts us in all our afflictions  
and thus enables us to comfort those who grieve  
with the same consolation  
we have received from him.

The minister then invites those present to pray in silence.

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## READING

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105. The minister or one of those present proclaims the reading. A reading from Part III, nos 343-346, or one of the following may be used.

A Matthew 18:19-20

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth  
about anything for which they are to pray,  
it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.  
For where two or three are gathered together in my name,  
there am I in the midst of them.”

## B John 11:21-27

Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.” Martha said to him, “I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

## C Luke 20:35-38

Jesus said: “Those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise. That the dead will rise even Moses made known in the passage about the bush, when he called ‘Lord’ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.”

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 THE LORD’S PRAYER
 

---

106. Using one of the following invitations, or in similar words, the minister invites those present to pray the Lord’s Prayer.

A With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption;  
let us pray as Jesus taught us:

B Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

All:

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.

---

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

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107. A prayer for the deceased person is then said. This prayer may be followed by a prayer for the mourners.

For the deceased person: The minister says one of the following prayers:

Holy Lord, almighty and eternal God,  
 hear our prayers for your servant N.,  
 whom you have summoned out of this world.  
 Forgive his/her sins and failings  
 and grant him/her a place of refreshment, light and peace.  
 Let him/her pass unharmed through the gates of death  
 to dwell with the blessed in light,  
 as you promised to Abraham and his children for ever.  
 Accept N. into your safe-keeping  
 and on the great day of judgment  
 raise him/her up with all the saints  
 to inherit your eternal kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

[Latin:

Te, Dómine, sancte Pater, omnipotens aetérne Deus,  
supplices deprecámur pro anima fámuli tui (fámulæ tuæ)  
N.,  
quem (quam) de hoc sáculo ad te venire iussísti;  
ut ei dignéris dare locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.  
Líceat ei portas mortis sine offensióne transíre  
et in mansiónibus sanctórum et in luce sancta permáneat,  
quam olim Abrahæ et eius sémini promisísti.  
Nullam eius ánima sustíneat læsionem,  
sed, cum magnus dies ille resurrectionis  
et remuneratiónis advénerit,  
resuscitáre eum (eam), Dómine,  
una cum sanctis et eléctis dignéris;  
dimíttas ei ómnia delícta atque peccáta,  
tecúmque immortalitátis vitam  
et regnum consequátur æternum.  
R. Amen.]

For the mourners: The minister may then say the following  
prayer:

Father of mercies and God of all consolation,  
you pursue us with untiring love  
and dispel the shadow of death  
with the bright dawn of life.

[Comfort your family in their loss and sorrow.  
Be our refuge and our strength, O Lord,  
and lift us from the depths of grief  
into the peace and light of your presence.]

Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 by dying has destroyed our death,  
 and by rising, restored our life.  
 Enable us therefore to press on toward him,  
 so that, after our earthly course is run,  
 he may reunite us with those we love,  
 when every tear will be wiped away.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:  
 Misericordiárum Pater et Deus totíus consolatiónis,  
 qui nos ætérno amóre proséqueris,  
 qui umbram mortis in vitæ vertis auróram,  
 réspice, quæsumus, fámulos tuos in tribulatióne geméntes.

(Esto, Dómine, refúgium nostrum et virtus,  
 ut ex huius dolóris ténebris et luctu  
 ad præsentíæ tuæ lucem et pacem elevémur).

Et quia Fílius tuus Dóminus noster  
 mortem nostram moriéndo destrúxit  
 et vitam resurgéndo reparávit,  
 concéde, quæsumus, ut ad eum sic currámus,  
 ut post mortális vitæ cursum,  
 ibi aliquándo cum frátribus adunémur,  
 ubi omnes lácrimæ ab óculis abstergéntur.

Qui tecum vivit et regnat in sácula sæculórum.  
 R. Amen.]

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## BLESSING

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108. The minister says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;

let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.

A gesture, for example, signing the forehead of the deceased with the sign of the cross, may accompany the following words.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.

R. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Skip to blessing if (a) a priest or deacon (b) a layperson

[Latin:

Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur amodo. Etiam ut requiescant a laboribus suis; opera enim illorum sequuntur illos

Réquiem æternam dona ei, Dómine.

R. Et lux perpétua lúceat ei.

Requiescat in pace.

R. Amen.

Anima eius, et ánimæ ómnium fidélium defunctórum, per misericórdiam Dei requiescant in pace.

R. Amen.]

A

A minister who is a priest or deacon says:

May the peace of God,  
 which is beyond all understanding,  
 keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of  
 God  
 and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
 the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

[Latin:

Pax Dei, quae exsúperat omnem sensum,  
 custódiat corda vestra et intellegéntias vestras  
 in sciéntia et caritáte Dei,  
 et Fílii sui, Dómini nostri Iesu Christi. R. Amen.

Benedícat vos omnípotens Deus,  
 Pater, et Fílius, + et Spíritus Sanctus.  
 R. Amen.]

B

A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs himself or herself with the sign of the cross, saying:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
 bless and console us  
 and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:  
 in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
 and of the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.”

## PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

Texts marked with an (L) indicate that a Latin text is available after the English text.

### INTRODUCTION

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I want those you have given me to be with me where I am

223. This chapter contains prayers for use by a minister who has been called to attend a person who is already dead. A priest is not to administer the sacraments of penance or anointing. Instead, he should pray for the dead person using these or similar prayers.

224. It may be necessary to explain to the family of the person who is dead that sacraments are celebrated for the living, not for the dead, and that the dead are effectively helped by the prayers of the living.

225. To comfort those present the minister may conclude these prayers with a simple blessing or with a symbolic gesture, for example, making the sign of the cross on the forehead. A priest or deacon may sprinkle the body with holy water.

### GREETING

---

226. The minister greets those who are present, offering them sympathy and the consolation of faith, using one of the following or similar words:

A

In this moment of sorrow  
The Lord is in our midst  
and comforts us with his word:

Blessed are the sorrowful; they shall be consoled.

B

Praised be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation!  
He comforts us in our afflictions  
and thus enables us to comfort those who are in trouble,  
with the same consolation we have received from him.

---

PRAYER

---

227. The minister then says one of the following prayers

Let us pray.

A

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.

[Latin:

Te, Dómine, sancte Pater, omnípotens aetérne Deus,  
 supplices deprecámur pro anima famuli tui N.,  
 quem de hoc sáeculo ad te venire iussísti;  
 ut ei dignéris dare locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.  
 Líceat ei portas mortis sine offensióne transíre  
 et in mansiónibus sanctórum et in luce sancta permáneat,  
 quam olim Abrahæ et eius sémini promisísti.  
 Nullam eius ánima sustíneat læsionem,  
 sed, cum magnus dies ille resurrectionis  
 et remuneratiónis advénerit,  
 resuscitáre eum, Dómine,  
 una cum sanctis et eléctis dignéris;  
 dimíttas ei ómnia delícta atque peccáta,  
 tecúmque immortalitátis vitam  
 et regnum consequátur æternum.  
 Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.  
 R. Amen.]

B

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 for ever.

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.

[Latin:

Tibi, Dómine, fratrem nostrum (sorórem nostram)  
humíliter commendámus,  
ut, quem (quam) in hac vita mortáli  
imménso semper es prosecútus amóre,  
nunc, a malis ómnibus liberátum (liberátam),  
in réquiem íngredi iúbeas sempitérnam.  
Tuam ergo cleméntiam deprecámur,  
ut, quia prima iam transiérunt,  
illum (illam) in paradísium tuum benígne perdúcas,  
ubi neque luctus, neque clamor, neque dolor erit ultra,  
sed pax et gáudium, cum Fílio tuo et Spírítu Sancto,  
in sǎcula sǎculórum  
R. Amen.]

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## READING

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228. The word of God is proclaimed by one of those present or by the minister.

A.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
23:44-46

It was now around midday, and darkness came over the whole land until midafternoon with an eclipse of the sun. The curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two. Jesus uttered a loud cry and said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." After he said this, he expired.

The Gospel of the Lord.

B.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John  
11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33-36, 41-44

The sisters sent word to Jesus to inform him, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” Upon hearing this, Jesus said: “This sickness is not to end in death; rather it is for God’s glory, that through it the Son of God may be glorified.”

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus very much. Yet, after hearing that Lazarus was sick, he stayed on where he was for two days more. Finally he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea. Finally, he said to his disciples “Let us go back to Judea.”

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. When Martha had heard that Jesus was coming she went to meet him, while Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would never have died. Even now, I am sure that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” “Your brother will rise again,” Jesus assured her. “I know he will rise again,” Martha replied, “in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her: “I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me, though he should die, will come to life; and whoever is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied. “I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God: he who is to come into the world.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jewish folk who had accompanied her also weeping, he was troubled in spirit,

moved by the deepest emotions. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Lord, come and see,” they said. Jesus began to weep, which caused the Jews to remark, “See how much he loved him!” They then took away the stone and Jesus looked upward and said: “Father, I thank you for having heard me. I know that you always hear me but I have said this for the sake of the crowd, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Having said this, he called loudly, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, bound hand and foot with linen strips, his face wrapped in a cloth. “Untie him,” Jesus told them, “and let him go free.” This caused many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, to put their faith in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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#### LITANY OF THE SAINTS

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229. Then one of those present may lead the others in praying a brief form of the litany of saints – the full form may be found below. Other saints may be added, including the patron saints of the dead person, of the family, and of the parish; saints to whom the dead person had a special devotion may also be included.

A

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

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for him/her.  
 Holy angels of God, pray for him/her.

Abraham, our father in faith, pray for him/her.  
 David, leader of God's people, pray for him/her.  
 All holy patriarchs and prophets, pray for him/her.  
 Saint John the Baptist, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Joseph, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Peter and Saint Paul, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Andrew, pray for him/her.  
 Saint John, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Stephen, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Ignatius, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Lawrence, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Agnes, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Gregory, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Augustine, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Athanasius, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Basil, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Martin, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Benedict, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Francis Xavier, pray for him/her.  
 Saint John Vianney, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Catherine, pray for him/her.  
 Saint Teresa, pray for him/her.

Other saints may be included here

All holy men and women, pray for him/her.

Lord, be merciful, Lord, save your people.  
 From all evil, Lord, save your people.  
 From every sin, Lord, save your people.  
 From Satan's power, Lord, save your people.  
 At the moment of death, Lord, save your people.  
 From everlasting death, Lord, save your people.

On the day of judgment, Lord, save your people.  
 By your coming as man, Lord, save your people.  
 By your suffering and cross, Lord, save your people.  
 By your death and rising to new life, Lord, save your people.  
 By your return in glory to the Father, Lord, save your people.  
 By your gift of the Holy Spirit, Lord, save your people.  
 By your coming again in glory, Lord, save your people.  
 Be merciful to us sinners, Lord, save your people.

Bring N. to eternal life, first promised to him/her in baptism, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Raise N. on the last day, for he/she has eaten the Bread of Life, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Let N. share in your glory, for he/she has shared in your suffering and death, Lord, hear our prayer.  
 Jesus, Son of the Living God, Lord, hear our prayer.

Christ, hear us. Christ, hear us.  
 Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Lord Jesus, hear our prayer.

The following prayer is added

God of mercy,  
 hear our prayers and be merciful  
 to your son/daughter N.,  
 whom you have called from this life.  
 Welcome him/her into the company of your saints,  
 in the kingdom of light and peace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!

Come to meet him/her angels of the Lord!

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for him/her.

Saint Joseph, pray for him/her.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, pray for him/her.

Other saints may be included here.

All holy men and women, pray for him/her.

The following prayer is added

God of mercy,

hear our prayers and be merciful

to your son/daughter N.,

whom you have called from this life.

Welcome him/her into the company of your saints,

in the kingdom of light and peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

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### THE LORD'S PRAYER

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230. The minister introduces the Lord's Prayer in these or similar words:

A With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

B Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

All say:

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.

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PRAYER OF COMMENDATION

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231. The minister concludes with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,  
 you willingly gave yourself up to death  
 so that all people might be saved  
 and pass from death into a new life.  
 Listen to our prayers;  
 look with love on your people  
 who mourn and pray for their dead brother/sister N.

Lord Jesus, you alone are holy and compassionate:  
 forgive N. his/her sins.  
 By dying you opened the gates of life  
 for those who believe in you;  
 do not let our brother/sister be parted from you,  
 but by your glorious power  
 give him/her light, joy, and peace in heaven  
 where you live for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

[Latin:

Dómine, Redemptor noster,  
 qui teípsum morti tradidísti,

ut omnes hómines salvi fíerent  
 et ad vitam possent de morte transire,  
 clementissimam pietátem tuam humílter deprecamur,  
 ut digneris omnes servos tuos intueri lugentes  
 et pro amisso propinquo suo suppliciter exorantes.  
 Illi omnia peccata dimitte, Domine,  
 qui solus es sanctus et summe misericors,  
 qui per mortem tuam portas vitae tuis fidelis reserasti.  
 Ne fratrem nostrum a te separari, Rex aterne, permittas,  
 sed virtute gloriae tuae locum ei lucis, beatudinis et pacis  
 largire.  
 Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.  
 R. Amen.]

For the solace of those present the minister may conclude these prayers with a simple blessing or with a symbolic gesture, for example, signing the forehead with the sign of the cross. A priest or deacon may sprinkle the body with holy water.

## **GATHERING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY**

Texts marked with an (L) indicate that a Latin text is available after the English text.

### **INTRODUCTION**

If we have died with Christ, we believe we shall also live with him used when the family first gathers in the presence of the body, when the body is to be prepared for burial, or after it has been prepared. The family members, in assembling in the presence of the body, confront in the most immediate way the fact of their loss and the mystery of death. Because cultural attitudes and practices on such occasions may vary, the minister should adapt the rite.

110 Through the presence of the minister and others and through the celebration of this brief rite, the community seeks to be with the mourners in their need and to provide an atmosphere of sensitive concern and confident faith. In prayer and gesture those present show reverence for the body of the deceased as a temple of the life-giving Spirit and ask, in that same Spirit, for the eternal life promised to the faithful.

111 The minister should try to be as attentive as possible to the particular needs of the mourners. The minister begins the rite at an opportune moment and, as much as possible, in an atmosphere of calm and recollection. The pause for silent prayer after the Scripture verse can be especially helpful in this regard.

### **SIGN OF THE CROSS**

112 The minister and those present sign themselves with the sign of the cross and the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE VERSE

113 One of the following or another brief Scripture verse is read.

A Matthew 11:28-30

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

B John 14:1-3

My brothers and sisters, Jesus says:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be.”

Pause for silent prayer.

## SPRINKLING WITH HOLY WATER

114 Using one of the following formularies, the minister may sprinkle the body with holy water.

A

The Lord is our shepherd  
and leads us to streams of living water.

B

Let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ  
who by his death and resurrection has redeemed us.

C

The Lord God lives in his holy temple yet abides in our  
midst.

Since in baptism N. became God's temple  
and the Spirit of God lived in him/her,  
with reverence we bless his/her mortal body.

## PSALM

115 One of the following psalms is sung or said:

A

Psalm 130

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

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.

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

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

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

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

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

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

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

B

Psalm 115 and 116

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

How gracious is the Lord, and just;  
 our God has compassion.  
 The Lord protects the simple hearts;  
 I was helpless so he saved me.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

I trusted, even when I said:  
 “I am sorely afflicted,”  
 and when I said in my alarm:  
 “No man can be trusted.”

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
 is the death of his faithful.  
 Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
 you have loosened my bonds.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

116 Using one of the following invitations, or in similar words, the minister invites those present to pray the Lord’s Prayer.

A

With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:

B

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

All:

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.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

117 The minister says one of the following prayers:

A

God of faithfulness,  
 in your wisdom you have called your servant N. out of this  
 world;  
 release him/her from the bonds of sin,  
 and welcome him/her into your presence,  
 so that he/she may enjoy eternal light and peace  
 and be raised up in glory with all your saints.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B

Into your hands, O Lord,  
 we humbly entrust our brother/sister N.  
 In this life you embraced him/her with your tender love;  
 deliver him/her now from every evil  
 and bid him/her enter eternal rest.

The old order has passed away:  
 welcome him/her then into paradise,  
 where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,  
 but the fullness of peace and joy  
 with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
 for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

## BLESSING

118 The minister says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;  
 let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with  
 them.

A gesture, for example, signing the forehead of the  
 deceased with the sign of the cross, may accompany the  
 following words.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.  
 R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.  
 R. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
 through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
 R. Amen.

A

A minister who is a priest or deacon says:

May the peace of God,  
 which is beyond all understanding,

keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of  
God  
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

B

A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs himself or  
herself with the sign of the cross, saying:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
bless and console us  
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

## VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

In the light of verbal indications given to several episcopal Conferences, texts in this rite affected by the new translation of the Roman Missal into English are appended and indicated by the abbreviation ‘NTRM’. Users are requested to consult their local Ordinary, or abide by guidelines issued by him, in determining which text to use.

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### INTRODUCTORY RITES

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#### GREETING

69 Using one of the following greetings, or in similar words, the minister greets those present.

A.

May the God of hope give you the fullness of peace, and may the Lord of life be always with you.

R. And also with you. [NTRM: And with your spirit.]

B.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

R. And also with you. [NTRM: And with your spirit.]

C.

The grace and peace of God our Father, who raised Jesus from the dead, be always with you.

R. And also with you. [NTRM: And with your spirit.]

D.

May the Father of mercies, the God of all consolation, be with you.

R. And also with you. [NTRM: And with your spirit.]

## OPENING SONG

70 The celebration continues with a song.

## INVITATION TO PRAYER

71 In the following or similar words, the minister invites those present to pray:

My brothers and sisters, we believe that all the ties of friendship and affection which knit us as one throughout our lives do not unravel with death. Confident that God always remembers the good we have done and forgives our sins, let us pray, asking God to gather N. to himself.

Pause for silent prayer.

## OPENING PRAYER

72 The minister says one of the following prayers.

398 The following prayers for the dead may be used in the various rites. The prayers should be chosen taking the character of the text into account as well as the place in the rite where it will occur.

1 General 1 2 General 2 3 General 3 4 General 4 5  
 General 5 6 General 6 7 General 7 8 General 8 9  
 General 9 10 General 10 11 General 11 12 General 12  
 13 General 13 14 A pope 15 A diocesan bishop 16  
 Another bishop 17 A priest 1 18 A priest 2 19 A priest  
 3 20 A deacon 1 21 A deacon 2 22 A religious 1 23 A

religious 2 24 One who worked in the service of the Gospel 25 A baptized child 1 26 A baptized child 2 27 A young person 1 28 A young person 2 29 Parents 30 A parent 31 A married couple 1 32 A married couple 2 33 A married couple 3 34 A wife 35 A husband 36 A deceased non-Christian married to a Catholic 37 An elderly person 1 38 An elderly person 2 39 One who died after a long illness 1 40 One who died after a long illness 2 41 One who died after a long illness 3 42 One who died suddenly 43 One who died accidentally or violently 44 One who died by suicide 1 45 One who died by suicide 2 46 Several persons 1 47 Several persons 2

## 1 General

God of faithfulness,  
 in your wisdom you have called your servant N. out of this world;  
 release him/her from the bonds of sin,  
 and welcome him/her into your presence,  
 so that he/she may enjoy eternal light and peace  
 and be raised up in glory with all your saints.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## 2 General

Lord, in our grief we turn to you.  
 Are you not the God of love  
 who open your ears to all?

