



SCRIPTURE READINGS **FOR FUNERALS**

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The Gospel Readings

The Word of God is a source of encouragement and consolation for the faithful of God.

In our tradition we recognise that readings from the scripture are not just readings, still less just words. When the Scriptures are proclaimed in church, when we gather for prayer, Jesus himself is sacramentally present. Even when we read these readings to ourselves privately we are invited to listen for the voice of the Lord of Life.

This booklet contains a variety of the readings which are approved for use at Catholic funerals services. The booklet is provided to assist people preparing for a funeral service - and some specific guidance for that is provided on the next page. But it can also serve as a source of spiritual reading in the days and weeks that follow the funeral service.

It is most natural to return in prayer to those readings used at the service itself, to continue to draw nourishment from them. But there is much to learn and much to gain from the other readings here too.

The Word of God and Funeral Services.

How many readings are there at a Funeral?

There are a variety of forms of funeral service. These include

- Vigil for the Deceased (which can include the reception of the body at the church)
- The principal funeral service - which maybe the Funeral Mass or a Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass
- The rite of Committal (at the cemetery or crematorium) • (When the Committal was at a crematorium) the Rite for the Burial of Ashes

At most of these there can be as few as one reading - almost always a gospel reading. At the principal funeral service there will always be two or three, including a gospel reading.

- If there is only one reading, that reading is always a Gospel reading. • If there are two then one is from the first or second section, and the third is the Gospel reading • If there are three readings then one reading is taken from each of the three sections.

The priest who is conducting the funeral will agree with you which forms of service will take place, and which readings will be used. He will want to ensure that those decisions are taken which will best meet your needs and respect the tradition of the Church.

Who reads them?

The Gospel reading is read by the priest. The other reading(s) may be read by family members or friends. Please be sure to choose a reader who is able to read clearly and audibly, so that your guests will be able to hear the reading you have chosen.

If you feel that family members or friends will not be able to read, then please let the priest know, and he will happily arrange for someone else to read the chosen readings.

Selecting the readings

The following pages contain a selection of readings, approved by the Church for use at funerals.

If you are pressed for time then you might start with the Gospel readings, and then move on to the Old and New Testament readings.

It may well be that among the readings you will find a favourite reading, or a reading that has been traditionally used at family funerals - and that you decide to choose this reading for use on this occasion too. . On the other hand it may be that none of the readings offered are very familiar to you.

In either case we recommend that you take your time to read through the various readings offered. Each one has something to say to us about the experience of death and the life of faith. It would be a good thing to let this reading of the scriptures, listening to God's word, be a part of your spiritual preparation for the funeral, and starting to come to terms with the death of a loved one, and your own bereavement.

Consider what these readings have to say about faith, about death, and about the mystery of the Resurrection. Bring the readings and your response to them to your prayer. It can be helpful too, to discuss the readings - at least the ones that you have chosen to have at the funeral services with family members or friends.

Advising the priest of the reading(s) you choose

Be sure to make certain that you let the priest have the details of the reading or readings you have chosen when you meet with him to prepare the funeral liturgy.

Old Testament Readings

1. A reading from the book of Job 19:1. 23-27

This I know: that my Avenger lives.

Job said: 'Ah, would that these words of mine were written down, inscribed on some monument with iron chisel and engraving tool, cut into the rock for ever. This I know: that my Avenger lives, and he, the last, will take his stand on earth. After my awaking, he will set me close to him, and from my flesh I shall look on God. He whom I shall see will take my part: these eyes will gaze on him and find him not aloof.'

2. A reading from the book of Wisdom 3:1-9

He accepted them as a holocaust.

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace. If they experienced punishment as men see it, their hope was rich with immortality; slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be. God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with him;

he has tested them like gold in a furnace, and accepted them as a holocaust. When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out; as sparks run through the stubble, so will they. They shall judge nations, rule over peoples, and the Lord will be their king for ever. They who trust in him will understand the truth; those who are faithful will live with him in love; for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the book of Wisdom 3:1–6. 9

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3. A reading from the book of Wisdom 4:7–15

Untarnished life, this is ripe old age.

