

ORIENTATIONS
FOR CELEBRATING THE FUNERAL
OF SS.CC. BROTHERS AND SISTERS
“... in whose service I wish to live and die”

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS
OF JESUS AND MARY AND OF PERPETUAL ADORATION
OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR

Rome, 2014

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I N D E X

PRESENTATION	5
CHAPTER I AT THE DEATH OF A BROTHER OR A SISTER	7
CHAPTER II BEFORE THE FUNERAL.....	10
CHAPTER III CELEBRATION OF THE FUNERAL MASS.....	12
CHAPTER IV PROCESSION TO THE CEMETERY AND PRAYER AT THE GRAVE	14
CHAPTER V PRAYER FOR DECEASED SS.CC.....	15
Appendix 1 CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD DURING A WAKE.....	16
Appendix 2 FORMULAS OF INTRODUCTION FOR THE FUNERAL MASS.....	20
Appendix 3 UNIVERSAL PRAYER FOR THE FUNERAL MASS.....	23
Appendix 4 PRAYER AT THE CEMETERY	25
Appendix 5 CELEBRATION AT THE CEMETERY	28

PRESENTATION

LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERALS

“... *In whose service I wish to live and die.*” Our formula of religious profession makes mention of death. Our consecration to the Sacred Hearts is light for us as we journey toward death. This consecration is our way of proclaiming the faith received in baptism, when we entered into the death of Jesus Christ in order to rise with him.

When a brother or sister of the Congregation dies, it is good that we remember their religious profession, which was the particular way in which they followed the dead and risen Lord and participated in his paschal mystery. For that reason we offer these “*Orientations for celebrating the funeral of SS.CC. brothers and sisters*”, so as to give the Church’s prayer for the deceased an SS.CC. accent.

Praying for those who have died is an act of faith in God, who loves life, whose Spirit raises the dead and brings us to life with Christ, who conquers death. Our prayer and our proclamation of the reign of God would be vain without faith in the resurrection.

Praying for those who have died is an act of charity, a demonstration of our brother/sisterhood and of the love that united us in life and that continues to make us one beyond death. Love never ends. We are all sinners, in need of conversion and mercy. We know that the reparative work of Christ must be made real in us if we want to be together with one another and with God our Father who welcomes us to his house. The community’s prayer for those who have died, invokes that reparative love so that it transform and renew the deceased and bring them to eternal rest in God. As the Good Father said, “*we must never forget that it is a salutary thought to pray for the dead, and that we must interest heaven in their favor.*”¹

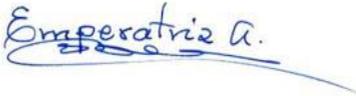
Praying for those who have died is an act of communion, which strengthens the bonds that unite us, which sustains the hope that gives life and which allows us to comfort one another. When there is true love, the separation of death means profound sadness. When love is sustained by faith, there is light, joy and hope

¹ Circular letter announcing the death of Fr. Idefonse Alet ssc, December 4, 1831; BP 1660.

with death. *“Our friends go before us, do not weep as if we will see them no more. They will pray for us.”*²

The communion that exists between different generations of the Congregation, between the living and dead, is part of the communion of the whole Church, the body of the risen Christ. With these texts that we offer you here, may we show forth our faith and grow in charity.

May 10, 2014

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emperatriz A." with a long, sweeping underline.

Emperatriz Arrobo ssc

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Javier" with a large, stylized flourish.

Javier Álvarez-Ossorio ssc

² Good Father, Letter of October 11, 1802; BP 2246.