Listen to our prayers for your servant N.,  
 whom you have called out of this world:  
 lead him/her to your kingdom of light and peace  
 and count him/her among the saints in glory.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

### 3 General

Holy Lord, almighty and eternal God,  
 hear our prayers for your servant N.,  
 whom you have summoned out of this world.  
 Forgive his/her sins and failings  
 and grant him/her a place of refreshment, light, and peace.  
 Let him/her pass unharmed through the gates of death  
 to dwell with the blessed in light,  
 as you promised to Abraham and his children for ever.  
 Accept N. into your safekeeping  
 and on the great day of judgment  
 raise him/her up with all the saints  
 to inherit your eternal kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 4 General

Into your hands, O Lord,  
 we humbly entrust our brother/sister N.  
 In this life you embraced him/her with your tender love;  
 deliver him/her now from every evil  
 and bid him/her enter eternal rest.  
 The old order has passed away:  
 welcome him/her then into paradise,  
 where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,  
 but the fullness of peace and joy  
 with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
 for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

### 5 General

Almighty God and Father,  
 it is our certain faith that your Son, who died on the cross,  
 was raised from the dead,  
 the firstfruits of all who have fallen asleep.  
 Grant that through this mystery  
 your servant N., who has gone to his/her rest in Christ,  
 may share in the joy of his resurrection.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 6 General

O God,  
 glory of believers and life of the just,  
 by the death and resurrection of your Son, we are  
 redeemed:  
 have mercy on your servant N.,  
 and make him/her worthy to share the joys of paradise,  
 for he/she believed in the resurrection of the dead.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 7 General

Almighty God and Father,  
 by the mystery of the cross, you have made us strong;  
 by the sacrament of the resurrection  
 you have sealed us as your own.  
 Look kindly upon your servant N.,  
 now freed from the bonds of mortality,  
 and count him/her among your saints in heaven.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 8 General

God of loving kindness,  
 listen favorably to our prayers:  
 strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead  
 and our hope that your servant N. will also rise again.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 9 General

To you, O God, the dead do not die,  
 and in death our life is changed, not ended.  
 Hear our prayers  
 and command the soul of your servant N.  
 to dwell with Abraham, your friend,  
 and be raised at last on the great day of judgment.  
 In your mercy cleanse him/her of any sin  
 which he/she may have committed through human frailty.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 10 General

Lord God, in whom all find refuge,  
 we appeal to your boundless mercy:  
 grant to the soul of your servant N.  
 a kindly welcome,  
 cleansing of sin,  
 release from the chains of death,  
 and entry into everlasting life.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 11 General

God of all consolation,  
 open our hearts to your word,

so that, listening to it, we may comfort one another,  
 finding light in time of darkness  
 and faith in time of doubt.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## 12 General

O God, to whom mercy and forgiveness belong,  
 hear our prayers on behalf of your servant N.,  
 whom you have called out of this world;  
 and because he/she put his/her hope and trust in you,  
 command that he/she be carried safely home to heaven  
 and come to enjoy your eternal reward.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## 13 General

O God,  
 in whom sinners find mercy and the saints find joy,  
 we pray to you for our brother/sister N.,  
 whose body we honor with Christian burial,  
 that he/she may be delivered from the bonds of death.  
 Admit him/her to the joyful company of your saints  
 and raise him/her on the last day  
 to rejoice in your presence for ever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## 14 A pope

O God, from whom the just receive an unfailing reward,  
 grant that your servant N., our Pope,  
 whom you made vicar of Peter and shepherd of your  
 Church,

may rejoice for ever in the vision of your glory,  
 for he was a faithful steward here on earth  
 of the mysteries of your forgiveness and grace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 15 A diocesan bishop

Almighty and merciful God,  
 eternal Shepherd of your people,  
 listen to our prayers and grant that your servant, N., our  
 bishop,  
 to whom you entrusted the care of this Church,  
 may enter the joy of his eternal Master,  
 there to receive the rich reward of his labors.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 16 Another bishop

O God, from the ranks of your priests  
 you chose your servant N.  
 to fulfill the office of bishop.  
 Grant that he may share  
 in the eternal fellowship of those priests  
 who, faithful to the teachings of the apostles,  
 dwell in your heavenly kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 17 A priest

God of mercy and love,  
 grant to N., your servant and priest,  
 a glorious place at your heavenly table,  
 for you made him here on earth

a faithful minister of your word and sacrament.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

18 A priest

O God,  
 listen favorably to our prayers  
 offered on behalf of your servant and priest,  
 and grant that N.,  
 who committed himself zealously to the service of your  
 name,  
 may rejoice for ever in the company of your saints.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

19 A priest

Lord God,  
 you chose our brother N. to serve your people as a priest  
 and to share the joys and burdens of their lives.  
 Look with mercy on him  
 and give him the reward of his labors,  
 the fullness of life promised to those who preach your holy  
 Gospel.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

20 A deacon

God of mercy,  
 as once you chose seven men of honest repute  
 to serve your Church,  
 so also you chose N. as your servant and deacon.  
 Grant that he may rejoice in your eternal fellowship  
 with all the heralds of your Gospel,

for he was untiring in his ministry here on earth.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## 21 A deacon

Lord God,  
 you sent your Son into the world  
 to preach the Good News of salvation  
 and to pour out his Spirit of grace upon your Church.  
 Look with kindness on your servant N.  
 As a deacon in the Church  
 he was strengthened by the gift of the Spirit  
 to preach the Good News,  
 to minister in your assembly,  
 and to do the works of charity.

Give him the reward promised  
 to those who show their love of you  
 by service to their neighbor.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## 22 A religious

All-powerful God, we pray for our brother/sister N.,  
 who responded to the call of Christ  
 and pursued wholeheartedly the ways of perfect love.  
 Grant that he/she may rejoice  
 on that day when your glory will be revealed  
 and in company with all his/her brothers and sisters  
 share for ever the happiness of your kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## 23 A religious

God of blessings,  
 source of all holiness,  
 the voice of your Spirit has drawn countless men and  
 women  
 to follow Jesus Christ  
 and to bind themselves to you  
 with ready will and loving heart.  
 Look with mercy on N.  
 who sought to fulfill his/her vows to you,  
 and grant him/her the reward promised to all good and  
 faithful servants.

May he/she rejoice in the company of the saints  
 and with them praise you for ever.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

24 One who worked in the service of the Gospel

Faithful God,  
 we humbly ask your mercy for your servant N.,  
 who worked so generously to spread the Good News:  
 grant him/her the reward of his/her labors  
 and bring him/her safely to your promised land.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

25 A baptized child

Lord, in our grief we call upon your mercy:  
 open your ears to our prayers,  
 and one day unite us again with N.,  
 who, we firmly trust,  
 already enjoys eternal life in your kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

26 A baptized child

To you, O Lord,  
 we humbly entrust this child,  
 so precious in your sight.  
 Take him/her into your arms  
 and welcome him/her into paradise,  
 where there will be no sorrow,  
 no weeping nor pain,  
 but the fullness of peace and joy  
 with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
 for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

27 A young person

Lord,  
 your wisdom governs the length of our days.  
 We mourn the loss of N.,  
 whose life has passed so quickly,  
 and we entrust him/her to your mercy.  
 Welcome him/her into your heavenly dwelling  
 and grant him/her the happiness of everlasting youth.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

28 A young person

Lord God,  
 source and destiny of our lives,  
 in your loving providence  
 you gave us N.  
 to grow in wisdom, age, and grace.  
 Now you have called him/her to yourself.

As we grieve the loss of one so young,  
 we seek to understand your purpose.  
 Draw him/her to yourself  
 and give him/her full stature in Christ.  
 May he/she stand with all the angels and saints,  
 who know your love and praise your saving will.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 29 Parents

Lord God, who commanded us to honor father and mother,  
 look kindly upon your servants N. and N.,  
 have mercy upon them  
 and let us see them again in eternal light.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 30 A parent

God of our ancestors in faith,  
 by the covenant made on Mount Sinai  
 you taught your people to strengthen the bonds of family  
 through faith, honor, and love.  
 Look kindly upon N.,  
 a father/mother who sought to bind his/her children to you.  
 Bring him/her one day to our heavenly home  
 where the saints dwell in blessedness and peace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 31 A married couple

Lord God, whose covenant is everlasting,  
 have mercy upon the sins of your servants N. and N.;

as their love for each other united them on earth,  
 so let your love join them together in heaven.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 32 A married couple

Eternal Father,  
 in the beginning you established the love of man and  
 woman  
 as a sign of creation.  
 Your own Son loves the Church as a spouse.  
 Grant mercy and peace to N. and N. who,  
 by their love for each other,  
 were signs of the creative love  
 which binds the Church to Christ.  
 We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 33 A married couple

Lord God,  
 giver of all that is true and lovely and gracious,  
 you created in marriage a sign of your covenant.  
 Look with mercy upon N. and N.  
 You blessed them in their companionship,  
 and in their joys and sorrows you bound them together.  
 Lead them into eternal peace,  
 and bring them to the table  
 where the saints feast together in your heavenly home.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 34 A wife

Eternal God,

you made the union of man and woman  
a sign of the bond between Christ and the Church.

Grant mercy and peace to N.,  
who was united in love with her husband.  
May the care and devotion of her life on earth  
find a lasting reward in heaven.  
Look kindly on her husband and family/children  
as now they turn to your compassion and love.  
Strengthen their faith and lighten their loss.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

### 35 A husband

Eternal God,  
you made the union of man and woman  
a sign of the bond between Christ and the Church.

Grant mercy and peace to N.,  
who was united in love with his wife.  
May the care and devotion of his life on earth  
find a lasting reward in heaven.  
Look kindly on his wife and family/children  
as now they turn to your compassion and love.  
Strengthen their faith and lighten their loss.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

### 36 A deceased non-Christian married to a Catholic

Almighty and faithful Creator,  
all things are of your making,  
all people are shaped in your image.  
We now entrust the soul of N. to your goodness.  
In your infinite wisdom and power,

work in him/her your merciful purpose,  
 known to you alone from the beginning of time.  
 Console the hearts of those who love him/her  
 in the hope that all who trust in you  
 will find peace and rest in your kingdom.  
 We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 37 An elderly person

God of endless ages,  
 from one generation to the next  
 you have been our refuge and strength.  
 Before the mountains were born  
 or the earth came to be,  
 you are God.  
 Have mercy now on your servant N.  
 whose long life was spent in your service.  
 Give him/her a place in your kingdom,  
 where hope is firm for all who love  
 and rest is sure for all who serve.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 38 An elderly person

God of mercy,  
 look kindly on your servant N.  
 who has set down the burden of his/her years.  
 As he/she served you faithfully throughout his/her life,  
 may you give him/her the fullness of your peace and joy.  
 We give thanks for the long life of N.,  
 now caught up in your eternal love.  
 We make our prayer in the name of Jesus who is our risen  
 Lord  
 now and for ever.

R. Amen.

39 One who died after a long illness

God of deliverance,  
 you called our brother/sister N.  
 to serve you in weakness and pain,  
 and gave him/her the grace of sharing the cross of your  
 Son.

Reward his/her patience and forbearance,  
 and grant him/her the fullness of Christ's victory.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

40 One who died after a long illness

Most faithful God,  
 lively is the courage of those who hope in you.  
 Your servant N. suffered greatly  
 but placed his/her trust in your mercy.

Confident that the petition of those who mourn  
 pierces the clouds and finds an answer,  
 we beg you, give rest to N.

Do not remember his/her sins  
 but look upon his/her sufferings  
 and grant him/her refreshment, light, and peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

41 One who died after a long illness

O God,  
 you are water for our thirst  
 and manna in our desert.  
 We praise you for the life of N.  
 and bless your mercy

that has brought his/her suffering to an end.  
 Now we beg that same endless mercy  
 to raise him/her to new life.  
 Nourished by the food and drink of heaven,  
 may he/she rest for ever  
 in the joy of Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 42 One who died suddenly

Lord,  
 as we mourn the sudden death of our brother/sister,  
 show us the immense power of your goodness  
 and strengthen our belief  
 that N. has entered into your presence.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 43 One who died accidentally or violently

Lord our God,  
 you are always faithful and quick to show mercy.  
 Our brother/sister N. was suddenly [and violently] taken  
 from us.  
 Come swiftly to his/her aid,  
 have mercy on him/her,  
 and comfort his/her family and friends  
 by the power and protection of the cross.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 44 One who died by suicide

God, lover of souls,  
 you hold dear what you have made  
 and spare all things, for they are yours.

Look gently on your servant N.,  
and by the blood of the cross  
forgive his/her sins and failings.

Remember the faith of those who mourn  
and satisfy their longing for that day  
when all will be made new again  
in Christ, our risen Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.  
R. Amen.

#### 45 One who died by suicide

Almighty God and Father of all,  
you strengthen us by the mystery of the cross  
and with the sacrament of your Son's resurrection.  
Have mercy on our brother/sister N.  
Forgive all his/her sins and grant him/her peace.  
May we who mourn this sudden death be comforted  
and consoled by your power and protection.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

#### 46 Several persons

O Lord,  
you gave new life to N. and N.  
in the waters of baptism;  
show mercy to them now,  
and bring them to the happiness of life in your kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.

#### 47 Several persons

All-powerful God,

whose mercy is never withheld  
 from those who call upon you in hope,  
 look kindly on your servants N. and N.,  
 who departed this life confessing your name,  
 and number them among your saints for evermore.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

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## LITURGY OF THE WORD

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73 The celebration continues with the liturgy of the word.

### FIRST READING

74 A reader proclaims the first reading.

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the  
 Corinthians

We have an everlasting home in heaven

We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be  
 destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not  
 made with hands, eternal in heaven.

So we are always courageous, although we know that while  
 we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for  
 we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and  
 we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord.  
 Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home  
 or away. For we must all appear before the judgment seat  
 of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense,  
 according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

75 The following psalm is sung or said or another psalm or song.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

The Lord is my light and my help;  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
before whom shall I shrink?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, for this I long,  
to live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life,  
to savor the sweetness of the Lord,  
to behold his temple.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;  
have mercy and answer.

Of you my heart has spoken:  
“Seek his face.”

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.

Hope in the Lord!

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

## GOSPEL

76 The gospel reading is then proclaimed.

+ A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 12:35-40

Be prepared

Jesus told his disciples:

“Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them. And should he come in the second or third watch and find them prepared in this way, blessed are those servants. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour when the thief was

coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

## HOMILY

77 A brief homily on the readings is then given.

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## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

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## LITANY

78 The minister leads those present in the following litany.

Let us turn to Christ Jesus with confidence and faith in the power of his cross and resurrection.

Assisting minister:

Risen Lord, pattern of our life for ever:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Promise and image of what we shall be:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Son of God who came to destroy sin and death:

Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Word of God who delivered us from the fear of death:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Crucified Lord, forsaken in death, raised in glory:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, gentle Shepherd who brings rest to our souls,  
give peace to N. for ever:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Lord Jesus, you bless those who mourn and are in pain.  
Bless N.'s family and friends who gather around him/her  
today:  
Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

79 Using one of the following invitations, or in similar words, the minister invites those present to pray the Lord's Prayer.

A Friends (brothers and sisters), our true home is heaven. Therefore let us pray to our heavenly Father as Jesus taught us:

B With God there is mercy and fullness of redemption; let us pray as Jesus taught us:

C Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom as Jesus taught us:

All:

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.

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

80 The minister says one of the following prayers. The following prayers for the mourners may be used in the various rites. The prayers should be chosen taking the character of the text into account as well as the place in the rite where it will occur.

1 General 1

2 General 2

3 General 3

4 General 4

5 General 5

6 General 6

7 General 7

8 A baptized child 1

9 A baptized child 2

10 A baptized child 3

11 A baptized child 4

12 A baptized child 5

13 A child who died before baptism 1

14 A child who died before baptism 2

15 A stillborn child

1 General

Father of mercies and God of all consolation,  
you pursue us with untiring love  
and dispel the shadow of death  
with the bright dawn of life.

[Comfort your family in their loss and sorrow.  
 Be our refuge and our strength, O Lord,  
 and lift us from the depths of grief  
 into the peace and light of your presence.]

Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 by dying has destroyed our death,  
 and by rising, restored our life.  
 Enable us therefore to press on toward him,  
 so that, after our earthly course is run,  
 he may reunite us with those we love,  
 when every tear will be wiped away.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

## 2 General

Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,  
 you willingly gave yourself up to death,  
 so that all might be saved and pass from death to life.  
 We humbly ask you to comfort your servants in their grief  
 and to receive N. into the arms of your mercy.  
 You alone are the Holy One,  
 you are mercy itself;  
 by dying you unlocked the gates of life  
 for those who believe in you.  
 Forgive N. his/her sins,  
 and grant him/her a place of happiness, light, and peace  
 in the kingdom of your glory for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

## 3 General

God, all-compassionate,  
 ruler of the living and the dead,

you know beforehand  
 those whose faithful lives reveal them as your own.  
 We pray for those who belong to this present world  
 and for those who have passed to the world to come:  
 grant them pardon for all their sins.  
 We ask you graciously to hear our prayer  
 through the intercession of all the saints  
 and for your mercy's sake.  
 For you are God, for ever and ever.  
 R. Amen.

#### 4 General

Lord our God,  
 the death of our brother/sister N.  
 recalls our human condition  
 and the brevity of our lives on earth.  
 But for those who believe in your love  
 death is not the end,  
 nor does it destroy the bonds  
 that you forge in our lives.  
 We share the faith of your Son's disciples  
 and the hope of the children of God.  
 Bring the light of Christ's resurrection  
 to this time of testing and pain  
 as we pray for N. and for those who love him/her,  
 through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 5 General

Lord God,  
 you are attentive to the voice of our pleading.  
 Let us find in your Son  
 comfort in our sadness,  
 certainty in our doubt,

and courage to live through this hour.  
 Make our faith strong  
 through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 6 General

Lord,  
 N. is gone now from this earthly dwelling  
 and has left behind those who mourn his/her absence.  
 Grant that as we grieve for our brother/sister  
 we may hold his/her memory dear  
 and live in hope of the eternal kingdom  
 where you will bring us together again.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 7 General

Most merciful God,  
 whose wisdom is beyond our understanding,  
 surround the family of N. with your love,  
 that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss,  
 but have confidence in your goodness,  
 and strength to meet the days to come.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

#### 8 A baptized child

Lord of all gentleness,  
 surround us with your care  
 and comfort us in our sorrow,  
 for we grieve at the loss of this [little] child.

As you washed N. in the waters of baptism

and welcomed him/her into the life of heaven,  
 so call us one day  
 to be united with him/her  
 and share for ever the joy of your kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 9 A baptized child

Eternal Father,  
 through the intercession of Mary,  
 who bore your Son and stood by the cross as he died,  
 grant to these parents in their grief  
 the assistance of her presence,  
 the comfort of her faith,  
 and the reward of her prayers.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

### 10 A baptized child

Lord God,  
 source and destiny of our lives,  
 in your loving providence  
 you gave us N.  
 to grow in wisdom, age, and grace.  
 Now you have called him/her to yourself.

We grieve over the loss of one so young  
 and struggle to understand your purpose.

Draw him/her to yourself  
 and give him/her full stature in Christ.  
 May he/she stand with all the angels and saints,  
 who know your love and praise your saving will.  
 We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

R. Amen.

11 A baptized child

Merciful Lord,  
 whose wisdom is beyond human understanding,  
 you adopted N. as your own in baptism  
 and have taken him/her to yourself  
 even as he/she stood on the threshold of life.  
 Listen to our prayers and extend to us your grace,  
 that one day we may share eternal life with N.,  
 for we firmly believe that he/she now rests with you.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

12 A baptized child

Lord God,  
 from whom human sadness is never hidden,  
 you know the burden of grief that we feel at the loss of this  
 child.

