



St. Michael Parish

Guide for Catholic Funerals

Pastoral Center

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Dear Friends in Christ,

On behalf of St. Michael Parish Family, please accept our heartfelt prayers and sympathy as you remember and celebrate the life of your loved one. Please know that our Pastoral Staff is ready to assist you in preparing for and celebrating a Funeral Liturgy. In the Catholic Church, there are two forms – a Funeral Mass or a Funeral Service (Ceremony without Mass).

As you work with your Funeral Director, you may find the following information helpful. Your Funeral Director will make arrangements with us regarding the place and time of the celebration. You may have the Funeral scheduled at any one of our churches. Normally, Funerals are scheduled for 9am or 11am. We would ask that you give this serious consideration, as our schedule could at times need to allow more than one funeral on a given day.

The celebrant who will preside at the Funeral will contact you and will try to set up a time to meet with you and other family members to plan the Funeral, particularly in choosing the Scripture readings. Please know that we encourage members of the family to consider being involved in the liturgy, so we will ask if you have some members of the family to assist with the following: one or two people willing to proclaim the Scripture readings (if not, we will provide a Lector to read); two people to bring up the offertory gifts (if you have a Mass); and also if there is a person who will be sharing Words of Remembrance.

The Funeral Director will also contact the Musician and Cantor for the service. You may contact them to discuss the liturgical hymns for the funeral. The fee for the musicians will be shared with you by your Funeral Director.

The fee for the Church is \$135 and is paid directly to St. Michael Parish by the funeral home. There is no fee for the clergy presiding at the Funeral.

You and your deceased loved one will be remembered in our prayers in the coming days and at our weekend Masses. In the past, you have loved others, comforted them, and shared their losses. During the hours and days ahead, it will be your turn, your time, to be loved, to be comforted, and to let others share your grief.

May the God of Hope give you the fullness of peace, and may the Lord of Life always be with you!

With our prayers and sympathy in the Risen Lord,
The Clergy and Staff of St. Michael Parish

Celebration of the Funeral Liturgy

The Order of Christian Funerals is celebrated in three stations: the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of Committal.

The Vigil for the Deceased at the Funeral Home

As its name implies, the Vigil is generally celebrated the night before the Funeral. The Vigil service is typically brief, consisting of an Opening Prayer, a proclamation of Sacred Scripture, and intercessions for the deceased. Sacred music may also be a part of this service. If secular music or a eulogy is requested, these take place after the completion of the Vigil Rite.

The Funeral in the Church

At the Funeral Liturgy the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death and to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion.

The funeral may take place in the context of Mass, or during a Liturgy of the Word that is not Mass. The church is the place where the community of faith gathers for worship. Therefore, it is best that the funeral rites take place in the church.

In the act of bringing the body to the church, the members of the community acknowledge the deceased as one of their own, as one who was welcomed in Baptism and who held a place in the assembly. Through the use of various baptismal symbols we show the reverence due the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Any national flags or insignia of associations to which the deceased belonged are to be removed from the casket at the entrance of the church. Then the baptismal symbols and gestures become evident.

The Paschal Candle is lit and placed at the front of the church near the casket or urn. The candle reminds us of the light of Christ, entrusted to us at our Baptism.

Sprinkling the body with Holy Water recalls the pouring of water in the baptismal celebration to wash away our sin.

Placing the pall over the casket recalls the "white garment" we were given at Baptism as a sign of putting on a new life in Christ.

Later, the body of the deceased is incensed as a sign of respect for the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Rite of Committal at the Cemetery

In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with “all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith”, the deceased awaits the glory of the Resurrection. The Rite of Committal is the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of the deceased. It may be celebrated at the grave, tomb, or mausoleum.

This Rite includes prayers offered for blessing of the ground, disposition of the body and for the consolation of those gathered. If military honors are offered, they are done following the completion of the Rite.

Sacred Scripture in the Funeral Rites

At the Vigil, Funeral Liturgy, and Rite of Committal, scriptural passages are read. The Catholic Church does not permit substituting other sources of literature for these readings. Poetry or excerpts from literature are appropriately read at the funeral home following the Vigil or at a later time when the family is gathered.

If the family desires to select readings, they may choose from Scripture readings listed within this booklet.

Flowers in the Church

Casket sprays are removed before the casket is brought into the church. They may be replaced at the end of the funeral. Flowers may be brought from the funeral home or sent directly to the church. They will be placed so as not to obscure the altar, pulpit, tabernacle, or block passage of ministers in the sanctuary. Very few flowers should be brought into the church during Lent.

When the church is decorated for Christmas or Easter, other flowers may seem redundant. You may wish not to bring them to the church during these times.