CHAPTER I

AT THE DEATH

OF A BROTHER OR A SISTER

- 1.** The death of a brother or a sister is always an important event. Frequently it is preceded by prolonged illness, during which the brother/sister is accompanied by his/her community or by the staff of a health care facility. Sometimes death is sudden because of a health problem, an accident or even an act of violence.
- 2.** While accompanying a brother or sister in their final days, it is good to keep other communities informed, so that they can be united in prayer. According to circumstances, it will be important to celebrate the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The one receiving it should be accompanied by the community and be able to participate as consciously and actively as possible.³
- 3.** It is important to send news of death promptly so that the Congregation can be united in prayer for the deceased. Using e-mail and the webpage makes it easy to inform all the brothers and sisters quickly. Notification of death should be sent particularly to the General Secretariat of brothers or sisters, so that it can be put on the website. We recommend that a short biographical note be written that could also be published along with a photo.
- 4.** The moment of death has special meaning in the celebration of life in Christ. It is the final stage in living the Lord's paschal mystery. It is lived in faith and hope, praising God the source of life and love. We were consecrated to God in baptism and incorporated into Christ, who died and rose. We were consecrated to the Sacred Hearts in religious profession. Our formula of religious profession says that we make our religious vows in the

³ Sisters' Constitutions, Art. 44: "*The Anointing of the Sick brings the comfort of the Church's prayer in illness and calls us to unite it to the passion of Christ*".

Brothers' Constitutions, Art. 54.2: "*We are careful to see that our sick or elderly brothers receive the Sacrament of the Sick and Viaticum at the appropriate time.*"

Congregation, “in whose service I wish to live and die.” At the end of our life, we desire that the death of the members of the Congregation be “an act of praise for the God who loves us. In that way, our death will be a witness to Christ, a final act of mission.”⁴

5. When a member of the Body of Christ dies, the faithful are invited to intercede for the deceased and to console those who have lost a family member or friend. When a brother or sister of the Congregation dies, the community, united to the Church, intercedes for him/her, with sure faith that death is not the end of life nor does it shatter the bonds that united us in this life. In prayer and especially in the Eucharist, “we enter into communion with the thanksgiving of the risen Jesus,”⁵ all of us one in the paschal mystery. United to Jesus Christ we ask that the deceased brother/sister be purified of all sin and live fully with God.

6. One day the body of the deceased was sealed by the Holy Trinity and became a temple of the Holy Spirit. For that reason we respect and venerate the body of the deceased and the place where he/she will rest. In preparing the body for the funeral rites, care will be taken to treat it with dignity.

7. When circumstances justify the cremation of a brother/sister, it should be stressed during the funeral that the person lives on and that he/she will receive reward or punishment immediately after death and in the final resurrection on the Day of the Lord. The funeral should take place before the cremation because besides bring a time to pray for the deceased, it is an opportunity to honor his/her body, which during earthly life was consecrated as a temple of the Holy Spirit and called to participate in the resurrection of the body.

8. Care will be taken to maintain the places where the deceased of the congregation rest, whether in our own cemeteries or public cemeteries. When someone is cremated, it is not appropriate to scatter the ashes, for it is not a clear expression of faith in the resurrection of the body. It is better to place them in a columbarium or similar place.

⁴ 38th General Chapter (Brothers), Doc. “Mission” n. 37. Rome, 2012.

⁵ Constitutions, Art. 5.

9. As remote preparation for the celebration of funerals, we recommend that you read carefully the introduction to the funeral liturgies of the your episcopal conference. There you will find theological and liturgical background, as well as specific ways of carrying out the celebration.

CHAPTER II

BEFORE THE FUNERAL

- 10.** It is recommended that there be a time of prayer for the community to which family members and friends could be invited. If possible, it could take place around the coffin in a suitable place. (chapel, parish church, mortuary etc.)
- 11.** This time of common prayer can take different forms. The funeral ritual of the episcopal conference usually includes a “Prayer in the Home of the Deceased.” Each community will consider what would be the best in their situation. The following are possibilities:
 - a) Celebration of the Office of the Dead from the Liturgy of the Hours, particularly the Office of Readings.
 - b) Celebration of a Liturgy of the Word.
 - c) Praying the Rosary according to the local custom, including, if possible, biblical texts.
- 12.** A schema for a Liturgy of the Word is offered in **APPENDIX 1**.
- 13.** In different parts of the Congregations there are songs that have special meaning and would be appropriate for such celebrations. There are also traditional works of poetry or writings by members of the Congregation that could be used at such times of prayer.
- 14.** Before the funeral, it would be good to make it possible for community members, family and friends to have time for personal prayer near the coffin or in the community’s chapel.