As we mourn his/her passing from this life,  
 comfort us with the knowledge  
 that N. lives now in your loving embrace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

13 A child who died before baptism

O Lord, whose ways are beyond understanding,  
 listen to the prayers of your faithful people:  
 that those weighed down by grief  
 at the loss of this [little] child  
 may find reassurance in your infinite goodness.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

14 A child who died before baptism

God of all consolation,  
 searcher of mind and heart,  
 the faith of these parents [N. and N.] is known to you.

Comfort them with the knowledge  
 that the child for whom they grieve  
 is entrusted now to your loving care.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

15 A stillborn child

Lord God,  
 ever caring and gentle,  
 we commit to your love this little one,  
 quickened to life for so short a time.  
 Enfold him/her in eternal life.

We pray for his/her parents  
 who are saddened by the loss of their child.  
 Give them courage  
 and help them in their pain and grief.  
 May they all meet one day  
 in the joy and peace of your kingdom.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

A member or a friend of the family may speak in  
 remembrance of the deceased.

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CONCLUDING RITE

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## BLESSING

81 The minister says:

Blessed are those who have died in the Lord;  
let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with  
them.

A gesture, for example, signing the forehead of the  
deceased with the sign of the cross, may accompany the  
following words.

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.  
R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.  
R. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
R. Amen.

A

A minister who is a priest or deacon says:

May the peace of God,  
which is beyond all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of  
God  
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

B

A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs himself or herself with the sign of the cross, saying:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
bless and console us  
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

The vigil may conclude with a song or a few moments of  
silent prayer or both.

## READINGS FOR THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Masses for the Dead

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Reading from the Old Testament

2 Mc 12 The collection for the dead

Jb 19 I know that my Vindicator lives

Wis 3 As sacrificial offerings he took them to himself

Wis 4 An unsullied life, the attainment of old age

Is 25 He will destroy death forever

Lam 3 It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord

Dn 12 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake

2 Maccabees 12:43-46

He acted in an excellent and noble way as he had the resurrection of the dead in view.

A reading from the second Book of Maccabees

Judas, the ruler of Israel,

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, inasmuch 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.

Job 19:1, 23-27a

I know that my Vindicator lives.

A reading from the Book of Job

Job answered Bildad the Shubite 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 3:1-9 or 3:1-6, 9

As sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

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.  
 In the time of their visitation they shall shine,  
     and shall dart about as sparks through stubble;  
 They shall judge nations and rule over peoples,  
     and the LORD shall be their King forever.  
 Those who trust in him shall understand truth,  
     and the faithful shall abide with him in love:  
 Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,  
     and his care is with the elect.

Or: [Short Form]

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.  
 Those who trust in him shall understand truth,  
     and the faithful shall abide with him in love:  
 Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,  
     and his care is with the elect.

Wisdom 4:7-15

An unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

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

He will destroy death forever.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts  
will provide for all 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!”

Lamentations 3:17-26

It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Lamentations

My soul is deprived of peace,  
 I have forgotten what happiness is;  
 I tell myself my future 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

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall  
awake.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Daniel

In those days, I, Daniel mourned  
and 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.

Reading from the New Testament during the Season of  
Easter

Acts 10 He is the one appointed by God as judge of the  
living and the dead

Rev 14 Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord

Rev 20-21 The dead were judged according to their deeds

Rev 21 There shall be no more death

Acts 10:34-43 or 10:34-36, 42-43

He is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter proceeded to speak and said,

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.

Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.

You know the word that he sent to the children of Israel as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all,

what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.

He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree.

This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible,

not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness,

that everyone who believes in him  
will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Or: [Short Form]

Peter proceeded to speak and said,

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.  
Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts  
uprightly  
is acceptable to him.

You know the word that he sent to the children of Israel  
as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord  
of all.

He commissioned us to preach to the people  
and testify that he is the one appointed by God  
as judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness,  
that everyone who believes in him  
will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Revelation 14:13

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, ““Write this:  
Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”  
“Yes,” said the Spirit,  
“let them find rest from their labors,  
for their works accompany them.”

Revelation 20:11-21:1

The dead were judged according to their deeds.

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, saw a large white throne and the one who was sitting on it.  
 The earth and the sky fled from his presence  
 and there was no place for them.  
 I saw the dead, the great and the lowly, standing before the throne,  
 and scrolls were opened.  
 Then another scroll was opened, the book of life.  
 The dead were judged according to their deeds,  
 by what was written in the scrolls.  
 The sea gave up its dead;  
 then Death and Hades gave up their dead.  
 All the dead were judged according to their deeds.  
 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the pool of fire.  
 (This pool of fire is the second death.)  
 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life  
 was thrown into the pool of fire.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.  
 The former heaven and the former earth had passed away,  
 and the sea was no more.

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7  
 There shall be no more death.

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth.  
 The former heaven and the former earth had passed away,  
 and the sea was no more.  
 I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem,  
 coming down out of heaven from God,  
 prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
 I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,  
 "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people  
 and God himself will always be with them as their God.  
 He will wipe every tear from their eyes,  
 and there shall be no more death or mourning,  
 wailing or pain,  
 for the old order has passed away.”

The one who sat on the throne said,  
 “Behold, I make all things new.  
 I am the Alpha and the Omega,  
 the beginning and the end.  
 To the thirsty I will give a gift  
 from the spring of life-giving water.  
 The victor will inherit these gifts,  
 and I shall be his God,  
 and he will be my son.”

#### Responsorial Psalm

R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall  
 want.

or:

R. (4ab) Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no  
 evil, for you are with me.

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.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil,  
 for you are with me.

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.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
 or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil,  
 for you are with me.

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

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
 or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil,  
 for you are with me.

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.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
 or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil,  
 for you are with me.

Psalm 25:6 and 7b, 17-18, 20-21

R. (1) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.  
 or:

R. (3a) No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,  
 and your kindness are from of old.  
 In your kindness remember me,  
 because of your goodness, O LORD.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

or:

R. No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.

Relieve the troubles of my heart;  
 and bring me out of my distress.  
 Put an end to my affliction and my suffering;  
 and take away all my sins.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

or:

R. No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.

Preserve my life and rescue me;  
 let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.  
 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
 because I wait for you, O LORD.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

or:

R. No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.

Psalm 27:1, 4, 7 and 8b and 9a, 13-14

R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R. (13) I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord  
in the land of the living.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;  
of whom should I be afraid?

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in  
the land of the living.

One thing I ask of the LORD;  
this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,

That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD  
and contemplate his temple.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in  
the land of the living.

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;  
have pity on me, and answer me.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.  
Hide not your face from me.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in  
the land of the living.

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;  
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in  
the land of the living.

Psalm 42:3, 5cdef, 42:3, 4, 5

R. (42:3) My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall  
I see him face to face?

As the hind longs for the running waters,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
him face to face?

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.  
When shall I go and behold the face of God?

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
him face to face?

I went with the throng and led them in procession  
to the house of God.

Amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving,  
with the multitude keeping festival.

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
him face to face?

Send forth your light and your fidelity;

they shall lead me on  
 And bring me to your holy mountain,  
 to your dwelling-place.

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
 him face to face?

Then will I go in to the altar of God,  
 the God of my gladness and joy;  
 Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,  
 O God, my God!

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
 him face to face?

Why are you so downcast, O my soul?  
 Why do you sigh within me?  
 Hope in God! For I shall again be thanking him,  
 in the presence of my savior and my God.

R. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see  
 him face to face?

Psalm 63: 2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

R. (2b) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek;  
 for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts  
 like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary  
 to see your power and your glory,  
 For your kindness is a greater good than life;

my lips shall glorify you.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

Thus will I bless you while I live;  
 lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.  
 As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,  
 and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

You are my help,  
 and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.  
 My soul clings fast to you;  
 your right hand upholds me.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God.

Psalms 103:8 and 10, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18

R. (8a) The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R. (37:39a) The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,  
 slow to anger, and abounding in kindness.  
 Not according to our sins does he deal with us,  
 nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R. The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

As a father has compassion on his children,  
 so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.  
 For he knows how we are formed,

he remembers that we are dust.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R. The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

Man's days are like those of grass;  
 like a flower of the field he blooms;  
 The wind sweeps over him and he is gone,  
 and his place knows him no more.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R. The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

But the kindness of the LORD is from eternity,  
 to eternity toward those who fear him,  
 And his justice toward children's children  
 among those who keep his covenant  
 and remember to fulfill his precepts.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R. The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

Psalm 116:5, 6, 10-11, 15-16ac

R. (9) I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of  
 the living.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Gracious is the LORD and just;  
 yes, our God is merciful.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

or:

R. Alleluia.

The LORD keeps the little ones;

I was brought low, and he saved me.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

or:

R. Alleluia.

I believed, even when I said,

“I am greatly afflicted”;

I said in my alarm,

“No man is dependable.”

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD

is the death of his faithful ones.

O LORD, I am your servant,

you have loosed my bonds.

R. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Psalm 122:1-2, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. (1) I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or:

R. (See 1) Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,

“We will go up to the house of the LORD.”

And now we have set foot

within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or:

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

To it the tribes go up,

the tribes of the LORD,

According to the decree for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,

seats for the house of David.

R. I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or:

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

May those who love you prosper!

May peace be within your walls,

prosperity in your buildings.

R. I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or:

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Because of my relatives and friends  
 I will say "Peace be within you!"  
 Because of the house of the LORD, our God,  
 I will pray for your good.

R. I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house  
 of the Lord.

or:

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8

R. (see 5) Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord

or:

R. (see 5) I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;  
 LORD, hear my voice!  
 Let your ears be attentive  
 to my voice in supplication.

R. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord

or:

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,  
 LORD, who can stand?  
 But with you is forgiveness,  
 that you may be revered.

R. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord

or:

R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

I trust in the LORD;

my soul trusts in his word.  
 My soul waits for the LORD  
 more than the sentinels wait for the dawn.

R. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord  
 or:  
 R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

For with the LORD is kindness  
 and with him is plenteous redemption.

R. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord  
 or:  
 R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

And he will redeem Israel  
 from all their iniquities.

R. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord  
 or:  
 R. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

Psalms 143:1-2, 5-6, 7ab and 8ab, 10

R. (1a) O Lord, hear my prayer.

O LORD, hear my prayer;  
 hearken to my pleading in your faithfulness;  
 in your justice answer me.  
 And enter not into judgment with your servant,  
 for before you no living man is just.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer.

I remember the days of old;  
 I meditate on all your doings;

the works of your hands I ponder.  
 I stretch out my hands to you;  
 my soul thirsts for you like parched land.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer.

Hasten to answer me, O LORD;  
 for my spirit fails me.  
 At dawn let me hear of your mercy,  
 for in you I trust.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer.

Teach me to do your will,  
 for you are my God.  
 May your good spirit guide me  
 on level ground.

R. O Lord, hear my prayer.

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Reading from the New Testament

Rom 5 Since we are now justified in his Blood, we will be  
 saved through him from the wrath

Rom 5 Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more

Rom 6 We too might live in newness of life

Rom 8 We also groan within ourselves

as we wait for adoption,  
 the redemption of our bodies

Rom 8 What will separate us from the love of Christ?

Rom 14 Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's

1 Cor 15 So too in Christ shall all be brought to life

1 Cor 15 Death is swallowed up in victory

2 Cor 4 What is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal

2 Cor 5 We have a building from God, eternal in heaven

Phil 3 He will change our lowly bodies to conform to his glory

1 Thes 4 Thus we shall always be with the Lord

1 Tm 2 If we have died with him, we also shall live with him

1 Jn 3 We shall see him as he is

1 Jn 3 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers

Romans 5:5-11

Since we are now justified in his Blood, we will be saved through him from the wrath.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Hope does not disappoint,

because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For Christ, while we were still helpless,

died at the appointed time for the ungodly.  
 Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person,  
 though perhaps for a good person  
 one might even find courage to die.  
 But God proves his love for us  
 in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.  
 How much more then, since we are now justified by his  
 Blood,  
 will we be saved through him from the wrath.  
 Indeed, if, while we were enemies,  
 we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son,  
 how much more, once reconciled,  
 will we be saved by his life.  
 Not only that,  
 but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 5:17-21

Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

If, by the transgression of the one person,  
 death came to reign through that one,  
 how much more will those who receive the abundance of  
 grace  
 and of the gift of justification  
 come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ.  
 In conclusion, just as through one transgression  
 condemnation came upon all,  
 so through one righteous act,  
 acquittal and life came to all.  
 For just as through the disobedience of the one man  
 the many were made sinners,  
 so through the obedience of the one

the many will be made righteous.  
 The law entered in so that transgression might increase  
 but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more,  
 so that,  
 as sin reigned in death,  
 grace also might reign through justification for eternal  
 life  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:3-9 or 6:3-4, 8-9  
 We too might live in newness of life.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:  
 Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ  
 Jesus  
 were baptized into his death?  
 We were indeed buried with him through baptism into  
 death,  
 so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead  
 by the glory of the Father,  
 we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death  
 like his,  
 we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.  
 We know that our old self was crucified with him,  
 so that our sinful body might be done away with,  
 that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.  
 For a dead person has been absolved from sin.  
 If, then, we have died with Christ,  
 we believe that we shall also live with him.  
 We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;  
 death no longer has power over him.

Or: [Short Form]

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ  
Jesus

were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into  
death,

so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead  
by the glory of the Father,  
we too might live in newness of life.

If, then, we have died with Christ,

we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;  
death no longer has power over him.

Romans 8:14-23

We also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the  
redemption of our bodies.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.  
For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into  
fear,

but you received a spirit of adoption,  
through which we cry, Abba, "Father!"

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit  
that we are children of God,  
and if children, then heirs,  
heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,  
if only we suffer with him  
so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing  
 compared with the glory to be revealed for us.  
 For creation awaits with eager expectation  
 the revelation of the children of God;  
 for creation was made subject to futility,  
 not of its own accord but because of the one who  
 subjected it,  
 in hope that creation itself  
 would be set free from slavery to corruption  
 and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.  
 We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even  
 until now;  
 and not only that, but we ourselves,  
 who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,  
 we also groan within ourselves  
 as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son

but handed him over for us all,

will he not also give us everything else along with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones?

It is God who acquits us.

Who will condemn?

It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised,

who also is at the right hand of God,

who indeed intercedes for us.

What will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine,

or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly  
through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life,  
nor angels, nor principalities,  
nor present things, nor future things,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,  
nor any other creature will be able to separate us  
from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

No one lives for oneself,  
and no one dies for oneself.

For if we live, we live for the Lord,  
and if we die, we die for the Lord;  
so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

For this is why Christ died and came to life,  
that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Why then do you judge your brother?

Or you, why do you look down on your brother?

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God;  
for it is written:

As I live, says the Lord, every knee  
shall bend before me,  
and every tongue shall give praise to God.

So then each of us shall give an account of himself to God.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 or 15:20-23

So too in Christ shall all be brought to life.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the  
Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

Christ has been raised from the dead,  
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since death came through a man,  
the resurrection of the dead came also through a man.

For just as in Adam all die,  
so too in Christ shall all be brought to life,  
but each one in proper order:

Christ the firstfruits;

then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ;  
then comes the end,

when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his  
feet.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death,  
for he subjected everything under his feet.

But when it says that everything has been subjected,  
it is clear that it excludes the one who subjected  
everything to him.

When everything is subjected to him,  
then the Son himself will also be subjected  
to the one who subjected everything to him,  
so that God may be all in all.

Or: [Short Form]

Brothers and sisters:

Christ has been raised from the dead,  
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For since death came through a man,

the resurrection of the dead came also through a man.  
 For just as in Adam all die,  
 so too in Christ shall all be brought to life,  
 but each one in proper order:  
 Christ the firstfruits;  
 then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57  
 Death is swallowed up in victory.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the  
 Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:  
 Behold, I tell you a mystery.  
 We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed,  
 in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet.  
 For the trumpet will sound,  
 the dead will be raised incorruptible,  
 and we shall be changed.  
 For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with  
 incorruptibility,  
 and that which is mortal must clothe itself with  
 immortality.  
 And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with  
 incorruptibility  
 and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality,  
 then the word that is written shall come about:

Death is swallowed up in victory.  
 Where, O death, is your victory?  
 Where, O death, is your sting?

The sting of death is sin,  
 and the power of sin is the law.  
 But thanks be to God who gives us the victory

through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1

What is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the  
Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus  
will raise us also with Jesus  
and place us with you in his presence.

Everything indeed is for you,  
so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and  
more people  
may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of  
God.

Therefore, we are not discouraged;  
rather, although our outer self is wasting away,  
our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this momentary light affliction  
is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all  
comparison,  
as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen;  
for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is  
eternal.

For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent,  
should be destroyed,  
we have a building from God,  
a dwelling not made with hands,  
eternal in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

We have a building from God, eternal in heaven.

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the  
Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

We know that if our earthly dwelling,  
a tent, should be destroyed,  
we have a building from God,  
a dwelling not made with hands,  
eternal in heaven.

We are always courageous,  
although we know that while we are at home in the body  
we are away from the Lord,  
for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Yet we are courageous,  
and we would rather leave the body and go home to the  
Lord.

Therefore, we aspire to please him,  
whether we are at home or away.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,  
so that each one may receive recompense,  
according to what he did in the body, whether good or  
evil.

Philippians 3:20-21

He will change our lowly bodies to conform to his glory.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters:

Our citizenship is in heaven,  
and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.  
He will change our lowly body  
to conform with his glorified Body  
by the power that enables him also  
to bring all things into subjection to himself.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the  
Thessalonians

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,  
about those who have fallen asleep,  
so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no  
hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose,  
so too will God, through Jesus,  
bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord,  
that we who are alive,  
who are left until the coming of the Lord,  
will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself, with a word of command,  
with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of  
God,

will come down from heaven,  
and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Then we who are alive, who are left,  
will be caught up together with them in the clouds  
to meet the Lord in the air.

Thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore, console one another with these words.

2 Timothy 2:8-11

If we have died with him, we also shall live with him.

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

Beloved:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David:

such is my Gospel, for which I am suffering,  
even to the point of chains, like a criminal.

But the word of God is not chained.

Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen,

so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus,

together with eternal glory.

This saying is trustworthy:

If we have died with him  
we shall also live with him;

if we persevere  
we shall also reign with him.

But if we deny him  
he will deny us.

If we are unfaithful,  
he remains faithful,  
for he cannot deny himself.

1 John 3:1-2

We shall see him as he is.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us  
that we may be called the children of God.

Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us  
is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;  
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,  
for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:14-16

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers.

Whoever does not love remains in death.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him.

The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

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Alleluia Verse and Verse before the Gospel

1015.1 See Matthew 11:25

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to the childlike the mysteries of the Kingdom.

1015.2 Matthew 25:34

Come, you who are blessed by my Father, says the Lord; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

1015.3 John 3:16

God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son,

so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

1015.4 John 6:39

This is the will of my Father, 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.

1015.5 John 6:40

This is the will of my Father, says the Lord,  
that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may  
have eternal life,  
and I shall raise him on the last day.

1015.6 John 6:51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven,  
says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever.

1015.7 John 11:25a, 26

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;  
whoever believes in me will never die.

1015.8 See Philippians 3:20

Our true home is in heaven,  
and Jesus Christ, whose return we long for,  
will come from heaven to save us.