Scheduling a Funeral Mass

Funeral Masses are NOT permitted on:

- Sundays at any time
- Saturdays after 1pm
- Holy Days of Obligation
- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday

Funeral services apart from Mass can be scheduled on most days of the year.

Other Liturgical Considerations

Placing of the Pall: A funeral pall, reminding us of the white garment given at Baptism and therefore symbolizing our life in Christ, is draped over the casket at the beginning of the Funeral Mass. Family members or friends are welcome to do this, though it may also be done by pall bearers at the direction of the Funeral Director.

Presentation of Offertory Gifts: Two family members or friends who are Catholics in good standing may bring forward the bread and wine at the Offertory Procession during the funeral Mass.

Holy Communion: Catholics in the state of grace are encouraged to receive Communion. Others may come forward for a blessing, indicating their desire to do so by crossing their arms across their chest. Catholics do not practice inter-communion with the members of other Christian communities.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: Those who are alienated from the Church, from God, or from family members or friends, may wish to become reconciled. The priest will be happy to make the Sacrament of Reconciliation available to those who request it. If possible, please contact him before the funeral liturgy.

Music for the Funeral Rites: Music in the Funeral Rites allows the community to express its convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly.

If they so desire, the family may request a liturgical song to be included in the Funeral Rites. Final approval of this song rests with the music director. Secular, national, or ethnic songs are not permitted during the Funeral. Their proper place is after the Vigil service or at a family celebration.

The following Hymns are suitable selections to help you choose music for the Funeral Liturgy. Please ask the Funeral Director if you have any specific requests and they will try to accommodate your requests. The Funeral Director should inform the musicians of your choices prior to the funeral.

Amazing Grace — Ave Maria (Bach, or Schubert)

Be Not Afraid — Eagles Wings — How Great Thou Art

Prayer of St. Francis — I Am the Bread of Life

Panis Angelicus — J'irai La Voir Un Jour

Cremation in the Catholic Funeral Rite

The Church prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites. The long-standing practice of burying the body in a grave or tomb in imitation of the burial of Jesus' body is encouraged as a sign of our Christian faith. When the choice has been made to cremate a body, it is recommended that the cremation take place after the Funeral.

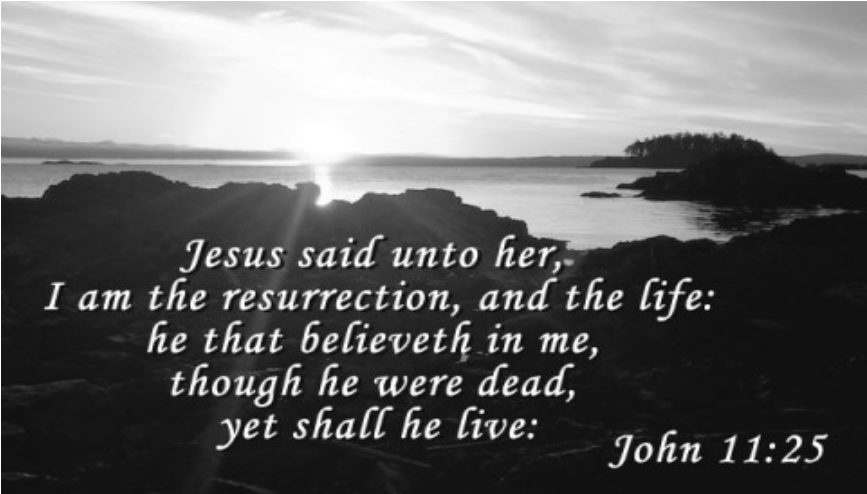
The cremated remains of a body should be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they came. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the remains, the manner in which they are carried, and the final disposition.

The cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium. The practice of scattering remains is not the reverent disposition the Church requires.

If cremated remains are brought to the church for the Funeral Rite, a small table or stand is prepared at the place normally occupied by the casket. The vessel may be carried to its place during the entrance procession or may be placed on the table or stand before the liturgy begins. It is also customary to have a small vase of flowers and an 8 1/2" x 11" framed image on the table near the cremains.

Words of Remembrance

Words of Remembrance, briefly describing the ways in which the deceased demonstrated his or her Christian values, are sometimes offered at the Funeral celebration. If they choose, the family is asked to select only ONE person and they are asked to be brief. **No more than two pages or 5 minutes are permitted.** Please speak with the priest or deacon about offering words of remembrance.



*Jesus said unto her,
I am the resurrection, and the life:
he that believeth in me,
though he were dead,
yet shall he live:*

John 11:25

Funeral Planning Worksheet

In order to assist you in planning the funeral liturgy please fill out the following worksheet and share this information with the Funeral Director and Priest.