In the other communities

15. When a community receives the news of the death of a member of the Congregation, he/she should be remembered at prayer and the Eucharist. The Provincial Statutes should indicate the way in which this is done.⁶

⁶ Brothers' Constitutions, Article 56: "*We express in our prayer the communion which continues to link us to the deceased brothers and sisters of the Congregation. The Provincial Chapters will specify exactly the prayers which are most appropriate.*"

Sisters' Constitutions, Article 45: "*In our prayer of intercession or of praise, we are one with the whole human family. In this spirit we pray for the living and the dead, especially for the sisters, brothers, and associates of the Congregation, for our families, our friends, those who work with us and those who recommend themselves to our prayer.*" Statute 14 of the Sisters: "*Guidelines concerning prayers for the living and the dead are given at the provincial level.*"

CHAPTER III

CELEBRATION OF THE FUNERAL MASS

16. Where possible and where it is the tradition, there could be a procession taking the body of the deceased to the church where the Eucharist will be celebrated. The funeral ritual of the episcopal conference will give orientations in this regard.

17. In the church, the coffin should be displayed in a simple manner. If possible it should face in the direction that the deceased would have in the liturgical assembly: brothers who are priests or deacons facing the people and others facing the altar.

18. Except when the local custom is otherwise, the Paschal Candle will be placed next to the coffin. Other symbols of SS.CC. religious life or the ordained ministry could also be used (scapular, SS.CC. cross or medallion, stole...) The Bible, Constitutions etc. could also be laced on or near the coffin. In **APPENDIX 2** there are texts that can be used for the opening of Mass and in introducing these symbols.

19. According to circumstances, it is the Local Superior, Provincial or Superior General who presides at the funeral of a brother. When a sister dies, the Superior of the brothers' community closest to the sisters could preside or the Provincial or Superior General of the brothers. It is appropriate that brothers who are priests concelebrate.

20. The Mass follows what is established in the Roman Missal with texts appropriate for each situation. In **APPENDIX 3** there is a model of the "universal prayer."

21. In the commemoration of the saints in the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest should name the saints and blessed of the Congregation recognized by the Church. It is a way of expressing that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, and with the brothers and sisters of the Congregation who have gone before us on the journey of faith. The offering is made for the whole Church and all its

members, living and dead, who have been called to share in the salvation and redemption won by the Body and Blood of Christ.⁷

22. At the end of the funeral mass, the final commendation takes place, according to the different funeral rituals. It can be done in the cemetery, if most of the community accompanies the coffin in procession to the cemetery.

23. According to local custom, after the introduction and a time of silence, some brief words may be said about the brother or sister who has died.

24. In some places, during the blessing with Holy Water and incensing, the brothers and sisters gather around the coffin and sing the *Salve Regina*.

25. It would be appropriate for the Superior to say some words of thanks to those who participated in the funeral mass, inviting them to continue to pray and to accompany the body to the cemetery. This could be done after the post-communion prayer and before the final commendation or after everything has concluded and before going to the cemetery.

⁷ General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 55, g.

CHAPTER IV

PROCESSION TO THE CEMETERY AND PRAYER AT THE GRAVE

- 26.** The Funeral Ritual will give orientations for this part. In some places there are traditional rites and local customs that it is good to follow.⁸ The grave can be blessed, if it has not been blessed previously.
- 27.** Before placing the body in the grave, some words can be said about our faith in the Paschal Mystery. Those present could be asked to say the creed.
- 28.** According to the situation, an appropriate song could be sung or a psalm (e.g. Psalms 117, 41, 92, 24, 118 etc.) recited. It might also be the time to say some words about the brother/sister being buried.
- 29.** The universal prayer can be said, followed by the Our Father and concluding with a prayer and prayers of farewell. A song can conclude the celebration.
- 30.** In **APPENDIX 4**, there is a model of the “Universal Prayer” and its conclusion.
- 31.** In **APPENDIX 5**, a schema for this prayer at the cemetery is presented, especially appropriate for when the body is being buried in the earth.

⁸ For example, the “Tamuraraa” of French Polynesia, the “lucernario” and flowers in Mozambique, in India...

CHAPTER V

PRAYER FOR DECEASED SS.CC.