1015.9 2 Timothy 2:11-12a

If we die with Christ, we shall live with him,  
and if we persevere we shall also reign with him.

1015.10 Revelation 1:5a, 6b

Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead;  
glory and power be his forever and ever. Amen.

1015.11 Revelation 14:13

Blessed are those who die in the Lord;  
let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with  
them.

Gospel Reading

Mt 5 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in  
heaven

Mt 11 Come to me and I will give you rest

Mt 25 Behold the bridegroom! Come out to him!

Mt 25 Come, you who are blessed by my Father

Mk 15-16 Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last

Lk 7 Young man, I tell you, arise!

Lk 12 You also must be prepared

Lk 23 Today you will be with me in paradise

Lk 23 Father, into your hands I commend my spirit

Lk 24 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer  
these things and enter into his glory?

Jn 5 Whoever hears my word and believes in me has passed from death to life

Jn 6 Everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life

Jn 6 Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and I will raise them on the last day

Jn 11 I am the resurrection and the life

Jn 11 Lazarus, come out!

Jn 12 If it dies, it produces much fruit

Jn 14 In my Father's house there are many dwellings

Jn 17 I wish that where I am they also may be with me

Jn 19 And bowing his head he handed over his Spirit

Matthew 5:1-12a

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
 for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
 Blessed are they who mourn,  
 for they will be comforted.  
 Blessed are the meek,

for they will inherit the land.  
 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
 for they will be satisfied.  
 Blessed are the merciful,  
 for they will be shown mercy.  
 Blessed are the clean of heart,  
 for they will see God.  
 Blessed are the peacemakers,  
 for they will be called children of God.  
 Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of  
 righteousness,  
 for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you  
 and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because  
 of me.  
 Rejoice and be glad,  
 for your reward will be great in heaven.”

Matthew 11:25-30

Come to me and I will give you rest.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

At that time Jesus answered:

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
 for although you have hidden these things  
 from the wise and the learned  
 you have revealed them to the childlike.  
 Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.  
 All things have been handed over to me by my Father.  
 No one knows the Son except the Father,  
 and no one knows the Father except the Son  
 and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,  
 and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
 for I am meek and humble of heart;  
 and you will find rest for yourselves.  
 For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

Matthew 25:1-13

Behold the bridegroom! Come out to him!

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

“The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins  
 who took their lamps and went out to meet the  
 bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish and five were wise.

The foolish ones, when taking their lamps,  
 brought no oil with them,

but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps.

Since the bridegroom was long delayed,  
 they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

At midnight, there was a cry,

‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

The foolish ones said to the wise,

‘Give us some of your oil,  
 for our lamps are going out.’

But the wise ones replied,

‘No, for there may not be enough for us and you.

Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.’

While they went off to buy it,

the bridegroom came

and those who were ready went into the wedding feast  
 with him.

Then the door was locked.

Afterwards the other virgins came and said,

‘Lord, Lord, open the door for us!’

But he said in reply,  
 ‘Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.’  
 Therefore, stay awake,  
 for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Matthew 25:31-46

Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory,  
 and all the angels with him,  
 he will sit upon his glorious throne,  
 and all the nations will be assembled before him.

And he will separate them one from another,  
 as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right,

‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation  
 of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food,

I was thirsty and you gave me drink,

a stranger and you welcomed me,

naked and you clothed me,

ill and you cared for me,

in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say,

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you,  
 or thirsty and give you drink?’

When did we see you a stranger and welcome you,  
 or naked and clothe you?’

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

And the king will say to them in reply,

‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did  
 for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’  
 Then he will say to those on his left,  
 ‘Depart from me, you accursed,  
 into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.  
 For I was hungry and you gave me no food,  
 I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
 a stranger and you gave me no welcome,  
 naked and you gave me no clothing,  
 ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’  
 Then they will answer and say,  
 ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty  
 or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,  
 and not minister to your needs?’  
 He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you,  
 what you did not do for one of these least ones,  
 you did not do for me.’  
 And these will go off to eternal punishment,  
 but the righteous to eternal life.”

Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-6 or 15:33-39

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

At noon darkness came over the whole land  
 until three in the afternoon.  
 And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,  
 Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?  
 which is translated,  
 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”  
 Some of the bystanders who heard it said,  
 “Look, he is calling Elijah.”  
 One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a  
 reed,  
 and gave it to him to drink, saying,

“Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.”  
 Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.  
 The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to  
 bottom.  
 When the centurion who stood facing him  
 saw how he breathed his last he said,  
 “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

When the sabbath was over,  
 Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and  
 Salome  
 bought spices so that they might go and anoint him.  
 Very early when the sun had risen,  
 on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.  
 They were saying to one another,  
 “Who will roll back the stone for us  
 from the entrance to the tomb?”  
 When they looked up,  
 they saw that the stone had been rolled back;  
 it was very large.  
 On entering the tomb they saw a young man  
 sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe,  
 and they were utterly amazed.  
 He said to them, “Do not be amazed!  
 You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified.  
 He has been raised; he is not here.  
 Behold the place where they laid him.”

Or: [Short Form]

At noon darkness came over the whole land  
 until three in the afternoon.  
 And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,  
 Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?  
 which is translated,  
 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Some of the bystanders who heard it said,  
 “Look, he is calling Elijah.”  
 One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a  
 reed,  
 and gave it to him to drink, saying,  
 “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.”  
 Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.  
 The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to  
 bottom.  
 When the centurion who stood facing him  
 saw how he breathed his last he said,  
 “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

Luke 7:11-17

Young man, I tell you, arise!

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain,  
 and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him.  
 As he drew near to the gate of the city,  
 a man who had died was being carried out,  
 the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.  
 A large crowd from the city was with her.  
 When the Lord saw her,  
 he was moved with pity for her and said to her,  
 “Do not weep.”  
 He stepped forward and touched the coffin;  
 at this the bearers halted,  
 and he said, “Young man, I tell you, arise!:  
 The dead man sat up and began to speak,  
 and Jesus gave him to his mother.  
 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming,  
 “A great prophet has arisen in our midst,”  
 and “God has visited his people.”  
 This report about him spread through the whole of Judea

and in all the surrounding region.

Luke 12:35-40

You also must be prepared.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Gird your loins and light your lamps  
and be like servants who await their master’s return from  
a wedding,

ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants

whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.

Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself,

have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them.

And should he come in the second or third watch

and find them prepared in this way,

blessed are those servants.

Be sure of this:

if the master of the house had known the hour

when the thief was coming,

he would not have let his house be broken into.

You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not  
expect,

the Son of Man will come.”

Luke 23:33, 39-43

Today you will be with me in paradise.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

When the soldiers came to the place called the Skull,  
they crucified him and the criminals there,  
one on his right, the other on his left.

Now one of the criminals hanging there  
 reviled Jesus, saying,  
 “Are you not the Christ?  
 Save yourself and us.”  
 The other man, however, rebuking him, said in reply,  
 “Have you no fear of God,  
 for you are subject to the same condemnation?  
 And indeed, we have been condemned justly,  
 for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes,  
 but this man has done nothing criminal.”  
 Then he said,  
 “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”  
 He replied to him,  
 “Amen, I say to you,  
 today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53; 24:1-6a or 23:44-46, 50, 52-53  
 Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

It was about noon and darkness came over the whole land  
 until three in the afternoon  
 because of an eclipse of the sun.  
 Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle.  
 Jesus cried out in a loud voice,  
 “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”;  
 and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph  
 who,  
 though he was a member of the council,  
 went to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus.  
 After he had taken the body down,  
 he wrapped it in a linen cloth  
 and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb

in which no one had yet been buried.

At daybreak on the first day of the week  
 the women took the spices they had prepared  
 and went to the tomb.  
 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb;  
 but when they entered,  
 they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.  
 While they were puzzling over this,  
 behold, two men in dazzling garments appeared to them.  
 They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground.  
 They said to them,  
 “Why do you seek the living one among the dead?  
 He is not here, but he has been raised.”

Or: [Short Form]

It was about noon and darkness came over the whole land  
 until three in the afternoon  
 because of an eclipse of the sun.  
 Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle.  
 Jesus cried out in a loud voice,  
 “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”;  
 and when he had said this he breathed his last.

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph  
 who,  
 though he was a member of the council,  
 went to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus.  
 After he had taken the body down,  
 he wrapped it in a linen cloth  
 and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb  
 in which no one had yet been buried.

Luke 24:13-35 or 24:13-16, 28-35

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

That very day, the first day of the week,  
two of the disciples of Jesus were going  
to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem,  
and they were conversing about all the things that had  
occurred.

And it happened that while they were conversing and  
debating,

Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,  
but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

He asked them,

“What are you discussing as you walk along?”

They stopped, looking downcast.

One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply,

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem  
who does not know of the things  
that have taken place there in these days?”

And he replied to them, “What sort of things?”

They said to him,

“The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene,  
who was a prophet mighty in deed and word  
before God and all the people,  
how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over  
to a sentence of death and crucified him.

But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem  
Israel;

and besides all this,

it is now the third day since this took place.

Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:

they were at the tomb early in the morning

and did not find his Body;

they came back and reported

that they had indeed seen a vision of angels  
who announced that he was alive.  
Then some of those with us went to the tomb  
and found things just as the women had described,  
but him they did not see.”  
And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are!  
How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!  
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these  
things  
and enter into his glory?”  
Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,  
he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the  
Scriptures.  
As they approached the village to which they were going,  
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.  
But they urged him, “Stay with us,  
for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.”  
So he went in to stay with them.  
And it happened that, while he was with them at table,  
he took bread, said the blessing,  
broke it, and gave it to them.  
With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,  
but he vanished from their sight.  
Then they said to each other,  
“Were not our hearts burning within us  
while he spoke to us on the way and opened the  
Scriptures to us?”  
So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem  
where they found gathered together  
the Eleven and those with them, who were saying,  
“The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to  
Simon!”  
Then the two recounted  
what had taken place on the way

and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Or: [Short Form]

That very day, the first day of the week,  
two of the disciples of Jesus were going  
to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem,  
and they were conversing about all the things that had  
occurred.

And it happened that while they were conversing and  
debating,

Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,  
but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

As they approached the village to which they were going,  
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

But they urged him, "Stay with us,  
for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."

So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table,  
he took bread, said the blessing,  
broke it, and gave it to them.

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,  
but he vanished from their sight.

Then they said to each other,

"Were not our hearts burning within us  
while he spoke to us on the way and opened the  
Scriptures to us?"

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem  
where they found gathered together  
the Eleven and those with them, who were saying,  
"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to  
Simon!"

Then the two recounted  
what had taken place on the way

and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

John 5:24-29

Whoever hears my word and believes in me has passed from death to life.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus answered the Jews and said to them:

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word  
and believes in the one who sent me  
has eternal life and will not come to condemnation,  
but has passed from death to life.

Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here

when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God,  
and those who hear will live.

For just as the Father has life in himself,  
so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself.

And he gave him power to exercise judgment,  
because he is the Son of Man.

Do not be amazed at this,

because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs

will hear his voice and will come out,  
those who have done good deeds  
to the resurrection of life,  
but those who have done wicked deeds  
to the resurrection of condemnation.”

John 6:37-40

Everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life and I shall raise him on the last day.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to the crowds:

“Everything that the Father gives me will come to me,  
and I will not reject anyone who comes to me,  
because I came down from heaven not to do my own will  
but the will of the one who sent me.

And this is the will of the one who sent me,  
that I should not lose anything of what he gave me,  
but that I should raise it on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father,  
that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him  
may have eternal life,  
and I shall raise him on the last day.”

John 6:51-58

Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and I will raise  
them on the last day.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to the crowds:

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;  
whoever eats this bread will live forever;  
and the bread that I will give is my Flesh  
for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,

“How can this man give us his Flesh to eat?”

Jesus said to them,

“Amen, amen, I say to you,  
unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his  
Blood,  
you do not have life within you.

Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood  
has eternal life,

and I will raise him on the last day.  
 For my Flesh is true food,  
 and my Blood is true drink.  
 Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood  
 remains in me and I in him.  
 Just as the living Father sent me  
 and I have life because of the Father,  
 so also the one who feeds on me  
 will have life because of me.  
 This is the bread that came down from heaven.  
 Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,  
 whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

John 11:17-27 or 11:21-27

I am the resurrection and the life.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he found that Lazarus  
 had already been in the tomb for four days.  
 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles  
 away.

Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary  
 to comfort them about their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming,  
 she went to meet him;  
 but Mary sat at home.

Martha said to Jesus,  
 “Lord, if you had been here,  
 my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask of God,  
 God will give you.”

Jesus said to her,  
 “Your brother will rise.”

Martha said to him,  
 “I know he will rise,

in the resurrection on the last day.”  
 Jesus told her,  
 “I am the resurrection and the life;  
 whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,  
 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.  
 Do you believe this?”  
 She said to him, “Yes, Lord.  
 I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of  
 God,  
 the one who is coming into the world.”

Or: [Short Form]

Martha said to Jesus,  
 “Lord, if you had been here,  
 my brother would not have died.  
 But even now I know that whatever you ask of God,  
 God will give you.”  
 Jesus said to her,  
 “Your brother will rise.”  
 Martha said to him,  
 “I know he will rise,  
 in the resurrection on the last day.”  
 Jesus told her,  
 “I am the resurrection and the life;  
 whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,  
 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.  
 Do you believe this?”  
 She said to him, “Yes, Lord.  
 I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of  
 God,  
 the one who is coming into the world.”

John 11:32-45  
 Lazarus, come out!

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him,  
 she fell at his feet and said to him,  
 “Lord, if you had been here,  
 my brother would not have died.”  
 When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come  
 with her weeping,  
 he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,  
 “Where have you laid him?”  
 They said to him, “Sir, come and see.”  
 And Jesus wept.  
 So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.”  
 But some of them said,  
 “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man  
 have done something so that this man would not have  
 died?”

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb.  
 It was a cave, and a stone lay across it.  
 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”  
 Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him,  
 “Lord, by now there will be a stench;  
 he has been dead for four days.”  
 Jesus said to her,  
 “Did I not tell you that if you believe  
 you will see the glory of God?”  
 So they took away the stone.  
 And Jesus raised his eyes and said,  
 “Father, I thank you for hearing me.  
 I know that you always hear me;  
 but because of the crowd here I have said this,  
 that they may believe that you sent me.”  
 And when he had said this,  
 he cried out in a loud voice,  
 “Lazarus, come out!”

The dead man came out,  
 tied hand and foot with burial bands,  
 and his face was wrapped in a cloth.  
 So Jesus said to the crowd,  
 “Untie him and let him go.”

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary  
 and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

John 12:23-28 or 12 23:26  
 If it dies, it produces much fruit.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to this disciples:  
 “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.  
 Amen, amen, I say to you,  
 unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,  
 it remains just a grain of wheat;  
 but if it dies, it produces much fruit.  
 Whoever loves his life will lose it,  
 and whoever hates his life in this world  
 will preserve it for eternal life.  
 Whoever serves me must follow me,  
 and where I am, there also will my servant be.  
 The Father will honor whoever serves me.

“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say?  
 ‘Father, save me from this hour’?  
 But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour.  
 Father, glorify your name.”  
 Then a voice came from heaven,  
 “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.”

Or; [Short Form]

Jesus said to this disciples:

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Amen, amen, I say to you,

unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,

it remains just a grain of wheat;

but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves his life will lose it,

and whoever hates his life in this world

will preserve it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me,

and where I am, there also will my servant be.

The Father will honor whoever serves me.

John 14:1-6

In my Father’s house there are many dwellings.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus said to this disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.

If there were not,

would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back again and take you to myself,

so that where I am you also may be.

Where I am going you know the way.”

Thomas said to him,

“Master, we do not know where you are going;

how can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 17:24-26

I wish that where I am they also may be with me.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

“Father, those whom you gave me are your gift to me.

I wish that where I am they also may be with me,

that they may see my glory that you gave me,

because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Righteous Father, the world also does not know you,

but I know you, and they know that you sent me.

I made known to them your name and I will make it known,

that the love with which you loved me

may be in them and I in them.”

John 19:17-18, 25-39

And bowing his head he handed over his Spirit.

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself

he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull,

in Hebrew, Golgotha.

There they crucified him, and with him two others,

one on either side, with Jesus in the middle.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother

and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,

and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved,

he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.”

Then he said to the disciple,

“Behold, your mother.”

And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished,  
in order that the scripture might be fulfilled,  
Jesus said, "I thirst."

There was a vessel filled with common wine.  
So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop  
and put it up to his mouth.

When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,  
"It is finished."

And bowing his head, he handed over the Spirit.

Now since it was preparation day,  
in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on  
the sabbath,

for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one,  
the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken  
and they be taken down.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first  
and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.  
But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already  
dead,

they did not break his legs,  
but one soldier thrust his lance into his side,  
and immediately blood and water flowed out.

An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true;  
he knows that he is speaking the truth,  
so that you also may come to believe.

For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be  
fulfilled:

Not a bone of it will be broken.

And again another passage says:

They will look upon him whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea,  
secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews,  
asked Pilate if he could remove the Body of Jesus.

And Pilate permitted it.  
So he came and took his Body.  
Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night,  
also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes  
weighing about one hundred pounds.

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## The Order of Christian Funerals

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Why do you search for the Living One among the dead?

1 In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. Christ “achieved his task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension.”[1]

2 The proclamation of Jesus Christ “who was put to death for our sins and raised to life to justify us” (Romans 4:25) is at the center of the Church’s life. The mystery of the Lord’s death and resurrection gives power to all of the Church’s activity. “For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the sublime sacrament of the whole Church.” [2] The Church’s liturgical and sacramental life and proclamation of the Gospel make this mystery present in the life of the faithful. Through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, men and women are initiated into this mystery. “You have been taught that when we were baptized in Christ Jesus we were baptized into his death; in other words when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was

raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5).

3 In the eucharistic sacrifice, the Church's celebration of Christ's Passover from death to life, the faith of the baptized in the paschal mystery is renewed and nourished. Their union with Christ and with each other is strengthened: "Because there is one bread, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17).

4 At the death of a Christian, whose life of faith was begun in the waters of baptism and strengthened at the eucharistic table, the Church intercedes on behalf of the deceased because of its confident belief that death is not the end nor does it break the bonds forged in life. The Church also ministers to the sorrowing and consoles them in the funeral rites with the comforting word of God and the sacrament of the eucharist.

5 Christians celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God for the gift of a life which has now been returned to God, the author of life and the hope of the just. The Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection, is the principal celebration of the Christian funeral.

6 The Church through its funeral rites commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins. At the funeral rites, especially at the celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice, the Christian community affirms and expresses the union of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven in the one great communion of saints. Though separated from the living, the dead are still at one

with the community of believers on earth and benefit from their prayers and intercession. At the rite of final commendation and farewell, the community acknowledges the reality of separation and commends the deceased to God. In this way it recognizes the spiritual bond that still exists between the living and the dead and proclaims its belief that all the faithful will be raised up and reunited in the new heavens and a new earth, where death will be no more.

7 The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God's mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis.

## MINISTRY AND PARTICIPATION

8 "If one member suffers in the body of Christ which is the Church, all the members suffer with that member" (1 Corinthians 12:26). For this reason, those who are baptized into Christ and nourished at the same table of the Lord are responsible for one another. When Christians are sick, their brothers and sisters share a ministry of mutual charity and "do all that they can to help the sick return to health, by showing love for the sick, and by celebrating the sacraments with them." [3] So too when a member of Christ's Body dies, the faithful are called to a ministry of consolation to those who have suffered the loss of one whom they love. Christian consolation is rooted in that hope that comes from faith in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian hope faces the reality of death and the anguish of grief but trusts confidently that the power of sin and death has been vanquished by the risen Lord. The Church calls each

member of Christ's Body— priest, deacon, layperson — to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn.

