



Church of St. Bernard

Ministry of Consolation

Instructions for Readers at Funeral Masses

During the Liturgy of the Word of the Funeral Mass, we gather to proclaim and hear comforting wisdom from the Bible about death and resurrection, about sadness, consolation and hope. Then, after the priest's or deacon's homily, we will pray in the General Intercessions for your loved one, for other friends and family who have died, and for the comfort and consolation of those who mourn.

You have been asked to proclaim a passage from the Scriptures or read the Intercessions. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. Before agreeing to exercise this ministry, please consider the following qualifications necessary for readers at a funeral Mass:

- Readers must be practicing baptized Christians for whom the Bible contains the Word of God, and who are able to proclaim it convincingly as such. The proclamation of Sacred Scripture and leadership of prayer requires more than just a correct pronunciation of the words. For effective proclamation, the reader must convey a mature sense of knowing what one is reading that includes a sense of reverence and spirituality, so that those gathered may gain some consolation and hope.
- Readers must have the time to rehearse the readings, and be able to arrive at the church early to meet with the Consolation Minister for final instructions.
- Readers must be comfortable speaking from a podium into a microphone in a public place, and must not be too emotionally distraught to proclaim the reading or lead the Intercessions in a dignified way.

If you feel you will be able to exercise this ministry at the funeral Mass, please follow these instructions:

1. **Scripture Readers:** The family has been given a book which contains the Scripture passages. Please obtain a copy of the reading to practice in advance. At the funeral, you will read the Scripture selection from a ceremonial binder which the Consolation Minister will show you. The readings take place after the opening prayer when the gathered assembly is seated. The priest may call you into the sanctuary by name.

Intercession Readers: You will find the intercessions to practice on the back of this page (unless a special set of intercessions is being composed). They will be placed on the ambo for you to read; the Consolation Minister will show you this before Mass. They are read after the priest or deacon's homily. The priest may call you into the sanctuary by name.

2. Meet the Consolation Minister at the church ten minutes before the funeral. She/he will explain the procedure to you. If you have any questions about the meaning or pronunciation of the words, speak to the minister or the priest or deacon. Then, take a moment to pray for God's grace and peace.
3. When you exercise your ministry as reader, please approach the ambo (the podium from which you will proclaim) slowly and reverently. Your reading will be set out on in a binder on the ambo; do not bring papers with you. Take time to adjust the microphone, and project your voice into it. It is very important to speak slowly and distinctly, and to take breaths between sentences.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

Priest: **God, the Almighty Father, raised Christ his Son from the dead; with confidence we ask him to save all his people, living and dead.**

Reader:

Our response to the Intercessions will be, "Lord, hear our prayer."

For _____, who in baptism was given the pledge of eternal life, that he/she may now be admitted to the company of the saints, we pray to the Lord,

All will respond after each intercession: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our brother/sister who ate the body of Christ, the bread of life, that he/she may be raised up on the last day, we pray to the Lord,

For our deceased relatives and friends, and for all who have helped us,
[Optional: especially _____]

that they may have the reward of their goodness, we pray to the Lord,

For those who have fallen asleep in the hope of rising again, that they may see God face to face, we pray to the Lord,

For the family and friends of our brother/sister _____, that they may be consoled in their grief by the Lord, we pray to the Lord,

For all of us assembled here to worship in faith, that we may be gathered together again in God's kingdom, we pray to the Lord,

(Remain at the ambo until the priest finishes the prayer below, then return to your place.)

Priest: **God, our shelter and our strength,
you listen in love to the cry of your people:
Hear the prayers we offer for our departed brothers and sisters.
Cleanse them of their sins and grant them the fullness of redemption.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**