32. As indicated earlier, communities will pray for the deceased brothers and sisters when they receive the news of their death. They will arrange whatever is called for according to the Provincial Statutes.

33. In the communities' daily prayer, there is a remembrance of those who have died. An appropriate time to do that is during Vespers at the end of the intercessions, when there is the prayer for the dead. A special intention for SS.CC. brothers and sisters can be added.

34. Mention can be made of brothers and sisters on their anniversary of death, using the SS.CC. Necrology. Communities should make an effort to update the Necrology incorporating the names of brothers and sisters who have recently died.

35. During November, on or around the commemoration of All Souls (November 2), a Eucharist will be celebrated for all deceased SS.CC. brothers and sisters.

36. At the time of a chapter or assembly it is appropriate to remember our deceased brothers and sisters. The community could make it a custom that during such gatherings, there is a Eucharistic celebration to commemorate the deceased brothers and sisters.

APPENDIX 1

CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD DURING A WAKE

1. The celebration can be held with the coffin present. Next to it can be placed symbols of our Christian faith. (for example holy water, the paschal candle, incense etc.) There could also be symbols of our SS.CC. vocation such as the scapular, the cross or medal with the Sacred Hearts, the Constitutions etc. In the case of deacon or priest, it could be the stole or chasuble.

Introductory Rite

2. The celebration may begin with a hymn.
3. The presider begins with the sign of the cross and these or similar words:
- a) The peace of the risen Christ be with you.
 - b) May the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you.
 - c) May the blessing of God, the Father of mercy and consolation comfort us in our sorrow.

4. The presider may introduce the celebration with these or similar words:

Brothers and sisters, we are gathered as an expression of our communion with our brother/sister **N.**, who lived among us and now has left this world to live in the eternal dwelling place. Our faith in the risen Christ tells us that

those who die in the Lord continue living in him. Sustained by this faith we commend our deceased brother/sister to the Father's love. He/She has lived the last stage of his/her call as one consecrated to the Sacred Hearts and now has been called to the fullness of love in communion with God. Let us ask that united to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to all those who have gone before us in faith, he/she might enjoy the inheritance of the saints.

5. Then the presider invites everyone to pray in silence and after says the following prayer or a similar one:

Lord, author of life,
we make this prayer to you for your son/daughter N.,
whom you called to follow your Son in our Congregation,
so that he/she might be consecrated
to the hearts of Jesus and Mary.
He/she was our companion on the journey;
he/she responded to your call and wanted his/her life
to be at the service of your Kingdom,
contemplating, living and proclaiming
love incarnate in your Son Jesus.
May he/she now be welcomed
into your heavenly assembly,
together with Mary and all the saints
to live the eternal Easter.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

<p>Proclamation of the Word of God</p>

6. Appropriate biblical texts are proclaimed, which can alternate with responsorial psalms, an appropriate song, an alleluia verse or a time of silence. The proclamation of the Gospel should have a privileged place.

There could also be a reading from some text of the Congregation or a recognized author.

7. After the readings there can be a brief homily or simply a time of silence.

Universal Prayer

8. The universal prayer follows, which may follow the form used in the Eucharist or the Liturgy of the Hours or something similar. Several models are offered below.

The presider says these or similar words:

Comforted by the Word of God, we lift up our prayer to the Father of mercy, that all those who are one with Jesus in his death may also share in his resurrection.

Let us pray saying, *Merciful Father, hear our prayer.*

One or several readers:

- For our brother/sister **N.**, who in baptism received the seed of life, may he/she be welcomed into the communion of the saints. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For **N.**, who adored the bread of the Eucharist and was nourished at the table of the Lord, may Christ raise him/her up to eternal glory. Let us pray to the Lord.
- That **N.**, whom he called to religious life in the Congregation, might contemplate the immensity of God's love for all eternity. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all the deceased of our Congregation, our families and for all who have died, that the Lord welcome them into the glorious assembly of his saints. Let us pray to the Lord.

- For all those who suffer in body and in spirit, that they experience the closeness of the risen Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For peace, justice and harmony among peoples, that all in authority promote the common good. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all of us gathered here, that the Lord reawaken our faith, strengthen our hope and enflame our love. Let us pray to the Lord.