### Community

9 The responsibility for the ministry of consolation rests with the believing community, which heeds the words and example of the Lord Jesus: “Blessed are they who mourn; they shall be consoled” (Matthew 5:3). Each Christian shares in this ministry according to the various gifts and offices in the Church. As part of the pastoral ministry, pastors, associate pastors, and other ministers should instruct the parish community on the Christian meaning of death and on the purpose and significance of the Church's liturgical rites for the dead. Information on how the parish community assists families in preparing for funerals should also be provided.

By giving instruction, pastors and associate pastors should lead the community to a deeper appreciation of its role in the ministry of consolation and to a fuller understanding of the significance of the death of a fellow Christian. Often the community must respond to the anguish voiced by Martha, the sister of Lazarus: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would never have died” (John 11:21) and must console those who mourn, as Jesus himself consoled Martha: “Your brother will rise again. . . . I am the resurrection and the life: those who believe in me, though they should die, will come to life; and those who are alive and believe in me will never die” (John 11:25-26). The faith of the Christian community in the resurrection of the dead brings support and strength to those who suffer the loss of those whom they love.

10 Members of the community should console the mourners with words of faith and support and with acts of kindness, for example, assisting them with some of the routine tasks of daily living. Such assistance may allow members of the family to devote time to planning the funeral rites with the priest and other ministers and may also give the family time for prayer and mutual comfort.

11 The community's principal involvement in the ministry of consolation is expressed in its active participation in the celebration of the funeral rites, particularly the vigil for the deceased, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal. For this reason these rites should be scheduled at times that permit as many of the community as possible to be present. The assembly's participation can be assisted by the preparation of booklets that contain an outline of the rite, the texts and songs belonging to the people, and directions for posture, gesture, and movement.

12 At the vigil for the deceased or on another occasion before the eucharistic celebration, the presiding minister should invite all to be present at the funeral liturgy and to take an active part in it. The minister may also describe the funeral liturgy and explain why the community gathers to hear the word of God proclaimed and to celebrate the eucharist when one of the faithful dies.

Pastors, associate pastors, and other ministers should also be mindful of those persons who are not members of the Catholic Church, or Catholics who are not involved in the life of the Church.

13 As a minister of reconciliation, the priest should be especially sensitive to the possible needs for reconciliation felt by the family and others. Funerals can begin the process of reconciling differences and supporting those ties

that can help the bereaved adjust to the loss brought about by death. With attentiveness to each situation, the priest can help to begin the process of reconciliation when needed. In some cases this process may find expression in the celebration of the sacrament of penance, either before the funeral liturgy or at a later time.

## Liturgical Ministers

### Presiding Minister

14 Priests, as teachers of faith and ministers of comfort, preside at the funeral rites, especially the Mass; the celebration of the funeral liturgy is especially entrusted to pastors and associate pastors. When no priest is available, deacons, as ministers of the word, of the altar, and of charity, preside at funeral rites. When no priest or deacon is available for the vigil and related rites or the rite of committal, a layperson presides.

### Other Liturgical Ministers

15 In the celebration of the funeral rites laymen and laywomen may serve as readers, musicians, ushers, pallbearers, and, according to existing norms, as special ministers of the eucharist. Pastors and other priests should instill in these ministers an appreciation of how much the reverent exercise of their ministries contributes to the celebration of the funeral rites. Family members should be encouraged to take an active part in these ministries, but they should not be asked to assume any role that their grief or sense of loss may make too burdensome.

## MINISTRY FOR THE MOURNERS AND THE DECEASED

## Family and Friends

16 In planning and carrying out the funeral rites the pastor and all other ministers should keep in mind the life of the deceased and the circumstances of death. They should also take into consideration the spiritual and psychological needs of the family and friends of the deceased to express grief and their sense of loss, to accept the reality of death, and to comfort one another.

17 Whenever possible, ministers should involve the family in planning the funeral rites: in the choice of texts and rites provided in the ritual, in the selection of music for the rites, and in the designation of liturgical ministers. Planning of the funeral rites may take place during the visit of the pastor or other minister at some appropriate time after the death and before the vigil service. Ministers should explain to the family the meaning and significance of each of the funeral rites, especially the vigil, the funeral liturgy, and the rite of committal.

If pastoral and personal considerations allow, the period before death may be an appropriate time to plan the funeral rites with the family and even with the family member who is dying. Although planning the funeral before death should be approached with sensitivity and care, it can have the effect of helping the one who is dying and the family face the reality of death with Christian hope. It can also help relieve the family of numerous details after the death and may allow them to benefit more fully from the celebration of the funeral rites.

## Deceased

18 Through the celebration of the funeral rites, the Church manifests its care for the dead, both baptized members and

catechumens. In keeping with the provisions of Codex Iuris Canonici, can. 1183, the Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a child who died before baptism and whose parents intended to have the child baptized.

At the discretion of the local Ordinary, the Church's funeral rites may be celebrated for a baptized member of another Church or ecclesial community provided this would not be contrary to the wishes of the deceased person and provided the minister of the Church or ecclesial community in which the deceased person was a regular member or communicant is unavailable.

19 Since in baptism the body was marked with the seal of the Trinity and became the temple of the Holy Spirit, Christians respect and honor the bodies of the dead and the places where they rest. Any customs associated with the preparation of the body of the deceased should always be marked with dignity and reverence and never with the despair of those who have no hope. Preparation of the body should include prayer, especially at those intimate moments reserved for family members. For the final disposition of the body, it is the ancient Christian custom to bury or entomb the bodies of the dead; cremation is permitted, unless it is evident that cremation was chosen for anti-Christian motives.

20 In countries or regions where an undertaker, and not the family or community, carries out the preparation and transfer of the body, the pastor and other ministers are to ensure that the undertakers appreciate the values and beliefs of the Christian community.

The family and friends of the deceased should not be excluded from taking part in the services sometimes

provided by undertakers, for example, the preparation and laying out of the body.

## LITURGICAL ELEMENTS

21 Since liturgical celebration involves the whole person, it requires attentiveness to all that affects the senses. The readings and prayers, psalms and songs should be proclaimed or sung with understanding, conviction, and reverence. Music for the assembly should be truly expressive of the texts and at the same time simple and easily sung. The ritual gestures, processions, and postures should express and foster an attitude of reverence and reflectiveness in those taking part in the funeral rites. The funeral rites should be celebrated in an atmosphere of simple beauty, in a setting that encourages participation. Liturgical signs and symbols affirming Christian belief and hope in the paschal mystery are abundant in the celebration of the funeral rites, but their undue multiplication or repetition should be avoided. Care must be taken that the choice and use of signs and symbols are in accord with the culture of the people.

### The Word of God

#### Readings

22 In every celebration for the dead, the Church attaches great importance to the reading of the word of God. The readings proclaim to the assembly 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 designs for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own. A careful selection and use of readings from Scripture for

the funeral rites will provide the family and the community with an opportunity to hear God speak to them in their needs, sorrows, fears, and hopes.

23 In the celebration of the liturgy of the word at the funeral liturgy, the biblical readings may not be replaced by nonbiblical readings. But during prayer services with the family nonbiblical readings may be used in addition to readings from Scripture.

24 Liturgical tradition assigns the proclamation of the readings in the celebration of the liturgy of the word to readers and the deacon. The presiding minister proclaims the readings only when there are no assisting ministers present. Those designated to proclaim the word of God should prepare themselves to exercise this ministry.[4]

### Psalmody

25 The psalms are rich in imagery, feeling, and symbolism. They powerfully express the suffering and pain, the hope and trust of people of every age and culture. Above all the psalms sing of faith in God, of revelation and redemption. They enable the assembly to pray in the words that Jesus himself used during his life on earth. Jesus, who knew anguish and the fear of death, “offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death. . . . Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation . . .” (Hebrews 5:7-9). In the psalms the members of the assembly pray in the voice of Christ, who intercedes on their behalf before the Father.[5] The Church, like Christ, turns again and again to the psalms as a genuine expression of grief and of praise and as a sure source of trust and hope in times of trial. Pastors and other ministers

are, therefore, to make an earnest effort through an effective catechesis to lead their communities to a clearer and deeper grasp of at least some of the psalms provided for the funeral rites.

26 The psalms are designated for use in many places in the funeral rites (for example, as responses to the readings, for the processions, for use at the vigil for the deceased). Since the psalms are songs, whenever possible, they should be sung.

### Homily

27 A brief homily based on the readings is always given after the gospel reading at the funeral liturgy and may also be given after the readings at the vigil service; but there is never to be a eulogy. Attentive to the grief of those present, the homilist should dwell on God's compassionate love and on the paschal mystery of the Lord, as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. The homilist should also help the members of the assembly to understand that the mystery of God's love and the mystery of Jesus' victorious death and resurrection were present in the life and death of the deceased and that these mysteries are active in their own lives as well. Through the homily members of the family and community should receive consolation and strength to face the death of one of their members with a hope nourished by the saving word of God. Laypersons who preside at the funeral rites give an instruction on the readings.

### Prayers and Intercessions

28 In the presidential prayers of the funeral rites the presiding minister addresses God on behalf of the deceased and the mourners in the name of the entire Church. From

the variety of prayers provided the minister in consultation with the family should carefully select texts that truly capture the unspoken prayers and hopes of the assembly and also respond to the needs of the mourners.

29 Having heard the word of God proclaimed and preached, the assembly responds at the vigil and at the funeral liturgy with prayers of intercession for the deceased and all the dead, for the family and all who mourn, and for all in the assembly. The holy people of God, confident in their belief in the communion of saints, exercise their royal priesthood by joining together in this prayer for all those who have died.[6]

Several models of intercessions are provided within the rites for adaptation to the circumstances.

## Music

30 Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love. The texts of the songs chosen for a particular celebration should express the paschal mystery of the Lord's suffering, death, and triumph over death and should be related to the readings from Scripture.

31 Since music can evoke strong feelings, the music for the celebration of the funeral rites should be chosen with great care. The music at funerals should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory.

32 Music should be provided for the vigil and funeral liturgy and, whenever possible, for the funeral processions and the rite of committal. The specific notes that precede each of these rites suggest places in the rites where music is appropriate. Many musical settings used by the parish community during the liturgical year may be suitable for use at funerals. Efforts should be made to develop and expand the parish's repertoire for use at funerals.

33 An organist or other instrumentalist, a cantor, and, whenever possible, even a choir should assist the assembly's full participation in singing the songs, responses, and acclamations of these rites.

### Silence

34 Prayerful silence is an element important to the celebration of the funeral rites. Intervals of silence should be observed, for example, after each reading and during the final commendation and farewell, to permit the assembly to reflect upon the word of God and the meaning of the celebration.

### Symbols

#### Easter Candle and Other Candles

35 The Easter candle reminds the faithful of Christ's undying presence among them, of his victory over sin and death, and of their share in that victory by virtue of their initiation. It recalls the Easter Vigil, the night when the Church awaits the Lord's resurrection and when new light for the living and the dead is kindled. During the funeral liturgy and also during the vigil service, when celebrated in the church, the Easter candle may be placed beforehand

near the position the coffin will occupy at the conclusion of the procession.

According to local custom, other candles may also be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy as a sign of reverence and solemnity.

### Holy Water

36 Blessed or holy water reminds the assembly of the saving waters of baptism. In the rite of reception of the body at the church, its use calls to mind the deceased's baptism and initiation into the community of faith. In the rite of final commendation the gesture of sprinkling may also signify farewell.

### Incense

37 Incense is used during the funeral rites as a sign of honor to the body of the deceased, which through baptism became the temple of the Holy Spirit. Incense is also used as a sign of the community's prayers for the deceased rising to the throne of God and as a sign of farewell.

### Other Symbols

38 If it is the custom in the local community, a pall may be placed over the coffin when it is received at the church. A reminder of the baptismal garment of the deceased, the pall is a sign of the Christian dignity of the person. The use of the pall also signifies that all are equal in the eyes of God (see James 2:1-9). A Book of the Gospels or a Bible may be placed on the coffin as a sign that Christians live by the word of God and that fidelity to that word leads to eternal life.

A cross may be placed on the coffin as a reminder that the Christian is marked by the cross in baptism and through Jesus' suffering on the cross is brought to the victory of his resurrection.

Fresh flowers, used in moderation, can enhance the setting of the funeral rites.

Only Christian symbols may rest on or be placed near the coffin during the funeral liturgy. Any other symbols, for example, national flags, or flags or insignia of associations, have no place in the funeral liturgy (see no. 132).

### Liturgical Color

39 The liturgical color chosen for funerals should express Christian hope but should not be offensive to human grief or sorrow. In the United States, white, violet, or black vestments may be worn at the funeral rites and at other offices and Masses for the dead.

### Ritual Gestures and Movement

40 The presiding minister or an assisting minister may quietly direct the assembly in the movements, gestures, and posture appropriate to the particular ritual moment or action.

41 Processions, especially when accompanied with music and singing, can strengthen the bond of communion in the assembly. For processions, ministers of music should give preference to settings of psalms and songs that are responsorial or litanic in style and that allow the people to respond to the verses with an invariable refrain. During the various processions, it is preferable that the pallbearers

carry the coffin as a sign of reverence and respect for the deceased.

42 Processions continue to have special significance in funeral celebrations, as in Christian Rome where funeral rites consisted of three “stages” or “stations” joined by two processions. Christians accompanied the body on its last journey. From the home of the deceased the Christian community proceeded to the church singing psalms. When the service in the church concluded, the body was carried in solemn procession to the grave or tomb. During the final procession the congregation sang psalms praising the God of mercy and redemption and antiphons entrusting the deceased to the care of the angels and saints. The funeral liturgy mirrored the journey of human life, the Christian pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.

In many places and situations a solemn procession on foot to the church or to the place of committal may not be possible. Nevertheless at the conclusion of the funeral liturgy an antiphon or versicle and response may be sung as the body is taken to the entrance of the church. Psalms, hymns, or liturgical songs may also be sung when the participants gather at the place of committal.

#### SELECTION OF RITES FROM THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

43 The Order of Christian Funerals makes provision for the minister, in consultation with the family, to choose those rites and texts that are most suitable to the situation: those that most closely apply to the needs of the mourners, the circumstances of the death, and the customs of the local Christian community. The minister and family may be assisted in the choice of a rite or rites by the reflections preceding each rite or group of rites.

44 Part I, “Funeral Rites,” of the Order of Christian Funerals provides those rites that may be used in the funerals of Christians and is divided into three groups of rites that correspond in general to the three principal ritual moments in Christian funerals: “Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers; “Funeral Liturgy,” and “Rite of Committal.”

45 The section entitled “Vigil and Related Rites and Prayers” includes rites that may be celebrated between the time of death and the funeral liturgy or, should there be no funeral liturgy, before the rite of committal. The vigil is the principal celebration of the Christian community during the time before the funeral liturgy. It may take the form of a liturgy of the word (see nos. 54-97) or of some part of the office for the dead (see Part IV, nos. 348-395). Two vigil services are provided: “Vigil for the Deceased” and “Vigil for the Deceased with Reception at the Church.” The second service is used when the vigil is celebrated in the church and the body is to be received at this time.

“Related Rites and Prayers” includes three brief rites that may be used on occasions of prayer with the family: “Prayers after Death; “Gathering in the Presence of the Body; and “Transfer of the Body to the Church or to the Place of Committal.” These rites are examples or models of what can be done and should be adapted to the circumstances.

46 The section entitled “Funeral Liturgy” provides two forms of the funeral liturgy, the central celebration of the Christian community for the deceased: “Funeral Mass” and “Funeral Liturgy outside Mass.” When one of its members dies, the Church especially encourages the celebration of the Mass. When Mass cannot be celebrated (see no. 178), the second form of the funeral liturgy may be used and a

Mass for the deceased should be celebrated, if possible, at a later time.

47 The section entitled “Rite of Committal” includes two forms of the rite of committal, the concluding rite of the funeral: “Rite of Committal” and “Rite of Committal with Final Commendation.” The first form is used when the final commendation is celebrated as part of the conclusion of the funeral liturgy. The second form is used when the final commendation does not take place during the funeral liturgy or when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal.

48 Part II, “Funeral Rites for Children,” provides an adaptation of the principal rites in Part I: “Vigil for a Deceased Child,” “Funeral Liturgy;” and “Rite of Committal.” These rites may be used in the funerals of infants and young children, including those of early school age. The rites in Part II include texts for use in the case of a baptized child and in the case of a child who died before baptism.

In some instances, for example, the death of an infant, the vigil and funeral liturgy may not be appropriate. Only the rite of committal and perhaps one of the forms of prayer with the family as provided in “Related Rites and Prayers” may be desirable. Part II does not contain “Related Rites and Prayers,” but the rites from Part I may be adapted.

49 Part III, “Texts from Sacred Scripture:” includes the Scripture readings and psalms for the celebration of the funeral rites. Part IV, “Office for the Dead,” includes “Morning Prayer,” “Evening Prayer:” and “Additional Hymns.” Part V, “Additional Texts:” contains “Prayers and Texts in Particular Circumstances” and “Holy Communion outside Mass.” The texts that appear in the various rites in Parts I, II, and IV may be replaced by cor-responding

readings and psalms given in Part III and by corresponding prayers and texts given in Part V.

### Endnotes

1 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, art. 5.

2 Ibid.

3 See Roman Ritual, Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum, General Introduction, no. 33.

4 See Lectionary for Mass (2nd editio typica, 1981), General Introduction, nos. 49, 52, and 55.

5 See General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, no. 109.

6 See *De Oratione communi seu fidelium* (2nd ed., Vatican Polyglot Press, 1966), chapter 1, no. 3, p. 7: tr., Documents on the Liturgy (The Liturgical Press, 1982), no. 1893.”

## RITE OF COMMITTAL WITH FINAL COMMENDATION

### INTRODUCTION

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Joseph took Jesus down from the cross,  
wrapped him in a shroud,  
and laid him in a tomb.

204 The rite of committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, is the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of its deceased member. It may be celebrated at the grave, tomb, or crematorium and may be used for burial at sea. Whenever possible, the rite of committal is to be celebrated at the site of committal, that is, beside the open grave or place of internment, rather than at a cemetery chapel.

205 Two forms of the rite of committal are provided here: “Rite of Committal” and “Rite of Committal with Final commendation.” The first form is used when the final commendation is celebrated as part of the conclusion of the funeral liturgy. The second form is used when the final commendation does not take place during the funeral liturgy or when no funeral liturgy precedes the committal rite.

206 In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The rite of committal is an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven: the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community

of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face to face.

## STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE RITE OF COMMITTAL

207 Both forms of the committal rite begin with an invitation, Scripture verse, and a prayer over the place of committal. The several alternatives for the prayer over the place of committal take into account whether the grave, tomb, or resting place has already been blessed and situations in which the final disposition of the body will actually take place at a later time (for example, when the body is cremated or will remain in a cemetery chapel until burial at a later time).

208 The rite of committal continues with the words of committal, the intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer.

The rite of committal with final commendation continues with an invitation to prayer, a pause for silent prayer, the sprinkling and incensing of the body, where this is customary, the song of farewell, and the prayer of commendation (see nos. 227-231).

