

Remembrance of our Beloved Departed

Grief and gratitude are kindred souls,
each pointing to the
beauty of what is
transient and given
to us by grace.

(Patricia Campbell Carlson)



The Seasons of Grief

Every stage of grief has its season,
and every facet of loss has its time.

A time for disbelief and a time for harsh reality.

A time to know and a time to be consumed by unknowing.

A time of clarity and a time of uncertainty.

A time for public smiles and a time for private tears.

A time to be thankful and a time of regret.

A time of giving up and a time for going on.

A time of living half a life and a time of wanting to live again.

A time of then and a time of now.

A time to feel hopeless and a time to be positive.

A time of looking forward and a time of wanting life to end.

A time of faith and a time of doubt.

A time for holding on and a time for letting go.

A time when steps are light and a time when limbs are tired.

A time of hazy memories and a time of instant recall.

A time for living with death and a time for living with life.

A time of fruitlessness and a time of growth.

A time of despair and a time of purpose.

A time of emptiness and a time of hope.

A time for rage and a time for peace.

"The Seasons of Grief", from New Journeys Now Begin by Tom Gordon, published by Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, 2006.

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Introduction



Welcome

*Today/This evening, we remember those who have died. In recalling them we give thanks. They have been sources of encouragement to us by the way they lived as persons of strong faith and great love.

Through our remembrance of them may we be renewed and re-inspired in our journey of spiritual transformation.

Hymn: **Being of Life**

(Track 4, CD *The Peace of God* by Briege O'Hare, osc and sung by Marie Cox, rsm)

Or **Enfold me in your Love**

(Track 6, CD *Holy Ground* by Monica Brown)

Or **A Hymn of your Choice**

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*Prayer

Leader: Let us call into our midst the presence, the memory and the strength of those who influenced and shaped our beliefs and values.

Loving God, this day we join in acknowledging the blessedness of the many who inspired us and shaped our faith.

We turn in memory and appreciation toward those in our family of origin who influenced and encouraged us to live as our best selves...

We remember, too, those who left this world with hurts unresolved...

We open our deep self to you and pray that any woundedness we have inherited will be healed through your grace and our loving hearts...

We bring to mind our departed sisters who enriched our lives and led us further on our journey of personal transformation...

We honor all those who sacrificed and suffered in order for peace and justice to be furthered on our planet...

We give thanks and rejoice for the countless, unnamed persons whose lives left a lasting mark of kindness and compassion... *Adapted from *Prayer Seeds: A Gathering of Blessings, Reflections and Poems for Spiritual Growth*© by Joyce Rupp. Used by permission of Ave Maria Press®, Inc.

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May the remembrance of each of these blessed ones inspire and increase our personal commitment to leave a trace of goodness wherever we go...

When we depart this sphere of life may our inner strength have contributed to individual and world peace.

Time of Silence



*Choose the 1st Reading from Jeremiah 18 and Sirach 33
or the 2nd Reading from Abbey of the Arts.*

1st Reading

Reader 1: God said to me, "Go down to the potter's house, where I will give you my message." So I went there and saw the potter working at the wheel. Whenever a piece of pottery turned out imperfectly, the potter would take the clay and make it into something else.

Reader 2: Then God said to me, "Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay? You are in my hands just like clay in the potter's hands. If at any time I say that I am going to uproot, break down, or destroy any nation or kingdom, but then the nations turns from its evil, I will not do what I said I would. On the other hand, if I say that I am going to plant or build up any nation or kingdom, but then that nation disobeys me and does evil, I will not do what I said I would... Don't I have the right to do with you people of Israel what the potter did with the clay?" (Jeremiah 18:1-10)

Reader 3: Just as clay is in the potter's hands for the potter to shape as the potter pleases, so we are in the hands of our Creator for the Creator to do as the Creator wishes. (Sirach 33:13)

Pause

Leader: ...we ask for the capacity to use our sufferings in such a way that we are forever vulnerable to the shape God has in mind for us.

2nd Reading

***Reading:** from *Abbey of the Arts*, Newsletter, Christine Valters Paintner.

The Christian feasts of All Saints and All Souls on November 1 and 2 honour the profound legacy of wisdom our ancestors have left to us.