Other petitions can be added.

The intercessions conclude with the recitation (or singing) of the Our Father.

Concluding Rite

9. If the casket is present during the celebration, the presider can sprinkle it with holy water and also incense it. While that is being done there is an appropriate song or silence.

10. The celebration concludes with the final blessing. If the presider is a priest or deacon, he gives the blessing in the usual way. If the presider is not ordained he/she uses the following form:

V/. May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil
and bring us to everlasting life.

R/. Amen.

Or he/she may use these words:

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.

R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

11. The “Regina Caeli”, or “Salve Regina” , or another Marian antiphon may follow.

APPENDIX 2

FORMULAS OF INTRODUCTION FOR THE FUNERAL MASS

Two models :

- a) Our celebration in the presence of the mortal remains of our brother/sister **N.**, is a way of expressing our communion and fulfilling the precept of the Lord, “this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” Because of God’s love, which we are called to contemplate, live and proclaim as members of the Congregation, we pray for our brother/sister, who has shared their life with us and in death has realized the supreme act of the mission to which he/she was called.

We pray that the Lord receive him/her in his glory. **N.**, in his/her religious (and priestly) life was a disciple and follower of Jesus. He/she entered with him into the dynamism of his love for the Father and the world. May he/she now contemplate and adore eternally the glory of God.

- b) Today the Sacred Hearts community celebrates the love of God that is stronger than death. Our brother/sister **N.** has died. His/her death saddens us and reminds us of our own fragility. But faith comforts us and assures us that Christ lives forever and wants to share with us that same life.

The Holy Spirit led **N.** to enter the Congregation in order to follow Jesus there. A (long) life guided by the Lord’s Spirit, who has lead him/her on his/her journey with us. The Spirit of the Lord has been with him/her throughout

his/her (long) life, a journey he/she shared with us. **N.** was born etc. (a brief biography of the deceased.)

N. has passed through death, the last stage of his/her following of Christ. His/her life, his/her religious (and priestly) vocation, have been engraved in the love of God. United to the whole Christian community and to the family and friends of **N.**, let us prepare ourselves to celebrate the Eucharist, which was the nourishment of his/her religious (and priestly) life and which today is a prayer that he/she participates in the banquet of the kingdom.

The Paschal candle is lit.

By the body of **N.** we enkindle this flame, symbol of the life of the Risen One. May the brightness of this light illumine our darkness and enlighten our journey of hope until we arrive at the kingdom where there is no darkness and only eternal peace. Amen.

Mention can be made of other symbols placed next to or around the coffin.

- We also place holy *water* next to the body of **N.** in remembrance of his/her baptism when he/she died and rose in Christ;
- *Incense* recalls “the aroma of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15) which, in spite of his/her sins and failings, our deceased brother/sister spread in his/her consecrated life (and his ministry);
- the *Word of God* that nourished his/her life (and of which he was appointed minister to proclaim the Gospel);

- an image of the *Sacred Hearts*, to whose service he/she was committed in profession so as to be transformed by redeeming love and so live the mission of contemplating, living and proclaiming God's love incarnate in Jesus;
- the *scapular/medal/cross*, with the emblem of the Sacred Hearts, sign of his/her religious consecration in the Congregation; along with the Constitutions, norm and guide for our life as a brother/sister;
- **(for a deacon)** the *stole* (and/or *dalmatic*) sign of the configuration to Christ the servant through the sacrament of orders;
- **(for a priest)** the *stole* (and/or *chasuble*) sign of the configuration to Christ the priest through the sacrament of orders.

APPENDIX 3

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

FOR THE FUNERAL MASS

1. For **N.**, who was called by God to follow him leaving everything and to be consecrated to the Sacred Hearts, that he/she come to the fullness of the love which God called him/her to announce with his/her very life. Let us pray to the Lord.
2. That those who suffer the loss of **N.** be strengthened in the hope that he/she continues to support them from the new heaven and new earth. Let us pray to the Lord.
3. For the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, that by the intercession of Saint Damien, Blessed Eustaquio and the Blessed Martyrs Teofilo and companions it may remain faithful to the vocation to contemplate, live and proclaim the redemptive love of God. Let us pray to the Lord.
4. For those who sow the seed of the Good News by education, pastoral ministry and the service of the sick, needy and suffering that they may bear much fruit. Let us pray to the Lord.