The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest. Length of days is not what makes age honourable, nor number of years the true measure of life; understanding, this is man's grey hairs, untarnished life, this is ripe old age. He has sought to please God, so God has loved him; as he was living among sinners, he has been taken up. He has been carried off so that evil may not warp his understanding or treachery seduce his soul; for the fascination of evil throws good things into the shade, and the whirlwind of desire corrupts a simple heart. Coming to perfection in so short a while, he achieved long life; his soul being pleasing to the Lord, he has taken him quickly from the wickedness around him. Yet people look on, uncomprehending; it does not enter their heads that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord, and protection, his holy ones.

4. A reading from the prophet Isaiah. 25:6–9

The Lord will destroy Death forever.

On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food. On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations, he will destroy Death forever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so. That day, it will be said: See, this is our God in whom we hoped for salvation; the Lord is the one in whom we hoped. We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us

5. A reading from the book of Lamentations 3:17–26

It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save.

My soul is shut out from peace; I have forgotten happiness. And now I say, 'My strength is gone, that hope which came from the Lord'. Brooding on my anguish and affliction is

gall and wormwood. My spirit ponders it continually and sinks within me. This is what I shall tell my heart, and so recover hope: the favours of the Lord are not all past, his kindnesses are not exhausted; every morning they are renewed; great is his faithfulness. 'My portion is the Lord' says my soul 'and so I will hope in him.' The lord is good to those who trust him, to the soul that searches for him. It is good to wait in silence for the Lord to save.

6. A reading from the prophet Daniel 12:1–3

Those who lie sleeping in the dust will awake.

I, Daniel, was doing penance when I received this message from the Lord: 'At that time Michael will stand up, the great prince who mounts guard over your people. There is going to be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence. When that time comes, your own people will be spared, all those whose names are found written in the book. Of those who lie sleeping in the dust of the earth many will awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace. The learned will shine as brightly as the vault of heaven, and those who have instructed many in virtue, as bright as stars for all eternity.'

7. A reading from the second book of Maccabees 12:43–45

A fine and noble action, in which he took account of the resurrection.

Judas, the leader of the Jews, took a collection from the people individually, amounting to nearly two thousand drachmae, and sent it to Jerusalem to have a sacrifice for sin offered, an altogether fine and noble action, in which he took full account of the resurrection. For if he had not expected the fallen to rise again it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. This was why he had this atonement sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.

II

New Testament Readings

(Readings 1- 4 are intended for use as the First Reading during the season of Easter, Readings 5-19 are for use at any time of the year)

1. A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 10:34–43

God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead.

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise,' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ—but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me,

can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses—we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead—and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.’
A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 10:34–36. 42–43

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‘It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ — but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men, and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name.’

2. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse 14:13

Happy are those who die In the Lord!

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say to me, ‘Write down: Happy are those who die in the Lord! Happy indeed, the Spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good deeds go with them.’

3. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse 20:11–21:1

The dead were judged according to what they had done in their lives.

I, John, saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. In his presence, earth and sky vanished, leaving no trace. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing in front of his throne, while the book of life was opened, and other books opened which were the record of what they had done in their lives, by which the dead were judged.

The sea gave up all the dead who were in it; Death and Hades were emptied of the dead that were in them; and every one was judged according to the way in which he had lived. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the burning lake. This burning lake is the second death; and anybody whose name could not be found written in the book of life was thrown into the burning lake.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea.

4. A reading from the book of the Apocalypse 21:1–7

There will be no more death.

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new

Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.'

Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new,' he said. 'I will give water from the well of life free to anybody who is thirsty; it is the rightful inheritance of the one who proves victorious; and I will be his God and he a son to me.'

5. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 5:5–11

Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger?

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man — though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die — but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

6. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 5:17–21

However great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater.

If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous. When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 6:3–9

Let us live a new life.

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised 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. We must realise that our former selves have been crucified with him to

destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin.

But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 6:3–4.8–9

Let us live a new life.