209 The act of committal takes place after the words of committal (in the rite of committal with final commendation, after the prayer of commendation) or at the conclusion of the rite. The act of committal expresses the full significance of this rite. Through this act the community of faith proclaims that the grave or place of interment, once a sign of futility and despair, has been transformed by means of Christ's own death and resurrection, into a sign of hope and promise.

210 Both forms of the rite conclude with a prayer over the people, which includes the verse Eternal rest, and a blessing. Depending on local custom, a song may then be sung and a gesture of leave-taking may be made, for example, placing flowers or soil on the coffin.

## ADAPTATION

211 If there is a pastoral need for a longer committal rite than those provided here, for example, when the funeral liturgy has been celebrated on a previous day or in a different community, the minister may use the appropriate form of the committal rite and adapt it, for example, by adding a greeting, song, one or more readings, a psalm, and a brief homily. When there has been no funeral liturgy prior to the committal rite, the “Rite of Committal with Final Commendation” may be used and similarly adapted.

212 The rite of committal may be celebrated in circumstances in which the final disposition of the body will not take place for some time, for example, when winter delays burial or when ashes are to be interred at some time after cremation. The rite of committal may then be repeated on the later occasion when the actual burial or interment takes place. On the second occasion the rite may include a longer Scripture reading as well as a homily.

In case of a body donated to science, the rite of committal may be celebrated whenever interment takes place.

## MINISTRY AND PARTICIPATION

213 The community continues to show its concern for the mourners by participating in the rite of committal. The rite marks the separation in this life of the mourners from the deceased, and through it the community assists them as

they complete their care for the deceased and lay the body to rest. The act of committal is a stark and powerful expression of this separation. When carried out in the midst of the community of faith, the committal can help mourners to face the end of one relationship with the deceased and to begin a new one based on prayerful remembrance, gratitude, and the hope of resurrection and reunion.

By their presence and prayer members of the community signify their intention to continue to support the mourners in the time following the funeral.

214 The singing of well-chosen music at the rite of committal can help the mourners as they face the reality of separation. At the rite of committal with final commendation, whenever possible, the song of farewell should be sung. In either form of the committal rite, a hymn or liturgical song that affirms hope in God's mercy and in the resurrection of the dead is desirable at the conclusion of the rite.

215 In the absence of a parish minister, a friend or member of the family should lead those present in the rite of committal.

The minister should vest according to local custom.

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## INVITATION

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216 When the funeral procession arrives at the place of committal the minister says the following or a similar invitation.

A

We gather here to commend our brother/sister N., to God our Father and to commit his/her body to the earth/elements. In the spirit of faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, let us [raise our voices in song] and offer our prayers for N.

B

As we gather to commend our brother/sister N. to God our Father and to commit his/her body to the earth/elements, let us express in [song and] prayer our common faith in the resurrection. As Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, we too are called to follow him through death to the glory where God will be all in all.

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SCRIPTURE VERSE

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217 One of the following or another brief Scripture verse is read. The minister first says:

We read in sacred Scripture:

A Matthew 25:34

Come, you who are blessed by my Father, says the Lord inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world

B John 6:39

This is the will of the one who sent me, says the Lord that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day.

C Philippians 3:20

Our citizenship is in heaven,  
and from it we also await a savior,  
the Lord Jesus Christ.

D Revelation 1:5-6

Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead;  
to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

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PRAYER over the PLACE of COMMITTAL

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218 The minister says one of the following prayers.

Go here if the place has already been blessed

A If the place of committal is to be blessed

Lord Jesus Christ,  
by your own three days in the tomb,  
you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you  
and so made the grave a sign of hope  
that promises resurrection  
even as it claims our mortal bodies.  
Grant that our brother/sister may sleep here in peace  
until you awaken him/her to glory,  
for you are the resurrection and the life.  
Then he/she will see you face to face  
and in your light will see light  
and know the splendor of God,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever.  
R. Amen.

Or:

405.2 O God,  
by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,

bless this grave,  
 and send your holy angel to watch over it.  
 As we bury here the body of our brother/sister,  
 deliver his/her soul from every bond of sin,  
 that he/she may rejoice in you with your saints for ever.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

Or:

405.3. Almighty God,  
 you created the earth and shaped the vault of heaven;  
 you fixed the stars in their places.  
 When we were caught in the snares of death  
 you set us free through baptism;  
 in obedience to your will  
 our Lord Jesus Christ  
 broke the fetters of hell and rose to life,  
 bringing deliverance and resurrection  
 to those who are his by faith.  
 In your mercy look upon this grave,  
 so that your servant may sleep here in peace;  
 and on the day of judgment raise him/her up  
 to dwell with your saints in paradise.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

Or:

405.4. God of endless ages,  
 through disobedience to your law  
 we fell from grace  
 and death entered the world;  
 but through the obedience and resurrection of your Son  
 you revealed to us a new life.  
 You granted Abraham, our father in faith,

a burial place in the promised land;  
 you prompted Joseph of Arimathea  
 to offer his own tomb for the burial of the Lord.  
 In a spirit of repentance  
 we earnestly ask you  
 to look upon this grave and bless it,  
 so that, while we commit to [the earth/its resting place]  
 the body of your servant N.  
 his/her soul may be taken into paradise.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B If the place of committal has already been blessed

All praise to you, Lord of all creation.  
 Praise to you, holy and living God.  
 We praise and bless you for your mercy,  
 we praise and bless you for your kindness.  
 Blessed is the Lord, our God

R. Blessed is the Lord, our God.

You sanctify the homes of the living  
 and make holy the places of the dead.  
 You alone open the gates of righteousness  
 and lead us to the dwellings of the saints.  
 Blessed is the Lord, our God.

R. Blessed is the Lord, our God.

We praise you, our refuge and strength.  
 We bless you, our God and Redeemer.  
 Your praise is always in our hearts and on our lips.  
 We remember the mighty deeds of the covenant.  
 Blessed is the Lord, our God

R. Blessed is the Lord, our God.

Almighty and ever-living God,  
remember the mercy with which you graced  
your servant N. in life.

Receive him/her, we pray, into the mansions of the saints.

As we make ready our brother's/sister's resting place,  
look also with favor on those who mourn  
and comfort them in their loss.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

C

Almighty and ever-living God,  
in you we place our trust and hope,  
in you the dead whose bodies were temples of the Spirit  
find everlasting peace.

As we take leave of our brother/sister,  
give our hearts peace in the firm hope  
that one day N. will live

in the mansion you have prepared for him/her in heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

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#### INVITATION to PRAYER

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227 Using one of the invitations below, or in similar words,  
the minister faces the people and begins the final  
commendation.

A

Before we go our separate ways, let us take leave of our  
brother/sister. May our farewell express our affection for  
him/her; may it ease our sadness and strengthen our hope.

One day we shall joyfully greet him/her again when the love of Christ, which conquers all things, destroys even death itself.

## B

Trusting in God, we have prayed together for N. and now we come to the last farewell. There is sadness in parting, but we take comfort in the hope that one day we shall see N. again and enjoy his/her friendship. Although this congregation will disperse in sorrow, the mercy of God will gather us together again in the joy of his kingdom. Therefore let us console one another in the faith of Jesus Christ.

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## SILENCE

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228 All pray in silence.

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## SIGNS of FAREWELL

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229 The coffin may now be sprinkled with holy water and incensed, or this may take place during or after the song of farewell.

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## SONG of FAREWELL

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230 The song of farewell is then sung. The following may be used or some other song may be sung:

Saints of God, come to his/her aid!  
 Hasten 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 the bosom of Abraham.

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

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

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

2

403.2. Lord our God, receive your servant,  
for whom you shed your blood.

R. Remember, Lord, that we are dust: like grass, like a flower of the field.

Merciful Lord, I tremble before you,  
ashamed of the things I have done.

R. Remember, Lord, that we are dust: like grass, like a flower of the field.

3

403.3 You knew me, Lord, before I was born.

You shaped me into your image and likeness.

R. I breathe forth my spirit to you, my Creator.

Merciful Lord, I tremble before you:

I am ashamed of the things I have done;

do not condemn me when you come in judgment.

R. I breathe forth my spirit to you, my Creator.

4

403.4 I know that my Redeemer lives:

on the last day I shall rise again.

R. And in my flesh I shall see God.

or

R. On the last day I shall rise again.

I shall see him myself, face to face;  
and my own eyes shall behold my Savior.

R. And in my flesh I shall see God.

or

R. On the last day I shall rise again.

Within my heart this hope I cherish:  
that in my flesh I shall see God.

R. And in my flesh I shall see God.

or

R. On the last day I shall rise again.

5

403.5. I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And on that final day of days,  
His voice shall bid me rise again:  
Unending joy, unceasing praise!

This hope I cherish in my heart:  
To stand on earth, my flesh restored,  
And, not a stranger but a friend,  
Behold my Savior and my Lord.

6

403.6. Lazarus you raised, O Lord,  
from the decay of the tomb.  
R. Grant your servant rest, a haven of pardon and peace.

Eternal rest, O Lord,  
and your perpetual light.

R. Grant your servant rest, a haven of pardon and peace.

7

405.7. You shattered the gates of bronze  
and preached to the spirits in prison.

R. Deliver me, Lord, from the streets of darkness.

A light and a revelation  
to those confined in darkness.

R. Deliver me, Lord, from the streets of darkness.

“Redeemer, you have come,”  
they cried, the prisoners of silence.

R. Deliver me, Lord, from the streets of darkness.

Eternal rest, O Lord,  
and your perpetual light.

R. Deliver me, Lord, from the streets of darkness.

---

PRAYER of COMMENDATION

---

231 The minister then says one of the following prayers:

Into your hands, Father of mercies,  
we commend our brother/sister N.  
in the sure and certain hope  
that, together with all who have died in Christ,  
he/she will rise with him on the last day.

[We give you thanks for the blessings  
which you bestowed upon N. in this life:  
they are signs to us of your goodness  
and of our fellowship with the saints in Christ.]

Merciful Lord,

turn toward us and listen to our prayers:  
 open the gates of paradise to your servant  
 and help us who remain  
 to comfort one another with assurances of faith,  
 until we all meet in Christ  
 and are with you and with our brother/sister for ever.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

B

To you, O Lord, we commend the soul of N. your servant;  
 in the sight of this world he/she is now dead;  
 in your sight may he/she live for ever.  
 Forgive whatever sins he/she committed through human  
 weakness  
 and in your goodness grant him/her everlasting peace.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

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## COMMITTAL

---

232 The act of committal takes place at this time or at the  
 conclusion of the rite.

---

## PRAYER over the PEOPLE

---

233 The assisting minister says:

Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

All pray silently. The minister, with hands outstretched,  
 prays over the people:

Merciful Lord,  
 you know the anguish of the sorrowful,

you are attentive to the prayers of the humble.  
 Hear your people  
 who cry out to you in their need,  
 and strengthen their hope in your lasting goodness.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 R. Amen.

The minister then says the following:

Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.  
 R. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

May he/she rest in peace.  
 R. Amen.

May his/her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
 through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
 R. Amen.

A

A minister who is a priest or deacon says

May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding,  
 keep your hearts and minds  
 in the knowledge and love of God  
 and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
 R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you,  
 the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.  
 R. Amen.

B

A lay minister invokes God's blessing and signs himself or herself with the sign of the cross, saying:

May the love of God and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
bless and console us  
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
R. Amen.

The minister then concludes

Go in the peace of Christ.  
R. Thanks be to God.

A hymn or song may conclude the rite. Where it is the custom, some sign or gesture of leave-taking may be made.”

## THE OFFICE OF THE DEAD

### Key

+ - This Means to Make the Sign of the Cross (In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit)

- For the Priest or Presider

\* - For the Congregation, also Used as a Guide for Multiple Readers

E.T. – To be Said at Easter Time

### “INVITATORY

---

The Invitatory is said when this is the first ‘hour’ of the day.

Lord, + open my lips.

– And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him (E.T. alleluia).

The antiphon is repeated. In individual recitation, the antiphon may be said only at the beginning of the psalm; it need not be repeated after each strophe.

Go to Psalm 24

Psalm 24

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The King of Glory Entering Zion.

A Psalm of David.

24 The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains,

The world, and those who dwell in it.

2 For He has founded it upon the seas

And established it upon the rivers.

3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
 And who may stand in His holy place?  
 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
 Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood  
 And has not sworn deceitfully.  
 5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord  
 And righteousness from the God of his salvation.  
 6 This is the generation of those who seek Him,  
 Who seek Your face—even Jacob. [e]Selah.  
 7 Lift up your heads, O gates,  
 And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
 That the King of glory may come in!  
 8 Who is the King of glory?  
 The Lord strong and mighty,  
 The Lord mighty in battle.  
 9 Lift up your heads, O gates,  
 And lift them up, O ancient doors,  
 That the King of glory may come in!  
 10 Who is this King of glory?  
 The Lord of hosts,  
 He is the King of glory. Selah.

Go to Psalm 67

### Psalm 67

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The Nations Exhorted to Praise God.

For the choir director; with stringed instruments. A Psalm.

A Song.

67 God be gracious to us and bless us,  
 And cause His face to shine upon us— Selah.  
 2 That Your way may be known on the earth,  
 Your salvation among all nations.  
 3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;  
 Let all the peoples praise You.  
 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;

For You will judge the peoples with uprightness  
 And guide the nations on the earth. Selah.  
 5 Let the peoples praise You, O God;  
 Let all the peoples praise You.  
 6 The earth has yielded its produce;  
 God, our God, blesses us.  
 7 God blesses us,  
 That all the ends of the earth may fear Him.

Go to Psalm 100

Psalm 100

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

All Men Exhorted to Praise God.

A Psalm for Thanksgiving.

100 Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Serve the Lord with gladness;

Come before Him with joyful singing.

3 Know that the Lord Himself is God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving

And His courts with praise.

Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

5 For the Lord is good;

His lovingkindness is everlasting

And His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 95

A call to praise God

Encourage each other daily while it is still today (Hebrews  
 3:13).

Come, let us sing to the Lord \*  
 and shout with joy to the Rock who saves us.

Let us approach him with praise and thanksgiving \*  
and sing joyful songs to the Lord.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

The Lord is God, the mighty God, \*  
the great king over all the gods.  
He holds in his hands the depths of the earth \*  
and the highest mountains as well.  
He made the sea; it belongs to him, \*  
the dry land, too, for it was formed by his hands.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Come, then, let us bow down and worship, \*  
bending the knee before the Lord, our maker.  
For he is our God and we are his people, \*  
the flock he shepherds.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Today, listen to the voice of the Lord:  
Do not grow stubborn, as your fathers did  
in the wilderness, \*  
when at Meriba and Massah  
they challenged me and provoked me, \*  
Although they had seen all of my works.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Forty years I endured that generation. \*  
I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray

and they do not know my ways.”  
 So I swore in my anger, \*  
 “They shall not enter into my rest.”

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
 (E.T. alleluia).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
 and to the Holy Spirit:  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
 and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
 (E.T. alleluia).

Return to the Menu  
 Psalm 24  
 The Lord’s entry into his temple

Christ opened heaven for us in the manhood he assumed  
 (Saint Irenaeus).

The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness, \*  
 the world and all its peoples.  
 It is he who set it on the seas; \*  
 on the waters he made it firm.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
 (E.T. alleluia).

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? \*  
 Who shall stand in his holy place?  
 The man with clean hands and pure heart,  
 who desires not worthless things, \*  
 who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbor.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

He shall receive blessings from the Lord \*  
and reward from the God who saves him.  
Such are the men who seek him, \*  
seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

O gates, lift high your heads;  
grow higher, ancient doors. \*  
Let him enter, the king of glory!

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Who is the king of glory?  
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant, \*  
the Lord, the valiant in war.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

O gates, lift high your heads;  
grow higher, ancient doors. \*  
Let him enter, the king of glory!

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Who is he, the king of glory?  
He, the Lord of armies, \*  
he is the king of glory.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Return to the Menu

Psalm 67

People of all nations will worship the Lord

You must know that God is offering his salvation to all the  
world (Acts 28:28).

O God, be gracious and bless us \*  
and let your face shed its light upon us.  
So will your ways be known upon earth \*  
and all nations learn your saving help.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Let the nations be glad and exult \*  
for you rule the world with justice.  
With fairness you rule the peoples, \*  
you guide the nations on earth.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Let the peoples praise you, O God; \*  
let all the peoples praise you.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

The earth has yielded its fruit \*  
for God, our God, has blessed us.  
May God still give us his blessing \*  
till the ends of the earth revere him.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Return to the Menu

Psalm 100

The joyful song of those entering God's temple

The Lord calls his ransomed people to sing songs of victory  
(Saint Athanasius).

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.  
Serve the Lord with gladness. \*  
Come before him, singing for joy.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Know that he, the Lord, is God.  
He made us, we belong to him, \*  
we are his people, the sheep of his flock.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Go within his gates, giving thanks.  
Enter his courts with songs of praise. \*  
Give thanks to him and bless his name.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Indeed, how good is the Lord,  
eternal his merciful love. \*  
He is faithful from age to age.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, all things live for him  
(E.T. alleluia).

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OFFICE of READINGS

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If the Invitatory is not said, then the following is used:

God, + come to my assistance.

– Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

– as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.

Amen. (Alleluia.)

### HYMN

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!

Sons of men and angels say: Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high; Alleluia!

Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Alleluia!

Christ has burst the gates of hell: Alleluia!

Death in vain forbids his rise; Alleluia!

Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!

Once he died, our souls to save; Alleluia!

Where thy victory, O grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ hath led, Alleluia!

Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!

Made like him, like him we rise; Alleluia!

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Hail, the Lord of earth and heaven! Alleluia!

Praise to thee by both be given; Alleluia!

Thee we greet triumphant now; Alleluia!

Hail, the resurrection Thou! Alleluia! Amen.

Tune: Llanfair 7.7.7.7 with Alleluias  
 Music: Robert Williams, 1781-1821  
 Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Go to the Psalmody

Or:

O Lord, you died that all might live  
 And rise to see the perfect day.  
 The fullness of your mercy give  
 To this/these our friend/s for whom we pray.

Refrain:

O Lamb of God, Redeemer blest,  
 Grant him/her/them eternal light and rest.

Lord, bless our friend/s who died in you,  
 As you have given him/her/them release.  
 Enliven him/her/them since he/she/they were true,  
 And give him/her/them everlasting peace.

Refrain:

O Lamb of God, Redeemer blest,  
 Grant him/her/them eternal light and rest.

In your green, pleasant pastures feed  
 The sheep that you have summoned hence;  
 And by the still, cool waters lead  
 Your flock in loving providence.

Refrain:

O Lamb of God, Redeemer blest,  
 Grant him/her/them eternal light and rest.

Direct us with your arm of might,

That with our friends we may all come  
 To dwell within your city bright,  
 Jerusalem, our heav'ly home.

Refrain:

O Lamb of God, Redeemer blest,  
 Grant him/her/them eternal light and rest.

Tune: Melita L.M. with Refrain

Music: John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

Text: Richard F. Littledale, 1833-1890, alt.

PSALMODY

Ant. 1 From the earth you formed me, with flesh you  
 clothed me; Lord, my Redeemer, raise me up again at the  
 last day (E.T. alleluia).

Psalm 40:2-14, 17-18

Thanksgiving and plea for help

It was not sacrifice and oblation you wanted, but you have  
 prepared a body for me (Hebrews 10:5).

I

I waited, I waited for the Lord  
 and he stooped down to me; \*  
 he heard my cry.

He drew me from the deadly pit, \*  
 from the miry clay.

