**Rite for Blessing a Headstone**

INTRODUCTION

*This order is for a solemn commemoration of a departed soul whose body lies in the cemetery and upon the placement of a new headstone. This can be carried out in coordination with the placement of the headstone or after the headstone has been place in its location at the gravesite.*

*The service may be used immediately following Mass or apart from the Mass*

*If the service takes place immediately after Mass and there is to be a procession to the cemetery, the blessing and dismissal of the Mass are omitted. During the procession a psalm (Psalms, 25, 42, 116, or 118 are suggested) or other suitable song may be sung.*

*If there is no procession a Psalm may be used after all have gathered at the gravesite.*

*This order may be used by a priest or a deacon.*

GREETING

*A minister who is a priest or deacon greets the people in the following words or other words taken from Scripture:*

**In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

*All reply:* Amen.

**The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, giver of life and conquer of death, be with you all.**

*All reply:* And with your spirit.

*The minister, using these or similar words, says:*

**My dear friends, our loved one has completed his/her work on earth and has been turned over to Our God for his redeeming grace and everlasting peace. N. now waits for the Lord’s coming in glory.**

**Yet, we still miss and grieve for our loved one and cherish the many wonderful memories that were created over time with the help of God. So, we take time to pray that God may welcome him/her among all the saints in heaven.**

*(Pray in silence for a moment)*

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

*If Mass is not preceded, a reader, another person present, or the minister reads a text from Sacred Scripture:*

**My brothers and sisters listen to the words of the first letter to Paul to the Thessalonians.** 4-13-18

**We do not want 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 preceded those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and 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.**

*Or one of the Scriptures texts in Part III of the Order of Christian Funerals may be chose.*

*The minister may give a short homily or reflection at this time*

LITANY OF SAINTS

*While the following litany is sung or recited, the minister sprinkles the grave with holy water and, if desired, may also incense the grave itself*

**Lord, have mercy** Lord, have mercy

**Christ have mercy** Christ have mercy

**Lord, have mercy** Lord, have mercy
**Holy Mother of God** pray for us
**St. Michael**  pray for us

**St. John the Baptist** pray for us

**St. Joseph** pray for us

**St. Peter** pray for us

**St. Paul** pray for us
**St. Andrew** pray for us

**St. Stephen** pray for us

**St. Ann** pray for us

**St. Lawrence** pray for us

**St. Teresa** pray for us

**St. Catherine** pray for us

**St. Frances Cabrini** pray for us

**St. Elizabeth Seton** pray for us
*(The names of other saints may be added)*

**All holy men and women** pray for us

**All the angels and saints** pray for us

**Christ, pardon all faults of our loved one** Lord hear our prayer

**Christ remember the good he/she did** Lord hear our prayer

**Christ comfort us who mourn** Lord hear our prayer

**Lord have mercy** Lord have mercy

**Christ have mercy** Christ have mercy

**Lord have mercy** Lord have mercy

*The minister then invites those present to pray the Lord’s Prayer, with these or similar words:*

**As Christians on the same journey from this life to the next, we know, that with Christ there is mercy and fullness of redemption. So, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us:**

*All:* Our Father…

BLESSING OF THE HEADSTONE

*The minister then turns to the headstone with holy water and blesses the headstone with this or a similar prayer:*

**It is our responsibility to remember our N. at the Altar of God and to pray for his/her soul. During the Holy Mass, we can truly experience the heavenly worship of all the angels and saints, while asking God to be merciful for ourselves and our dearly departed. In this place, we can memorize our loved with hope in the resurrection.**

**As so, we ask God to give us a place to pray and remember the wonderful gift He gave us through N. We ask you to forgive us our sins and the sins of our departed love ones so that, one day, we can join together in the chorus of praise and triumph over sin and death.**

**With confidence in Our Lord’s redeeming grace, we bless this headstone  with the same sign of the cross that dedicated the life of N. to God.**

**May God who made the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf to hear, grant N. a place in everlasting life.**

FINAL PRAYER

*The minister then says the following prayer, or another taken from the Order of Christian Funerals, no. 398.*

**Almighty God and Father, it is our certain faith that your Son, who died on the cross, was raised from the dead, is the first fruits 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 the resurrection.**

*All reply:* Amen

CONCLUDING RITE

**Eternal rest grant unto N., Oh Lord**

*All:* And let perpetual light shine upon him/her

**May he/she rest in peace**

*All:* Amen

**May his/her soul and the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

*All:* Amen

*A priest or deacon adds:*

**May the peace of God which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*All:* Amen

*Then he blesses all present.*

**And may almighty God bless you all, the Father, and the Son,  and the Holy Spirit.**

*All:* Amen

*The service may be concluded by a suitable psalm or other song*