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised 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.

But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

8. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:14–23

We wait for our bodies to be set free.

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a Son of God. The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

9. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:31–35. 37–39

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ.

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us — he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists,

nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

10. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 14:7–12

Alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. We shall all have to stand before the judgement seat of God; as scripture says: By my life — it is the Lord who speaks — every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of himself.

11. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 15:20–28

All men will be brought to life in Christ.

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and in the same way the resurrection of the dead has come through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order; Christ as the first-fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death, for everything is to be put under his feet. —Though when it is said that everything is subjected, this clearly cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all.

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 15:20–23

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12. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 15:51–57

Death is swallowed up in victory.

I will tell you something that has been secret: that we are not all going to die, but we shall all be changed. This will be instantaneous, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. It will sound, and the dead will be raised, imperishable, and we shall be changed as well, because our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and this mortal nature must put on immortality.

When this perishable nature has put on imperishability, and when this mortal nature has put on immortality, then the words of scripture will come true: Death is swallowed up in

victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Now the sting of flesh is sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. So let us thank God for giving us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

13 A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 4:14–5:1

Visible things last only for a time, but the invisible are eternal.

We know that he who raised the Lord Jesus to life will raise us with Jesus in our turn, and put us by his side and you with us. You see, all this is for your benefit, so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God. That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day. Yes the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them. And so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal.

For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

14. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 5:1. 6–10

We have an everlasting home in heavens.

We know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

We are always full of confidence, then, when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight — we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord. Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

15. A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians 3:20–21

He will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of his glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the whole universe.

16. A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians 4:13–18

We shall stay with the Lord forever.

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that any of us who are left alive until the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have died. At the trumpet of God, the voice of the archangel will call out the command and the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in

the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. So we shall stay with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these you should comfort one another.

17. A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy 2:8–13

If we die with him, then we shall live with him.

Remember the Good News that I carry, ‘Jesus Christ risen from the dead, sprung from the race of David’; it is on account of this that I have my own hardships to bear, even to being chained like a criminal—but they cannot chain up God’s news. So I bear it all for the sake of those who are chosen so that in the end they may have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus and the eternal glory that comes with it.

Here is a saying that you can rely on:

If we have died with him, then we shall live with him. If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.

If we disown him, then he will disown us. We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful, for he cannot disown his own self.

18. A reading from the first letter of St John 3:1–2

We shall see him as he really is.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God’s children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

19. A reading from the first letter of St John 3:14–16

We have passed out of death and into life because we love our brothers.

We have passed out of death and into life, and of this we can be sure because we love our brothers. If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; to hate your brother is to be a murderer, and murderers, as you know, do not have eternal life in them. This has taught us love — that he gave up his life for us; and we, too, ought to give up our lives for our brothers.



Responsorial Psalms for Funerals

1. Responsorial Psalm: Ps 22

Response: The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

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. **Response.**

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. **Response.**

You have prepared a banquet for me
In the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
My cup is overflowing. **Response.**

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. **Response**

2. Responsorial Psalm: Ps 102.8. 10. 13-18. Rv8

Response: The Lord is compassion and love.

The Lord is compassion and love,
Slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
Nor repay us according to our faults. **Response.**

As a father has compassion on his children,
The Lord has pity on those who fear him;
For he knows of what we are made of
He remembers that we are dust. **Response.**

As for man, his days are like grass;
He flowers like the flowers of the field;
The wind blows and he is gone
And his place never sees him again. **Response.**

But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear;
His justice reaches out to children's children
When they keep his covenant in truth. **Response**

Psalm 15

Response: You are my inheritance, O Lord.

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.' .
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.

Response

2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart;
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

Response

3. You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

Response

Click here to print Psalm 15

(In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 33

Response: The Lord is king, most high above all the earth.

1. The Lord is king, let earth rejoice,
let all the coastlands be glad.
Cloud and darkness are his raiment;
his throne, justice and right.

Response

2. The mountains melt like wax
before the Lord of all the earth.
The skies proclaim his justice;

all peoples see his glory.