He set my feet upon a rock \*  
 and made my footsteps firm.

He put a new song into my mouth, \*  
 praise of our God.

Many shall see and fear \*  
and shall trust in the Lord.

Happy the man who has placed \*  
his trust in the Lord  
and has not gone over to the rebels \*  
who follow false gods.

How many, O Lord my God, \*  
are the wonders and designs  
that you have worked for us; \*  
you have no equal.  
Should I proclaim and speak of them, \*  
they are more than I can tell!

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, \*  
but an open ear.  
You do not ask for holocaust and victim. \*  
Instead, here am I.

In the scroll of the book it stands written \*  
that I should do your will.  
My God, I delight in your law \*  
in the depth of my heart.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. From the earth you formed me, with flesh you clothed  
me; Lord, my Redeemer, raise me up again at the last day  
(E.T. alleluia).

Ant. 2 Lord, may it please you to rescue me; look upon me  
and help me (E.T. alleluia).

## II

Your justice I have proclaimed \*  
in the great assembly.  
My lips I have not sealed; \*  
you know it, O Lord.

I have not hidden your justice in my heart \*  
but declared your faithful help.  
I have not hidden your love and your truth \*  
from the great assembly.

O Lord, you will not withhold \*  
your compassion from me.  
Your merciful love and your truth \*  
will always guard me.

For I am beset with evils \*  
too many to be counted.  
My sins have fallen upon me \*  
and my sight fails me.  
They are more than the hairs of my head \*  
and my heart sinks.

O Lord, come to my rescue. \*  
Lord, come to my aid.

O let there be rejoicing and gladness \*  
for all who seek you.  
Let them ever say: "The Lord is great," \*  
who love your saving help.

As for me, wretched and poor, \*  
the Lord thinks of me.  
You are my rescuer, my help, \*

O God, do not delay.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you were made obedient unto death, and your name was exalted above all others. Teach us always to do the Father's will, so that, made holy by obedience which unites us to the sacrifice of your body, we can expect your great love in times of sorrow and sing a new song to our God.

Ant. Lord, may it please you to rescue me; look upon me and help me (E.T. alleluia).

Ant. 3 My soul is thirsting for the living God; when shall I see him face to face? (E.T. alleluia).

### Psalm 42

Longing for the Lord's presence in his Temple

Let all who thirst come; let all who desire it, drink from the life-giving water (Revelation 22:17).

Like the deer that yearns \*  
for running streams,  
so my soul is yearning \*  
for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for God, \*  
the God of my life;  
when can I enter and see \*

the face of God?

My tears have become my bread, \*  
 by night, by day,  
 as I hear it said all the day long: \*  
 “Where is your God?”

These things will I remember \*  
 as I pour out my soul:  
 how I would lead the rejoicing crowd \*  
 into the house of God,  
 amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving, \*  
 the throng wild with joy.

Why are you cast down, my soul, \*  
 why groan within me?  
 Hope in God; I will praise him still, \*  
 my savior and my God.

My soul is cast down within me \*  
 as I think of you,  
 from the country of Jordan and Mount Hermon, \*  
 from the Hill of Mizar.

Deep is calling on deep, \*  
 in the roar of waters:  
 your torrents and all your waves \*  
 swept over me.

By day the Lord will send \*  
 his loving kindness;  
 by night I will sing to him, \*  
 praise the God of my life.

I will say to God, my rock: \*  
 “Why have you forgotten me?”

Why do I go mourning, \*  
oppressed by the foe?"

With cries that pierce me to the heart, \*  
my enemies revile me,  
saying to me all the day long: \*  
"Where is your God?"

Why are you cast down, my soul, \*  
why groan within me?  
Hope in God; I will praise him still, \*  
my savior and my God.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Father in heaven, when your strength takes possession of us  
we no longer say: Why are you cast down, my soul? So  
now that the surging waves of your indignation have passed  
over us, let us feel the healing calm of your forgiveness.  
Inspire us to yearn for you always, like the deer for running  
streams, until you satisfy every longing in heaven.

Ant. My soul is thirsting for the living God; when shall I  
see him face to face? (E.T. alleluia).

Lord, countless are your mercies (E.T. alleluia).  
– Give me life according to your word (E.T. alleluia).

### READINGS

#### FIRST READING

One of the following is chosen:

From the first letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians  
15:12-34

The resurrection of Christ is the hope of the faithful

Tell me, if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ himself has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is void of content and your faith is empty too. Indeed, we should then be exposed as false witnesses of God, for we have borne witness before him that he raised Christ; but he certainly did not raise him up if the dead are not raised. Why? Because if the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised; and if Christ was not raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins and those who have fallen asleep in Christ are the deadest of the dead. If our hopes in Christ are limited to this life only, we are the most pitiable of men.

But as it is, Christ is now raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Death came through a man; hence the resurrection of the dead comes through a man also. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will come to life again, but each one in proper order: Christ the first fruits and then, at his coming, all those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when, after having destroyed every sovereignty, authority and power, he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

Christ must reign until God has put all his enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Scripture reads that God “has placed all things under his

feet.” But when it says that everything has been made subject, it is clear that he who has made everything subject to Christ is excluded. When, finally, all has been subjected to the Son, he will then subject himself to the One who made all things subject to him, so that God may be all in all.

If the dead are not raised, what about those who have themselves baptized on behalf of the dead? If the raising of the dead is not a reality, why be baptized on their behalf? And why are we continually putting ourselves in danger? I swear to you, brothers, by the very pride you take in me, which I cherish in Christ Jesus our Lord, that I face death every day. If I fought those beasts at Ephesus for purely human motives, what profit was there for me? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” Do not be led astray any longer. “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Return to reason, as you ought, and stop sinning. Some of you are quite ignorant of God; I say this to your shame.

#### RESPONSORY

1 Corinthians 15:25-26; see Revelation 20:13, 14

Christ must reign until God has brought all enemies under his feet

– And the last enemy to be destroyed is death (E.T. alleluia).

Then death and Sheol will give up their dead, death and Sheol will be cast into the fiery lake.

– And the last enemy to be destroyed is death (E.T. alleluia).

Or:

From the first letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians  
15:35-57

The resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Lord

Perhaps someone will say, “How are the dead to be raised up? What kind of body will they have?” A nonsensical question! The seed you sow does not germinate unless it dies. When you sow, you do not sow the full-blown plant, but a kernel of wheat, or some other grain. God gives body to it as he pleases—to each seed its own fruition. Not all bodily nature is the same. Men have one kind of body, animals another. Birds are of their kind, fish are of theirs. There are heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies. The splendor of the heavenly bodies is one thing, that of the earthly another. The sun has a splendor of its own, so has the moon, and the stars have theirs. Even among the stars, one differs from another in brightness.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown in the earth is subject to decay, what rises is incorruptible. What is sown is ignoble, what rises is glorious. Weakness is sown, strength rises up. A natural body is put down and a spiritual body comes up.

If there is a natural body, be sure there is also a spiritual one. Scripture has it that Adam, the first man, became a living soul; the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit. Take note, the spiritual was not first; first came the natural and after that the spiritual.

The first man was of earth, formed from dust, the second from heaven. Earthly men are like the man of earth, heavenly men are like the man of heaven.

Just as we resemble the man from earth, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. This is what I mean, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, no more can corruption inherit incorruption.

Now I am going to tell you a mystery. Not all of us shall fall asleep, but all of us are to be changed—in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. The trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. This corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, this mortal body with immortality. When the corruptible frame takes on incorruptibility and the mortal immortality, will the saying of the Scripture be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### RESPONSORY

Job 19:25, 26, 27

I know that my Redeemer live and on the last day I shall rise again.

– In my body I shall look on God, my Savior (E.T. alleluia).

I myself shall see him; my own eyes will gaze on him.

– In my body I shall look on God, my Savior (E.T. alleluia).

Or:

From the second letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians

4:16–5:10

When the body of our earthly dwelling place lies in death, we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven

We do not lose heart, because our inner being is renewed each day even though our body is being destroyed at the same time. The present burden of our trial is light enough, and earns for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. We do not fix our gaze on what is seen but on what is unseen. What is seen is transitory; what is unseen lasts forever.

Indeed, we know that when the earthly tent in which we dwell is destroyed we have a dwelling provided for us by God, a dwelling in the heavens, not made by hands but to last forever. We groan while we are here, even as we yearn to have our heavenly habitation envelop us. This it will, provided we are found clothed and not naked. While we live in our present tent we groan; we are weighed down because we do not wish to be stripped naked but rather to have the heavenly dwelling envelop us, so that what is mortal may be absorbed by life. God has fashioned us for this very thing and has given us the Spirit as a pledge of it.

Therefore we continue to be confident. We know that while we dwell in the body we are away from the Lord. We walk by faith, not by sight. I repeat, we are full of confidence and would much rather be away from the body and home with the Lord. This being so we make it our aim to please him whether we are with him or away from him. The lives of all of us are to be revealed before the tribunal of Christ so that each one may receive his recompense, good or bad, according to his life in the body.

RESPONSORY

Lord do not judge me according to my deeds:  
 I have done nothing worthy in your sight:  
 therefore I implore you, God of majesty,  
 – blot out all my guilt (E.T. alleluia).

Lord, wash away my iniquities, and cleanse from my sins.  
 – Blot out all my guilt (E.T. alleluia).

## SECOND READING

One of the following is used:

From a sermon by Saint Anastasius of Antioch, bishop  
 (Oratio 5, de Resurrectione Christi, 6-7, 9; PG 89, 1358-  
 1359, 1361-1362)

Christ will change our lowly body

To this end Christ died and rose to life that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. But God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. That is why the dead, now under the dominion of one who has risen to life, are no longer dead but alive. Therefore life has dominion over them and, just as Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again, so too they will live and never fear death again. When they have been thus raised from the dead and freed from decay, they shall never again see death, for they will share in Christ's resurrection just as he himself shared in their death.

This is why Christ descended into the underworld, with its imperishable prison bars: to shatter the doors of bronze and break the bars of iron and, from decay to raise our life to himself by giving us freedom in place of servitude.

But if this plan does not yet appear to be perfectly realized—for men still die and bodies still decay in death—this should not occasion any loss of faith. For, in receiving the first-fruits, we have already received the pledge of all the blessings we have mentioned; with them we have reached the heights of heaven, and we have taken our place beside him who has raised us up with himself, as Paul says: In Christ God has raised us up with him, and has made us sit with him in the heavenly places.

And the fulfillment will be ours on the day predetermined by the Father, when we shall put off our childish ways and come to perfect manhood. For this is the decree of the Father of the ages: the gift, once given, is to be secure and no more to be rejected by a return to childish attitudes.

There is no need to recall that the Lord rose from the dead with a spiritual body, since Paul, in speaking of our bodies bears witness that they are sown as animal bodies and raised as spiritual bodies: that is, they are transformed in accordance with the glorious transfiguration of Christ who goes before us as our leader.

The Apostle, affirming something he clearly knew, also said that this would happen to all mankind through Christ, who will change our lowly body to make it like his glorious body.

If this transformation is a change into a spiritual body and one, furthermore, like the glorious body of Christ, then Christ rose with a spiritual body, a body that was sown in dishonor, but the very body that was transformed in glory. Having brought this body to the Father as the first-fruits of our nature, he will also bring the whole body to fulfillment. For he promised this when he said: I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself.

## RESPONSORY

John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:52

All who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God;

– those who have done good deeds will go forth to the resurrection of life;

those who have done evil will go forth to the resurrection of judgment (E.T. alleluia).

In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the final trumpet blast,

the dead shall rise.

– those who have done good deeds will go forth to the resurrection of life;

those who have done evil will go forth to the resurrection of judgment (E.T. alleluia).

Or:

From a letter by Saint Braulio, bishop  
(Epist. 19: PL 80, 665-666)

The risen Christ is the hope of all Christians

Lazarus our friend is sleeping. In saying this, Christ, who is the hope of all believers refers to the departed as those who are asleep. By no means does he regard them as dead. Paul the apostle does not want us to grieve about those who have fallen asleep.

Our faith tells us that all who believe in Christ will never die; indeed faith assures us that Christ is not dead, nor shall we die. The Lord himself will come down from heaven and there will be the command of the archangel's voice and the

sound of the trumpet; then those who were united with Christ in death will rise. Let the hope of resurrection encourage us, then, because we shall see again those whom we lose here below.

Of course, we must continue to believe firmly in Christ; we must continue to obey his commandments. His power is so great that it is easier for him to raise the dead to life than it is for us to arouse those who are sleeping. As we are saying all these things some unknown feeling causes us to burst into tears; some hidden feeling discourages the mind which tries to trust and to hope. Such is the sad human condition; without Christ all life is utter emptiness.

O death! You separate those who are joined to each other in marriage. You harshly and cruelly divide those whom friendship unites. But your power is broken. Your heinous yoke has been destroyed by the One who sternly threatened you when Hosea cried out: O Death! I shall be your death. And with the words of the apostle we, too, deride you: O death! Where is your victory? O death! Where is your sting!

Your conqueror redeemed us. He handed himself over to wicked men so that he could transform the wicked into persons who were truly dear to him. It would take too long to narrate all the consolations intended for our benefit in the Scriptures. But by focusing our attention upon the glory of our Redeemer there is sufficient hope for our resurrection. Through faith we know that we are already risen from the dead. The Apostle writes: If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are at the same time living with him.

We do not really belong to ourselves; we belong to the One who redeemed us. Our will should always depend on his. For this reason we say in the Lord's Prayer: Your will be

done. Confronted with death, the sentiments of Job should be our own: The Lord gave and the Lord took away. May his name be blessed! Let us repeat here and now what Job said, lest we turn out to be unlike him, when our time comes.

#### RESPONSORY

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; Jeremiah 22:10

Concerning those who are asleep, do not be sad like men who have no hope;  
 – for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,  
 God will bring forth with Jesus all who have fallen asleep believing in him (E.T. alleluia).

Do not weep for the dead,  
 do not mourn them with tears.  
 – For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,  
 God will bring forth with Jesus all who have fallen asleep believing in him (E.T. alleluia).

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayers.  
 By raising your Son from the dead, you have given us faith.  
 Strengthen our hope that N., our brother(sister),  
 will share in his resurrection.  
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.  
 – Amen.

Or:

Lord God,  
you are the glory of believers  
and the life of the just.  
Your Son redeemed us  
by dying and rising to life again.  
Our brother (sister) N. was faithful and believed in our own  
resurrection.  
Give to him (her) the joys and blessings  
of the life to come.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one  
God,  
for ever and ever.  
– Amen.

Or:

Lord of mercy,  
hear our prayer.  
May our brother (sister) N.,  
whom you called your son (daughter) on earth,  
enter the kingdom of peace and light,  
where your saints live in glory.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
– Amen.

For several people:

God, our creator and redeemer,  
by your power Christ conquered death  
and returned to you in glory.  
May all your people (N. and N.), who have gone before us  
in faith  
share his victory

and enjoy the vision of your glory for ever,  
 where Christ lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.

– Amen.

For relatives, friends, and benefactors:

Father,  
 source of forgiveness and salvation for all mankind,  
 hear our prayer.

By the prayers of the ever-virgin Mary,  
 may our friends, relatives, and benefactors  
 who have gone from this world  
 come to share eternal happiness with all your saints.  
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.

– Amen.

## ACCLAMATION

Let us praise the Lord  
 – And give him thanks.

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## MORNING PRAYER

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### INTRODUCTION

God, + come to my assistance.

– Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

– as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.

Amen. Alleluia.

## HYMN

O Christ, our Pardon and our Hope,  
 Our Resurrection and our Life,  
 All eyes and hearts to you must turn  
 When saddened by approaching death.

You also bore its dreadful pangs,  
 In suff'rings deeper far than ours,  
 Into the Father's loving hands  
 With head bowed low your spirit fled.

Good Shepherd, merciful and kind,  
 Who knew our fragile, human state,  
 You gave us grace your death to share,  
 And in the Father's love to die.

Your arms extended on the Cross,  
 Your heart pierced through by bitter lance,  
 Encourage those who pass away  
 In sorrow's anguish or in pain.

Since you once broke the gates of hell,  
 And opened heaven's portal wide,  
 Raise up our hope as now we mourn,  
 As you will raise us after death.

May these our (brothers/sisters) who now sleep  
 In everlasting rest and peace,  
 By your sweet favor live to you,  
 And sing your praises ever more. Amen.

Tune: Jesus Dulcis Memoria L.M.

Music: Mode I

Text: Spes, Christe, nostræ veniæ in the Liber Hymnarius

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Ryde, UK, used with permission

PSALMODY

Ant. 1 The bones that were crushed shall leap for joy before  
the Lord (E.T. alleluia).

Psalm 51

O God, have mercy on me

Your inmost being must be renewed, and you must put on  
the new man (Ephesians 4:23-24).

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. \*  
In your compassion blot out my offense.  
O wash me more and more from my guilt \*  
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them; \*  
my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned; \*  
what is evil in your sight I have done.

That you may be justified when you give sentence \*  
and be without reproach when you judge.  
O see, in guilt I was born, \*  
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed you love truth in the heart; \*  
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.  
O purify me, then I shall be clean; \*  
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness, \*  
that the bones you have crushed may revive.

From my sins turn away your face \*  
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God, \*  
put a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence, \*  
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help; \*  
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,  
that I may teach transgressors your ways \*  
and sinners may return to you.

O rescue me, God, my helper, \*  
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.  
O Lord, open my lips \*  
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight, \*  
burnt offering from me you would refuse,  
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit \*  
A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

In your goodness, show favor to Zion: \*  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.  
Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice, \*  
holocausts offered on your altar.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm Prayer

Father, he who knew no sin was made sin for us, to save us and restore us to your friendship. Look upon our contrite heart and afflicted spirit and heal our troubled conscience, so that in the joy and strength of the Holy Spirit we may proclaim your praise and glory before all the nations.

Ant. The bones that were crushed shall leap for joy before the Lord (E.T. alleluia).

Ant. 2 At the very threshold of death, rescue me, Lord (E.T. alleluia).

Canticle: Isaiah 38:10-14, 17-20

Anguish of a dying man and joy in his restoration

I am living, I was dead ... and I hold the keys of death (Revelation 1:17-18).

Once I said, \*

“In the noontime of life I must depart!

To the gates of the nether world I shall be consigned \*  
for the rest of my years.”

I said, “I shall see the Lord no more \*  
in the land of the living.

No longer shall I behold my fellow men \*  
among those who dwell in the world.”

My dwelling, like a shepherd’s tent, \*  
is struck down and borne away from me;  
You have folded up my life, like a weaver \*  
who severs the last thread.

Day and night you give me over to torment; \*  
I cry out until the dawn.

Like a lion he breaks all my bones; \*

day and night you give me over to torment.

Like a swallow I utter shrill cries; \*  
I moan like a dove.  
My eyes grow weak, gazing heavenward: \*  
O Lord, I am in straits; be my surety!

You have preserved my life \*  
from the pit of destruction,  
When you cast behind your back \*  
all my sins.

For it is not the nether world that gives you thanks, \*  
nor death that praises you;  
Neither do those who go down into the pit \*  
await your kindness.

The living, the living give you thanks, \*  
as I do today.  
Fathers declare to their sons, \*  
O God, your faithfulness.

The Lord is our savior; \*  
we shall sing to stringed instruments  
in the house of the Lord \*  
all the days of our life.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. At the very threshold of death, rescue me, Lord (E.T. alleluia).

Ant. 3 I will praise my God all the days of my life (E.T. alleluia).

