

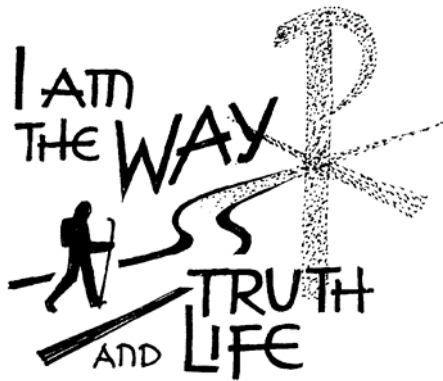
A RELATIVE OR FRIEND HAS DIED – WHAT CAN I DO?

The current restrictions on gatherings and social distancing have a major impact on people left behind when someone dies. This is particularly difficult as this is a time when we need each other most.

You will feel all sorts of things over the next few weeks and months and to bear them without the support of your family and friends will sometimes feel overwhelming.

Be kind to yourself – and to others – as you all try to work out how to deal with your loss.

Trust your heart and instincts – even if they feel all over the place.



Do what is helpful. This is your grief journey and you will make your way through it – even if, at times, you do not feel that you will. As someone said,

“Bereavement is a journey, not a destination”.

There are signposts that will may give you a sense of direction – and things that have helped others that may work for you. Use what helps.

Don't do what hinders or is just too difficult at present.

Remember that you are supported by countless people who are praying for those who, like you, are enduring loss. However alone you feel, some you will know – family, friends and parish communities – and many others whom you will never meet but who offer what they can – their love and prayer and ask God to bestow it where it is needed.

People react to loss in different ways. Some get ultra-busy. Some struggle to get moving. Some people want to get everything clear and organised. Some feel that their thoughts are like cooked spaghetti. Most of us experience all of these – and more.

What makes it harder for you and others is that we cannot do all the things we would expect to do around the time of death. They are not always easy, but we know vaguely what to expect – planning the funeral – the after-funeral refreshments – opening sympathy cards – and so on. Some are still possible but we do not have the reassuring rituals that carry us through these early days of loss. But there are things you can do that will help you through the next few days, weeks and months. There is a separate document with an outline of a possible Service of Commendation and some guidelines on how to prepare for it.

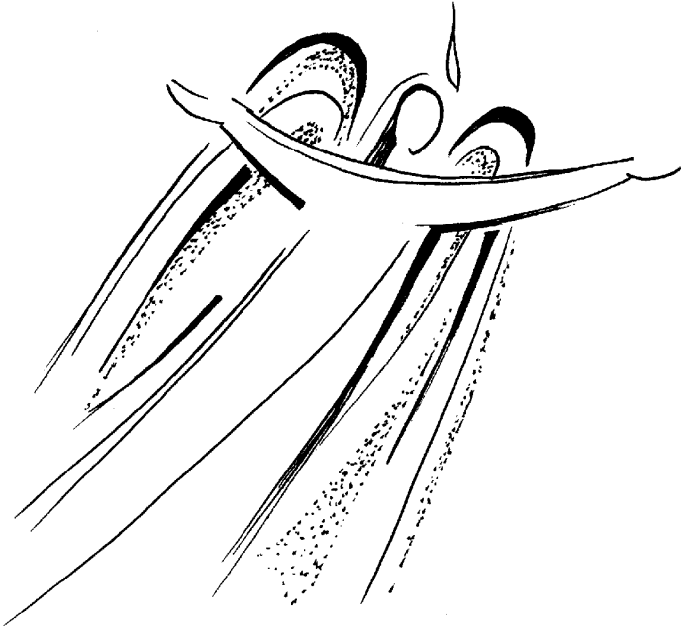
Do not be afraid to lament your loss. This is a strong part of our prayer tradition – and the prayers included here might help. There are also songs that help you to lament – to be sad and sorrowful and trustful that God is listening and loving you through it all.

Use rituals—as simple as lighting a candle or arranging flowers in a vase to create something beautiful. Take your time and allow the action to speak for your heart when your mind cannot find the words.

You are held in the Prayer of the Church.

PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS THAT MIGHT HELP YOU

Eternal rest grant to N... (or him/her), O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon him/her.
May he/she rest in peace
Amen.



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 in Zion,
with Mary, the virgin Mother of God,
with Joseph, and all the angels and saints.

What is dying?

I am standing on the seashore,
a ship sails in the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.

She is an object of beauty
and I stand watching her till at last she fades on the horizon
and someone at my side says: "She is gone."

Gone!

Where?

Gone from my sight that is all.

She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her,
and just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination.

The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her,
and just at the moment when someone at my side says,

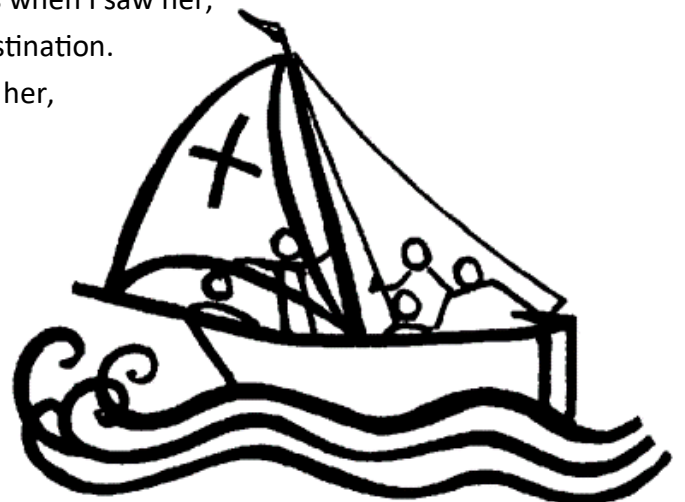
"She is gone"

there are others who are watching her coming,
and other voices take up a glad shout:

"There she comes!"

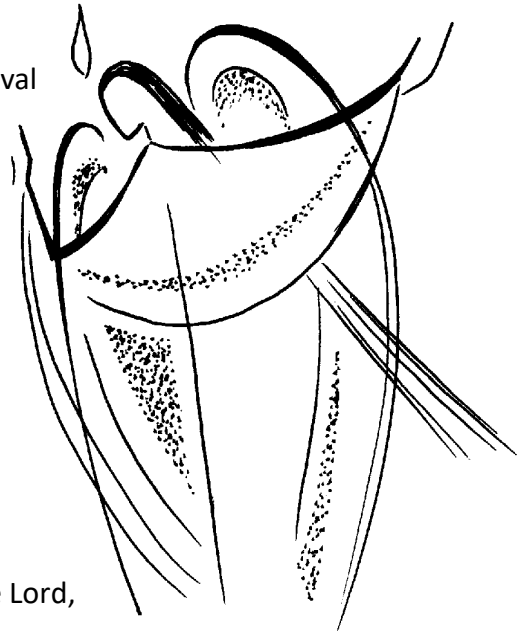
and that is dying.

Bishop Brent



May the angels lead you into paradise;
may the martyrs receive you at your arrival
and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem.

May choirs of angels receive you
and with Lazarus, once poor,
may you have eternal rest.



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.

Psalm 129(130)

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.
You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever

Psalm 22(23)