5. That the Church be fruitful ground where people feel called to serve the needs of the world; that our Congregation and other religious communities grow with new brothers and sisters who desire to follow Jesus giving their lives for others as the grain of wheat in the earth. Let us pray to the Lord.

6. For those who have cared for **N.** (during these months of) (during) his/her illness, giving him/her their care and attention, that the Lord bless them all. Let us pray to the Lord.

7. For all of us gathered here to bid farewell to **N.**, that we be reunited one day in the eternal Kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord.

Concluding Prayer:

We humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that you receive our brother/sister **N.**,
whom you so love.
May he/she rejoice with you in that place
where there is no more mourning or tears,
but only peace and joy, with your Son and the Holy Spirit,
forever and ever. Amen.

APPENDIX 4

PRAYER AT THE CEMETERY

Dear brothers and sisters, comforted by our faith in the God of mercy, who in the heart of Jesus has shown us the strength of his love and in the heart of Mary has given us an example of faith in that love, let us pray that all those at one with Christ in his death might participate also in his resurrection.

Our response will be: *Merciful Father, hear our prayer.*

One or several readers:

- For our brother/sister **N.**, who received the seed of life eternal in baptism and in profession was consecrated to the Sacred Hearts, may God welcome him/her into the communion of the saints. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For **N.**, who was nourished with the bread of the Eucharist and adored the Eucharist daily, may Christ bring him/her to participate in the eternal banquet of his reign. Let us pray to the Lord.
- May the Lord grant that **N.**, whom he called to religious life in the Congregation, contemplate eternally the immensity of his love. Let us pray to the Lord.
- May Mary our Mother, Saint Damien, Blessed Eustaquio, the Blessed Martyrs Teofilo and companions, and all the saints receive **N.** into the eternal dwelling place of heaven. Let us pray to the Lord.

Prayer at the Cemetery

- For all who suffer in body or spirit that they experience the closeness of the risen Lord. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For peace, justice and harmony among peoples that all who are in authority promote the common good. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all the deceased of our Congregation, our families, for all who rest in this cemetery, for all the deceased, that the Lord receive them into the glorious assembly of his holy ones. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all of us gathered here, that the Lord reawaken our faith, strengthen our hope and enflame our charity. Let us pray to the Lord.

Other petitions can be added.

The presider says the following or similar words:

Let us conclude with the prayer that the Lord taught us. It is the prayer of his sons and daughters, our voices united as brothers and sisters, a manifestation of our trust in his love:

Our Father...

The presider says the following closing prayer or one like it:

O Lord, welcome into the community
of your saints, our brother/sister **N.**,
who out of love for Christ
followed him in religious life (and the priesthood),
contemplating him in adoration,
laboring generously to proclaim him,
and living in the power of the Spirit
with those who journeyed with him/her.

Receive him/her into the peace of your Kingdom
where he/she will adore you forever.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
R/. Amen.

The rite may end with these words:

V/. Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord.
R/. And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

A closing song may conclude the celebration.

APPENDIX 5

CELEBRATION AT THE CEMETERY

1. This celebration is based on that of the brothers in Netherlands. It can be appropriate when the coffin is to be buried in the earth. It is necessary to prepare a processional cross, holy water, incense if used and a basket with seeds. Small candles and flowers are also used for the last part.
2. According to circumstances, there can be a procession from the Church where the funeral Mass was celebrated to the cemetery. The celebration in the cemetery can begin with an appropriate song that is known by the assembly.
3. After the song, the presider, welcomes everyone referring to the cross, which was at the head of the procession from the church or which is placed near the place where the burial will be.

Words such as the following can be used:

Welcome to this place. May the cross of Jesus Christ bless us, the cross which for us is a sign of hope, of life and of resurrection.

He then makes the sign of the cross or takes the cross and blesses the place.

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

4. He then says this introduction to the celebration and invites those present to pray.

We are here to say farewell to our dear brother/sister **N.**, to your relative...to our good friend.