Response

3. For you indeed are the Lord
most high above all the earth
exalted far above all spirits.

Response

Click here to print psalm 33

(In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 84

Response: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace.

His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Response

2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

Response

3. The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.

Response

4. Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
O God, be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us.

Response

Click here to print psalm 84 (In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 12

Response: Great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.

Response

2. Give thanks to the Lord,
give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name.

Response

3. Sing a psalm to the Lord!
For he has done glorious deeds.
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Response

Click here to print psalm 12 (In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 32

Response : Happy the people the Lord has chosen as his Own.

1. They are happy, whose God is the Lord,
the people he has chosen as his own.
From the heavens the Lord looks forth,
he sees all the children of men.

Response

2. The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine.

Response

3. Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
The Lord is our help and our shield.
May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.

Response

Click here to print psalm 32 (In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 121

Response: I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house.'

1. I rejoiced when I heard them say:
'Let us go to God's house.'
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, a Jerusalem.

Response

2. Jerusalem is built as a city
strongly compact.
It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord.

Response

3. For Israel's law it is,
there to praise the Lord's name.
There were set the thrones of judgement
of the house of David.

Response

Click here to print psalm 121 (In pdf format - will open in new window)

Psalm 138

Response: Lord, you have made me and you know me.

O Lord, you search me and you know me;
You know my resting and my rising;
You discern my thoughts from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down;
All my ways lie open to you.

Response

O where can I go from your Spirit;
Or where can I fly from your face?
If I climb to the heavens you are there,
If I lie in the grave you are there.

Response

If I take the wings of the morning
And dwell at the sea's furthest end,
Even there your hand would lead me,
Your right hand hold me fast.

Response

For it was you who created my being,
Knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
For the wonders of all your creations.

Response

O search me, God, and know my heart.
O test me and know my thoughts.
See that I follow not the wrong path
And lead me in the path of life eternal.

Response

Look towards him and be radiant.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.
The Lord is close to the broken hearted;
Those whose spirit is crushed he will save;
Those who hide in him
Shall not be condemned.

Response

III

Gospel Readings

1. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:1–12

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

‘How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn:

they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.’

2. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:25–30

Come to me, and I will give you rest.

Jesus exclaimed, ‘I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Every- thing has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.’

3. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:1–13

The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples:

‘The kingdom of heaven will be like this; Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at mid- night there was a cry. “The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him.” At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, “Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out”. But they replied, “There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves”. They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. “Lord, Lord,” they said, “open the door for us.” But he replied, “I tell you solemnly, I do not know you”. So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.’

4. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 25:31–46

Come, you whom my Father has blessed.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the

angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food;

I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came

to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go

to see you?" And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me any- thing to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me."

19,20

Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

5. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 15:33-39;16:1-6

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, My God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood by heard this, they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah.' Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink saying, 'Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down.' But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died and he said, 'In truth this man was a son of God.'

When the sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices with which to go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the sun was rising.

They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked they could see that the stone — which was very big — had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, 'There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him.'

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 15:33–39

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6. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 7:11–17

Young man, I tell you to get up.

Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople were with her. When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her. ‘Do not cry,’ he said. Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, ‘Young man, I tell you to get up’. And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, ‘A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people’. And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the countryside.

7. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 12:35–40

Stand ready.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘See that you are dressed for action and have your lamps lit. Be like men waiting for their master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. I tell you solemnly, he will put on an apron, sit them down at table and wait on them. It may be in the second watch he comes, or in the third, but happy those servants if he finds them ready. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what hour the burglar would come, he would not have let anyone break through the wall of his house. You too must stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.’

8. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 23:33. 39–43

Today you will be with me in paradise.

When the soldiers reached the place called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left.

One of the criminals hanging there abused him. ‘Are you not the Christ?’ he said. ‘Save yourself and us as well.’ But the other spoke up and rebuked him. ‘Have you no fear of God at all?’ he said. ‘You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,’ he said, ‘remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ ‘Indeed, I promise you,’ he replied,

‘today you will be with me in paradise.’

9. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 23:44-46. 50. 52-53. 24:1-6

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

It was about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’. With these words he breathed his last.

Then a member of the council arrived, an upright and virtuous man named Joseph. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He then took it down, wrapped it in a shroud and put him in a tomb which was hewn in stone in which no one had yet been laid.

On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, ‘Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen.’

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 23:44–46 50. 52–53

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

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He then took it down, wrapped it in a shroud and put him in a tomb which was hewn in stone in which no one had yet been laid.

10. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 24:13–35

Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and enter into his glory?

On the first day of the week, two of the disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, ‘What matters are you discussing as you walk along?’ They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, ‘You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.’ ‘What things?’ he asked. ‘All about Jesus of Nazareth,’ they answered, ‘who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set

Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened: and some women from our group have astounded us; they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?'

Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening,' they said, 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them

at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke **24:13-16. 28-35**

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When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening,' they said, 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

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11. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 5:24-29

Whoever listens to my words and believes has passed from death to life.

Jesus said to the Jews: I tell you most solemnly, whoever listens to my words, and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life; without being brought to judgement he has passed from death to life. I tell you most solemnly, the hour will come — in fact it is

here already — when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live. For the Father, who is the source of life, has made the Son the source of life; and, because he is the Son of Man, has appointed him supreme judge.

Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice;

those who did good will rise again to life; and those who did evil, to condemnation. I can do nothing by myself; I can only judge as I am told to judge, and my judging is just, because my aim is to do not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.'

12. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:37-40

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day.

Jesus said to the crowd: 'All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I shall not turn him away; because I have come from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the one who sent me. Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, and that I should raise it up on the last day. Yes, it is my Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and that I shall raise him up on the last day.'

13. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:51-58

Anyone who eats this bread has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day.

Jesus said to the crowd: 'I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.'

Then the Jews started arguing with one another: 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' they said. Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.

As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.'

14. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 11:17-27

I am the resurrection and the life.

On arriving at Bethany, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you'. 'Your brother,' said Jesus to her, 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day'. Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

‘Yes, Lord,’ she said, ‘I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.’

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 11:21–27

I am the resurrection and the life.

Martha said to Jesus, ‘If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that, even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you’. ‘Your brother,’ said Jesus to her, ‘will rise again.’ Martha said, ‘I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day’.

Jesus said: ‘I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’

‘Yes, Lord,’ she said, ‘I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.’

15. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 11:32–45

Lazarus, come out.

Mary the sister of Lazarus went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, ‘Where have you put him?’ They said, ‘Lord, come and see’. Jesus wept; and the Jews said, ‘See how much he loved him!’

But there were some who remarked, ‘He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man’s death?’ Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, ‘Take the stone away.’ Martha said to him, ‘Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.’ Jesus replied, ‘Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

‘Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.’

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, here! Come out!’ The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, let him go free.’

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

16. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 12:23–28

If a wheat grain dies, it yields a rich harvest.

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am my servant will he there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour

him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it is for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’
A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’

A shorter form of this reading is also permitted

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 12:23-26

If a wheat grain dies, it yields a rich harvest.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.’

17. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 14:1–6

There are many rooms in my Father’s house.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going.’

Thomas said, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’

Jesus said: ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me.’

18. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 17:24–26

I want them to be with me where I am.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: ‘Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am,

so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Father, Righteous One,

the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me.

I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them.’

19. A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 19:17–18. 25–30

Bowing his head he gave up his spirit

Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out of the city to the place of the skull or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, ‘Woman, this is your son’. Then to the disciple he said, ‘This is

your mother’

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture perfectly he said:

‘I am thirsty’.

A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, ‘It is accomplished’; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during sabbath—since that sabbath was a day of special solemnity—the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they found he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it—trustworthy evidence, and he knows he speaks the truth—and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfill the words of scripture:

Not one bone of his will be broken; and again, in another place scripture says:

They will look on the one whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a disciple of Jesus—though a secret one because he was afraid of the Jews - asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well — the same one who had first come to Jesus at night time — and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about a hundred pounds.