Psychologist Carl Jung wrote extensively about the collective unconscious which is this vast pool of ancestral memory within each of us. It is a kind of deposit of ancestral experience. He believed it comprises the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings. Nothing is lost. All of the stories, struggles, and wisdom are available to us.

Each of us is an unconscious carrier of this ancestral experience and part of our journey is to bring this to consciousness in our lives... The stories of our ancestors are woven into the fabric of our very being.

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*Gathering the Strength of the Ancestors

During a quiet, reflective period.

Recall a personal experience of your life when you faced a difficult situation. Remember how your inner strength helped you move through it. You have that strength residing in you now, the strength of the ancestors.



Write the names of deceased persons you have known (or people from literature, history, scripture and spirituality) whose strength has been passed on to you in some way. Think about their positive qualities and virtues (courage, sense of humour, ability to forgive, leadership, unselfishness, integrity, hospitality, etc.) List the names of five persons. When finished, unite quietly with them in gratitude. Pray to receive strength to enliven their qualities in your daily living.

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*Honouring the Strength of the Ancestors

A basket of medium-sized stones is passed around. Each person chooses one to hold. These stones represent the ancestral gift of strength. The group stands in a circle. As the stones are held, the names of the ancestors are proclaimed in the following way.



Each person speaks the name of one Ancestor/Sister/Family Member/Friend/Partner in Ministry etc. After each name is spoken, all respond:

Guide us and grant us your strength

Continue going around the circle until all names are spoken.

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The response is:

We Entrust Them to your Abiding Love

Pause briefly to remember after each of the following is named

Those taken from us all too soon... R

All who died while incarcerated... R

People afflicted with a terminal disease... R

Children stillborn or miscarried... R

First responders who died trying to save lives... R

Persons who took their own lives... R

Those who suffered from addictions... R

Missionaries, pastors, and staff members... R

Loved ones who slipped away without warning... R

Fearful ones who did not die peacefully... R

Victims of war, violence, and abuse of any form... R

Persons surprised by death during surgery... R

Elderly men and women and those in nursing homes... R

People who left without extending forgiveness... R

Men and women who died while at work... R

Traffic accident fatalities and homicide victims... R

Parents who left behind their young children... R

Those filled with excruciating, unbearable pain... R

Persons who lived unknown and lonely lives... R

Each person dear to our hearts whom we miss today... R

Litany of Consolation

Source of Solace, touch our hearts with your comfort.

Divine Compassion, thank you for loaning our loved ones to us for a while.

Abiding Presence, be near when we feel grief's desolation and loneliness.

Star of Hope, shine in the dark spaces of our emptiness and sorrow.

Holy Wisdom, provide guidance when we cannot see our way through the pain.

Enduring Love, wrap your arms around us when we are overcome with sadness.

Rock of Strength, assure us of our inner resiliency and our ability to heal from the hurt.

Source of Faith, refine our sense of a life beyond this one and grant us your peace.

Hymn: **Prayer for Protection**

(Track 3, CD The Peace of God by Briege O'Hare, osc and sung by Marie Cox, rsm)

Or **Let your Heart Take Comfort**

(Track 15, CD Holy Ground by Monica Brown)

Or **A Hymn of your choice.**



Closing Prayer

Leader: Beloved Ancestors, Sisters, Family Members, Friends and Partners in ministry your presence stretches back through the ages.

It touches and influences the deep part of each of us today. Your strength sings in our spirits. Your courage abides in our hearts. Your resilience resonates in our bones. Your love abounds in our souls. May we remember how connected we are to these enduring qualities. We offer gratitude for how the best of you continues to find life in us. Amen.



The Gap

Nothing can fill that gap when we lose
someone we love.

And it would be wrong to try to find anything.
We must simply hold out and win through.

That sounds very hard at first, but at the same
time it is a great consolation,
Since leaving the gap unfilled preserves the
bond of love between us.

It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap.
God does not fill it but leaves it empty
so that our communion with the one we love
may be kept alive-even at the cost of pain.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



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