Let us consign his/her body to the earth, like the seed that is sown. We ask God that in the warmth of his love he receive him/her into his life, enwrap him/her in his mercy, fill him/her with peace and so let him/her grow, as a good harvest, unto life eternal.

There is a time of silence and then the following prayer:

God of life, of earth, of air and of fire,
we entrust to you the body of **N**.
Bless this place, this piece of earth,
may it be a sign of your hidden power,
of the new life that is as yet invisible in you.
Just as from the open Heart of your Son Jesus
came forth streams of living water
and from the grain of wheat that dies,
grows new life,
may also the body of **N**. rise in glory
in the power of your love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
risen from the dead,
who lives and reigns with you forever and ever.
Amen.

5. After the prayer a short Scripture passage can be read. An antiphon from the Easter season could also be sung. For example this text from the letter to the Romans (14:7-9):

“None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.”

6. Then the presider or another person, invites those present to reflect on the fragility of life and to pray. He/she can use the following or similar words:

The human being returns to dust and ashes.
He/she returns to the creator of all that exists.
N. is now in the hands of God.
We hand over his/her body.
We leave it to the action of sun and rain,
of wind and storm.
However, we believe that love
is greater than death.
This is what we have experienced in God
and we experienced it with our brother/sister N.
With trust in God's goodness,
manifested in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
we ask him that he bring N.
to fullness of life, where there is no pain or sorrow.
Let us do this, praying prayers we learned as children:

All pray together the Our Father and Hail Mary.

7. Then the presider says the following or similar words and the coffin is lowered into the grave.

We give rest to your body, N.;
we will cover it with good earth,
with earth that is fertile, with beautiful flowers,
and also with our cherished memories of you.

8. Then taking the processional cross he makes the sign of the cross with it on the coffin that has already been lowered into the grave, saying the following or similar words:

N., we mark you with the sign of the cross,
sign of our faith in the resurrection
and eternal life.

The presider makes the sign of the cross over the coffin and invites all to make the sign of the cross.

- 9.** Then the grave is blessed with holy water saying these or similar words:

N., with water you were baptized in Christ.
Now we bless your grave with water
in the hope that Jesus
will transform your mortal body
into the image of his glorious body.

- 10.** Then a shovelful of dirt is thrown on the grave with these or similar words:

From the fertile earth God created humanity.
N., you now return to the earth,
in the hope that God
will raise you to life eternal.

- 11.** After several shovelfuls of earth have been cast on the grave, which could be done by several people, all are invited to pray with these or similar words:

N., your last place of rest is now this grave.
Rest in peace.
May God receive you into his house
and may he fill you with eternal joy,
in the company of Blessed Mary
and all who have gone before you
and rest in the place where light shines forever.
May you enjoy eternal peace.
In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

- 12.** Now those who desire or the presider may offer a few words to recall the life of the brother or sister being buried. Or the presider may simply say a few concluding words, such as these:

We now bid our brother/sister farewell. Many beautiful things have been said about him/her. Many memories of his/her life fill our minds and hearts. We are sorrowful at

his/her parting but also full of hope. We have heard words of consolation and encouragement. The name of N., mentioned so often today with love, will not be forgotten and our communion with him/her continues in the communion of the saints.

We leave this place of remembrance and thanksgiving and return to our everyday life. We will return to this place seeking silence and peace, to read the names of those who have gone before us, to count our days and prepare ourselves also to live a life that we trust will never end contemplating the glory of God.

It would also be appropriate to thank those who have come to pray with you and especially those who cared for our brother/sister in his/her final days.

- 13.** The celebration ends with some final words of the presider and inviting those present to toss seeds into the grave. While that is being done an appropriate song is sung, which could also be the *Salve Regina*.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat: but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” We are invited to toss a handful of seed into N.’s grave. God knows how to make life bear fruit. Let us go forth in peace, with faith, knowing that death is not the final word. God is the God of the living. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- 14.** If circumstances permit, people can also throw shovelfuls of dirt into the grave. Once filled, lit candles and flowers can be placed on it. While this is being done, all continue singing.