Psalm 146

Those who trust in God know what it is to be happy

To praise God in our lives means all we do must be for his glory (Arnobius).

My soul, give praise to the Lord;  
I will praise the Lord all my days, \*  
make music to my God while I live.

Put no trust in princes, \*  
in mortal men in whom there is no help.  
Take their breath, they return to clay \*  
and their plans that day come to nothing.

He is happy who is helped by Jacob's God, \*  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
who alone made heaven and earth, \*  
the seas and all they contain.

It is he who keeps faith for ever, \*  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry, \*  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free,

the Lord who gives sight to the blind, \*  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger \*  
and upholds the widow and orphan.

It is the Lord who loves the just \*  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever, \*

Zion's God, from age to age.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

God of glory and power, those who have put all their trust  
in you are happy indeed. Shine the brightness of your light  
on us, that we may love you always with a pure heart.

Ant. I will praise my God all the days of my life (E.T.  
alleluia).

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Or:

Ant 3. Let everything that breathes give praise to the Lord  
(E.T. alleluia).

### Psalm 150 Praise the Lord

Let mind and heart be in your song: this is to glorify God  
with your whole self (Hesychius).

Praise God in his holy place, \*  
praise him in his mighty heavens.  
Praise him for his powerful deeds, \*  
praise his surpassing greatness.

O praise him with sound of trumpet, \*  
praise him with lute and harp.  
Praise him with timbrel and dance, \*  
praise him with strings and pipes.

O praise him with resounding cymbals, \*  
 praise him with clashing of cymbals.  
 Let everything that lives and that breathes \*  
 give praise to the Lord.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
 and to the Holy Spirit:  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
 and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Lord God, maker of heaven and earth and of all created things, you make your just ones holy and you justify sinners who confess your name. Hear us as we humbly pray to you: give us eternal joy with your saints.

Ant. Let everything that breathes give praise to the Lord  
 (E.T. alleluia).

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### READING

1 Thessalonians 4:14

If we believe that Jesus died and rose, God will bring forth with him from the dead those also who have fallen asleep believing in him.

### RESPONSORY

Outside the Easter Season:

I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.  
 – I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

You turned my sorrow into joy,

– you have rescued me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

– I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Within the Easter Season:

I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me, alleluia,  
alleluia.

– I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me, alleluia,  
alleluia.

You turned my sorrow into joy.

– Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

– I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me, alleluia,  
alleluia.

## GOSPEL CANTICLE

Ant. I am the Resurrection, I am the Life; to believe in me  
means life, in spite of death, and all who believe and live in  
me shall never die (E.T. alleluia).

Canticle of Zechariah

Luke 1:68-79

The Messiah and his forerunner

Blessed + be the Lord, the God of Israel;\*  
he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, \*  
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old

that he would save us from our enemies, \*  
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers\*  
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: \*  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
free to worship him without fear, \*  
holy and righteous in his sight  
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most  
High; \*  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
to give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God \*  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of  
death, \*  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. I am the Resurrection, I am the Life; to believe in me  
means life, in spite of death, and all who believe and live in  
me shall never die (E.T. alleluia).

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray to the all-powerful Father who raised Jesus from the dead and gives new life to our mortal bodies, and say to him:

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

Father, through baptism we have been buried with your Son, and have risen with him in his resurrection,  
– grant that we may walk in newness of life so that when we die, we may live with Christ for ever.

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

Provident Father, you have given us the living bread that has come down from heaven and which should always be eaten worthily,  
– grant that we may eat this bread worthily and be raised up to eternal life on the last day.

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

Lord, you sent an angel to comfort your Son in his agony,  
– give us the hope of your consolation when death draws near.

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

You delivered the three youths from the fiery furnace,  
– free your faithful ones from the punishment they suffer for their sins.

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

God of the living and the dead, you raised Jesus from the dead,  
– raise up those who have died and grant that we may share eternal glory with them.

Lord, give us new life in Christ.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Gathering our prayer and praises into one, let us offer the prayer that Christ himself taught us:)

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.

Go to the Conclusion

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## DAYTIME PRAYER

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### INTRODUCTION

God, + come to my assistance.  
 – Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
 – as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  
 Amen. (Alleluia).

### HYMN

Cantor:  
 I know that my Redeemer lives,  
 and on the last day I shall rise again:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior,  
 All:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior.

Cantor:

I myself shall see him;  
 my own eyes will gaze on him,  
 my own eyes will gaze on him:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior,  
 All:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior.

Cantor:

This is the hope I cherish,  
 this is the hope I cherish in my heart:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior,  
 All:  
 in my body I shall look on God, my Savior.

Text: Rite of Funerals © 1970, ICEL

Tune: Music for Rite of Funerals and Rite of Baptism for  
 Children © 1977, ICEL

Composer: Howard Hughes, SM, born 1930

## PSALMODY

### Antiphons

Midmorning: Look on me with love, O Lord, and rescue  
 me (E.T. alleluia).

Midday: Lord, lay your healing hands on the wounds of my  
 sins (E.T. alleluia).

Midafternoon: Be my salvation, Lord, true to your name,  
 and by your mighty power set me free (E.T. alleluia).

Psalm 70

O God, come to my aid

Lord, save us, we are lost (Matthew 8:25).

O God, make haste to my rescue, \*  
Lord, come to my aid!  
Let there be shame and confusion \*  
on those who seek my life.

O let them turn back in confusion, \*  
who delight in my harm,  
let them retreat, covered with shame, \*  
who jeer at my lot.

Let there be rejoicing and gladness \*  
for all who seek you.  
Let them say for ever: "God is great," \*  
who love your saving help.

As for me, wretched and poor, \*  
come to me, O God.  
You are my rescuer, my help, \*  
O Lord, do not delay.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Psalm Prayer

God, our help and deliverer, do not abandon us among the  
many temptations of life, but deliver us from evil and turn  
our tears and struggles into joy.

Psalm 85

Our salvation is near

God blessed the land when our Savior came to earth  
(Origen).

O Lord, you once favored your land \*  
and revived the fortunes of Jacob,  
you forgave the guilt of your people \*  
and covered all their sins.  
You averted all your rage, \*  
you calmed the heat of your anger.

Revive us now, God, our helper! \*  
Put an end to your grievance against us.  
Will you be angry with us for ever, \*  
will your anger never cease?

Will you not restore again our life \*  
that your people may rejoice in you?  
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy \*  
and give us your saving help.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say, \*  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
peace for his people and his friends \*  
and those who turn to him in their hearts.  
His help is near for those who fear him \*  
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met; \*  
justice and peace have embraced.  
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth \*  
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper \*  
and our earth shall yield its fruit.  
Justice shall march before him \*  
and peace shall follow his steps.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
 and to the Holy Spirit:  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
 and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Show us your mercy, Lord; our misery is known to us. May  
 no evil desires prevail over us, for your glory and love  
 dwell in our hearts.

### Psalm 86

The prayer of the poor man in distress

Blessed be God who comforts us in all our trials (2  
 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Turn your ear, O Lord, and give answer \*  
 for I am poor and needy.  
 Preserve my life, for I am faithful: \*  
 save the servant who trusts in you.

You are my God, have mercy on me, Lord, \*  
 for I cry to you all the day long.  
 Give joy to your servant, O Lord, \*  
 for to you I lift up my soul.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, \*  
 full of love to all who call.  
 Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer \*  
 and attend to the sound of my voice.

In the day of distress I will call \*  
 and surely you will reply.  
 Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; \*

nor work to compare with yours.

All the nations shall come to adore you \*  
and glorify your name, O Lord:  
for you are great and do marvellous deeds, \*  
you who alone are God.

Show me, Lord, your way  
so that I may walk in your truth. \*  
Guide my heart to fear your name.

I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart \*  
and glorify your name for ever;  
for your love to me has been great: \*  
you have saved me from the depths of the grave.

The proud have risen against me;  
ruthless men seek my life: \*  
to you they pay no heed.

But you, God of mercy and compassion, \*  
slow to anger, O Lord,  
abounding in love and truth, \*  
turn and take pity on me.

O give your strength to your servant \*  
and save your handmaid's son.  
Show me a sign of your favor  
that my foes may see to their shame \*  
that you console me and give me your help.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

## Psalm Prayer

God of mercy and goodness, when Christ called out to you in torment, you heard him and gave him victory over death because of his love for you. We already know the affection you have for us; fill us with a greater love of your name and we will proclaim you more boldly before men and happily lead them to celebrate your glory.

## Antiphons

Midmorning: Look on me with love, O Lord, and rescue me (E.T. alleluia).

Midday: Lord, lay your healing hands on the wounds of my sins (E.T. alleluia).

Midafternoon: Be my salvation, Lord, true to your name, and by your mighty power set me free (E.T. alleluia).

At the other hours, the complementary psalmody is used.

## MIDMORNING

### READING

Job 19:25-26a

I know that my Vindicator lives,  
and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;  
And from my flesh I shall see God;

Why are you heavy, my heart, why are you so anxious?  
(E.T. Alleluia).

– Put your hope in God, for I will praise him still (E.T. alleluia).

Go to the Conclusion

MIDDAY

READING

Wisdom 1:13-14a, 15

God did not make death,  
nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living.  
For he fashioned all things that they might have being;  
For justice is undying.

Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil (E.T. alleluia).

– For you with me, Lord (E.T. alleluia).

Go to the Conclusion

MIDAFTERNOON

READING

Isaiah 25:8

God will destroy death forever.  
The Lord 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.

O God, hear my prayer (E.T. alleluia).

– To you all flesh must come (E.T. alleluia).

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Lord, hear our prayers.  
 By raising your Son from the dead, you have given us faith.  
 Strengthen our hope that N., our brother(sister),  
 will share in his resurrection.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 – Amen.

Or:

Lord God,  
 you are the glory of believers  
 and the life of the just.  
 Your Son redeemed us  
 by dying and rising to life again.  
 Our brother (sister) N. was faithful and believed in our own  
 resurrection.  
 Give to him (her) the joys and blessings  
 of the life to come.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 – Amen.

Or:

Lord of mercy,  
 hear our prayer.  
 May our brother (sister) N.,  
 whom you called your son (daughter) on earth,  
 enter the kingdom of peace and light,  
 where your saints live in glory.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 – Amen.

For several people:

God, our creator and redeemer,

by your power Christ conquered death  
 and returned to you in glory.  
 May all your people (N. and N.), who have gone before us  
 in faith  
 share his victory  
 and enjoy the vision of your glory for ever,  
 where Christ lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.  
 – Amen.

For relatives, friends, and benefactors:

Father,  
 source of forgiveness and salvation for all mankind,  
 hear our prayer.  
 By the prayers of the ever-virgin Mary,  
 may our friends, relatives, and benefactors  
 who have gone from this world  
 come to share eternal happiness with all your saints.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
 – Amen.

## ACCLAMATION

Let us praise the Lord.  
 – And give him thanks.  
 \*\*\*\*\*

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## EVENING PRAYER

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### INTRODUCTION

God, + come to my assistance.  
 – Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

– as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  
Amen. (Alleluia).

### HYMN

O Christ our King, supreme in power,  
The Father's glory and delight,  
Our fallen nature you restored,  
By dying you defeated death.

You bore our sorrows and our griefs,  
And sought a sterner conflict yet,  
By death you crushed the serpent's head  
Who conquered us and caused our death.

In triumph risen from the tomb  
You bring your people back to life  
Through your great Paschal mystery,  
We who were dead and lost by sin.

Increase in us the life of grace  
That when as Bridegroom you return,  
With lamps well trimmed we be prepared  
To follow you at once with joy.

Receive us as a judge serene  
Into the realms of peace and light,  
Whom faith and love have bound to you,  
Adoring your great Trinity.

Your servants who have left this world  
With soul from body now set free,  
Call swiftly to our Father's home  
To praise you for eternity. Amen.

Tune: Te lucis ante terminum L. M.

Music: Anonymous, Gregorian

Text: Spes, Immensæ Rex potentiae

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## PSALMODY

Ant 1. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will guard  
your soul (alleluia).

Psalm 121

Guardian of his people

Never again will they hunger and thirst, never again know  
scorching heat (Revelation 7:16).

I lift up my eyes to the mountains: \*  
from where shall come my help?  
My help shall come from the Lord \*  
who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble! \*  
Let him sleep not, your guard.  
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers, \*  
Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade; \*  
at your right side he stands.  
By day the sun shall not smite you \*  
nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil, \*  
he will guard your soul.  
The Lord will guard your going and coming \*  
both now and for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
 and to the Holy Spirit:  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
 is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have prepared a quiet place for us in your Father's eternal home. Watch over our welfare on this perilous journey, shade us from the burning heat of day, and keep our lives free of evil until the end.

Ant. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will guard your soul (alleluia).

Ant. 2 If you kept a record of our sins, Lord, who could escape condemnation? (Alleluia).

### Psalm 130

A cry from the depths

He himself will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

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.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
 and to the Holy Spirit:  
 as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
 and will be for ever. Amen.

### Psalm Prayer

Listen with compassion to our prayers, Lord. The  
 forgiveness of sins is yours. Do not look on the wrong we  
 have done, but grant us your merciful kindness.

Ant. If you kept a record of our sins, Lord, who could  
 escape condemnation? (Alleluia).

Ant. 3 As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so  
 the Son gives life to whom he wills. (alleluia).

Canticle: Philippians 2:6-11  
 Christ, God's holy servant

Though he was in the form of God,  
 Jesus did not deem equality with God \*  
 something to be grasped at.

Rather, he emptied himself  
 and took the form of a slave,\*

being born in the likeness of men.

He was known to be of human estate, \*  
and it was thus that he humbled himself,  
obediently accepting even death, \*  
death on a cross!

Because of this, \*  
God highly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name \*  
above every other name,

So that at Jesus' name \*  
every knee must bend  
in the heavens, on the earth, \*  
and under the earth,  
and every tongue proclaim  
to the glory of God the Father: \*  
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so  
the Son gives life to whom he wills. (alleluia).

#### READING

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your  
sting? The sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from  
the law. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## RESPONSORY

Outside the Easter Season:

In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain.  
 – In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain.

We shall dance and rejoice in your mercy.  
 – We shall never hope in vain.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
 – In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain.

Or:

Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest.  
 – Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest.

You will come to judge the living and the dead.  
 – Give them eternal rest.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
 – Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest.

Within the Easter Season:

In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain,  
 alleluia, alleluia.  
 – In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain,  
 alleluia, alleluia.

We shall dance and rejoice in your mercy.  
 – Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

– In you Lord is our hope. We shall never hope in vain,  
alleluia, alleluia.

Or:

Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest, alleluia,  
alleluia.

– Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest,  
alleluia, alleluia.

You will come to judge the living and the dead.

– Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

– Lord, in your steadfast love, give them eternal rest,  
alleluia, alleluia.

#### GOSPEL CANTICLE

Ant. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and  
whoever comes to me I shall not turn away (alleluia).

Canticle of Mary

Luke 1:46-55

The soul rejoices in the Lord

My + soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior \*  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me, \*  
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him \*  
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, \*  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, \*  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, \*  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel \*  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers, \*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, \*  
and will be for ever. Amen.

Ant. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and  
whoever comes to me I shall not turn away (alleluia).

### INTERCESSIONS

We acknowledge Christ the Lord through whom we hope  
that our lowly bodies will be made like his in glory, and we  
say:

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

Christ, Son of the living God, who raised up Lazarus, your  
friend, from the dead,  
– raise up to life and glory the dead whom you have  
redeemed by your precious blood.  
Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

Christ, consoler of those who mourn, you dried the tears of  
the family of Lazarus, of the widow's son, and the daughter  
of Jairus,

– comfort those who mourn for the dead.

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

Christ, Savior, destroy the reign of sin in our earthly  
bodies, so that just as through sin we deserved punishment,

– so through you we may gain eternal life.

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

Christ, Redeemer, look on those who have no hope because  
they do not know you,

– may they receive faith in the resurrection and in the life  
of the world to come.

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

You revealed yourself to the blind man who begged for the  
light of his eyes,

– show your face to the dead who are still deprived of your  
light.

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

When at last our earthly home is dissolved,

– give us a home, not of earthly making, but built of  
eternity in heaven.

Lord, you are our life and resurrection.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Gathering our prayer and praises into one, let us offer the  
prayer Christ himself taught us:)

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.

### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord, hear our prayers.  
 By raising your Son from the dead, you have given us faith.  
 Strengthen our hope that N., our brother(sister),  
 will share in his resurrection.  
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.  
 – Amen.

Or:

Lord God,  
 you are the glory of believers  
 and the life of the just.  
 Your Son redeemed us  
 by dying and rising to life again.  
 Our brother (sister) N. was faithful and believed in our own  
 resurrection.  
 Give to him (her) the joys and blessings  
 of the life to come.  
 We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one  
 God,  
 for ever and ever.  
 – Amen.

Or:

Lord of mercy,  
hear our prayer.

May our brother (sister) N.,  
whom you called your son (daughter) on earth,  
enter the kingdom of peace and light,  
where your saints live in glory.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

– Amen.

For several people:

God, our creator and redeemer,  
by your power Christ conquered death  
and returned to you in glory.

May all your people (N. and N.), who have gone before us  
in faith

share his victory

and enjoy the vision of your glory for ever,  
where Christ lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

– Amen.

For relatives, friends, and benefactors:

Father,  
source of forgiveness and salvation for all mankind,  
hear our prayer.

By the prayers of the ever-virgin Mary,  
may our friends, relatives, and benefactors  
who have gone from this world

come to share eternal happiness with all your saints.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

– Amen.

## DISMISSAL

If a priest or deacon presides, he dismisses the people:

The Lord be with you.

– And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

– Amen.

Another form of the blessing may be used, as at Mass.

Then he adds:

Go in peace.

– Thanks be to God.

In the absence of a priest or deacon and in individual  
recitation, Morning or Evening Prayer concludes:

May the Lord + bless us,  
protect us from all evil  
and bring us to everlasting life.

– Amen.– Amen.

*From the Roman Breviary Reformed by Order of the Holy Ecumenical  
Council of Trent, Published by Order of Pope St. Pius V and Revised By  
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Rituals and the Office of the Dead by Marilyn Hughes, 2017*

# The Limb of the Redemption

The Practice, the Play, the Love, the Choice  
and the People in the Afterlife

**Psychic and Out-of-Body States in some Recallment**

An Out-of-Body Travel Book on True Resurrection

By Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation

<http://outofbodytravel.org>

THE LIMB OF THE REDEMPTION: The Practice, the Play, the Love, the Choice and the People in the Afterlife, Psychic and Out-of-Body States in some Recallment - An Out-of-Body Travel Book on True Resurrection contains the journeys of the mystical and out of-body traveler as she confronts the various states of the dead in the afterlife and then presents the manner of assisting them in both the mystical and the physical realms. As we know, many people do not complete their required spiritual work while alive, and those who do may still have purification to undergo in the purgatorial realms. Thus, the limb, the branch of prayer that is held out to those souls who have neglected this duty or have fulfilled it imperfectly and have passed from this world to the next and need assistance. Take the ride. Containing 'THE WESTERN BOOK OF THE DEAD - Or the Record of the Books of God.' Containing from the 1908 Roman Breviary in English the Rite for Emergencies, Visits to the Sick, Anointing of the Sick Outside of Mass, Communion of the Sick in Ordinary Circumstances, Commendation of the Dying, Prayers after Death, Prayers for the Dead, Gathering in the Presence of the Body, Vigil for the Deceased,

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