Pages 8-14 contain two sections of Scriptures readings. Section A are readings from the Old Testament and Section B are readings from the New Testament. Please choose **one reading from each section** and fill in which reading you would like as well as who will be proclaiming the reading at the funeral Mass.

Pall: (2-4 people): _____

Placing of Christian Symbols:

Cross: 1 person _____

Bible: 1 person _____

1st Reading: One from section A _____

2nd Reading: One from section B _____

General Intercessions: 1 person _____

see page 15

Offertory Gifts: 2 people _____

Words of Remembrance: 1 person _____

Music Selection: (see page 5 or ask your Funeral Director)

Processional: _____

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23 – *Good Shepherd*

Offertory: _____

Communion: _____

Song of Farewell: *Saints of God*

Recessional: _____

Readings from the Old Testament

A-1 — Job 19:1, 23-27a

A reading from the Book of Job

Job answered Bildad the Shuhite and said: Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever!

But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;

The Word of the Lord.

A-2 — Wisdom 3:1-6

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.

The Word of the Lord.

A-3 — Isaiah 25:6, 7-9

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples. On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever.

The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

On that day it will be said:

"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!

This is the LORD for whom we looked;

let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

The Word of the Lord.

A-4 ... Lamentations 3:17-26

A reading from the Book of Lamentations

My soul is deprived of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the LORD. The thought of my homeless poverty is worm wood and gall; remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me.

But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the LORD are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; they are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.

My portion is the LORD, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Good is the LORD to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the LORD.

The Word of the Lord.

A-5 ... Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

A reading from the Letter of Ecclesiastes

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces. A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

What advantage has the worker from his toil? I have considered the task which God has appointed for all to be busied about. He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without one's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

I recognize that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life. For everyone, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God. I recognized that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it, or taking from it. Thus has God done that he may be revered. What now is has already been; what is to be, already is; and God restores what would otherwise be displaced.

The Word of the Lord

A-6 ... 2Maccabees 12:43-46

A reading from the second Book of Maccabees

Judas, the ruler of Israel, took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice.

In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been useless and foolish to pray for them in death.

But . If he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought.

Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin.

The Word of the Lord

Readings from the New Testament**B-1 ... Romans 5:5-11**

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For Christ, while we were still helpless, died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die.

But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his Blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord.

B-2 ... Romans 6:3-9

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body

might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. For a dead person has been absolved from sin. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

The Word of the Lord.

B-3 ... Romans 8:14-23

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, *Abba*, "Father!" The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

The Word of the Lord.

B-4 ... Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: If God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things, we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

B-5 ... Romans 14:7-9, 10c-12

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters: No one 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. Why then do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written:

As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God. So then each of us shall give an accounting of himself to God.

The Word of the Lord.

B-6 ... 2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and place us with you in his presence. Everything indeed is for you, so that the grace bestowed in abundance on more and more people may cause the thanksgiving to overflow for the glory of God.

Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal. For we know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

The Word of the Lord.

B-7 ... 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters: We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. We are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

The Word of the Lord.

B-8 ... 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians

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

The Word of the Lord.

B-9 ... Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away."

The One who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift of water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.

The Word of the Lord.

B-10... Revelation 14:13

A reading from the Book of Revelation

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," said the Spirit, "let them find rest from their labors, for their works accompany them."

The Word of the Lord.

B-11 ... 1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.

Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

The Word of the Lord.

B-12 ... Acts of the Apostles 10:34-36, 42-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter proceeded to speak, saying:

“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the children of Israel as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Word of the Lord.

B-13 ... 2 Timothy 2:8-13

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

Beloved:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David:

Such is my Gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal.

But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory.

This saying is trustworthy:

If we have died with him we shall also live with him;

If we persevere we shall also reign with him.

But if we deny him he will deny us.

If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

The Word of the Lord.

General Intercessions

Priest: Jesus is risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father, where He intercedes for His Church. Confident that God hears the voices of those who trust in the Lord Jesus, we join our prayers to His:

Lector: Please respond, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

For _____ who in baptism was given the pledge of eternal life, that he/she may now be admitted to the company of the saints. We pray to the Lord. **ALL:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For our brother/sister who ate the Body of Christ, the Bread of Life, that he may be raised up on the last day. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our deceased relatives and friends and for all who have helped us, that they may have the reward of their goodness. We pray to the Lord.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the family and friends of our brother/sister _____, that they may be consoled in their grief by the Lord, who wept at the death of his friend, Lazarus. We pray to the Lord.

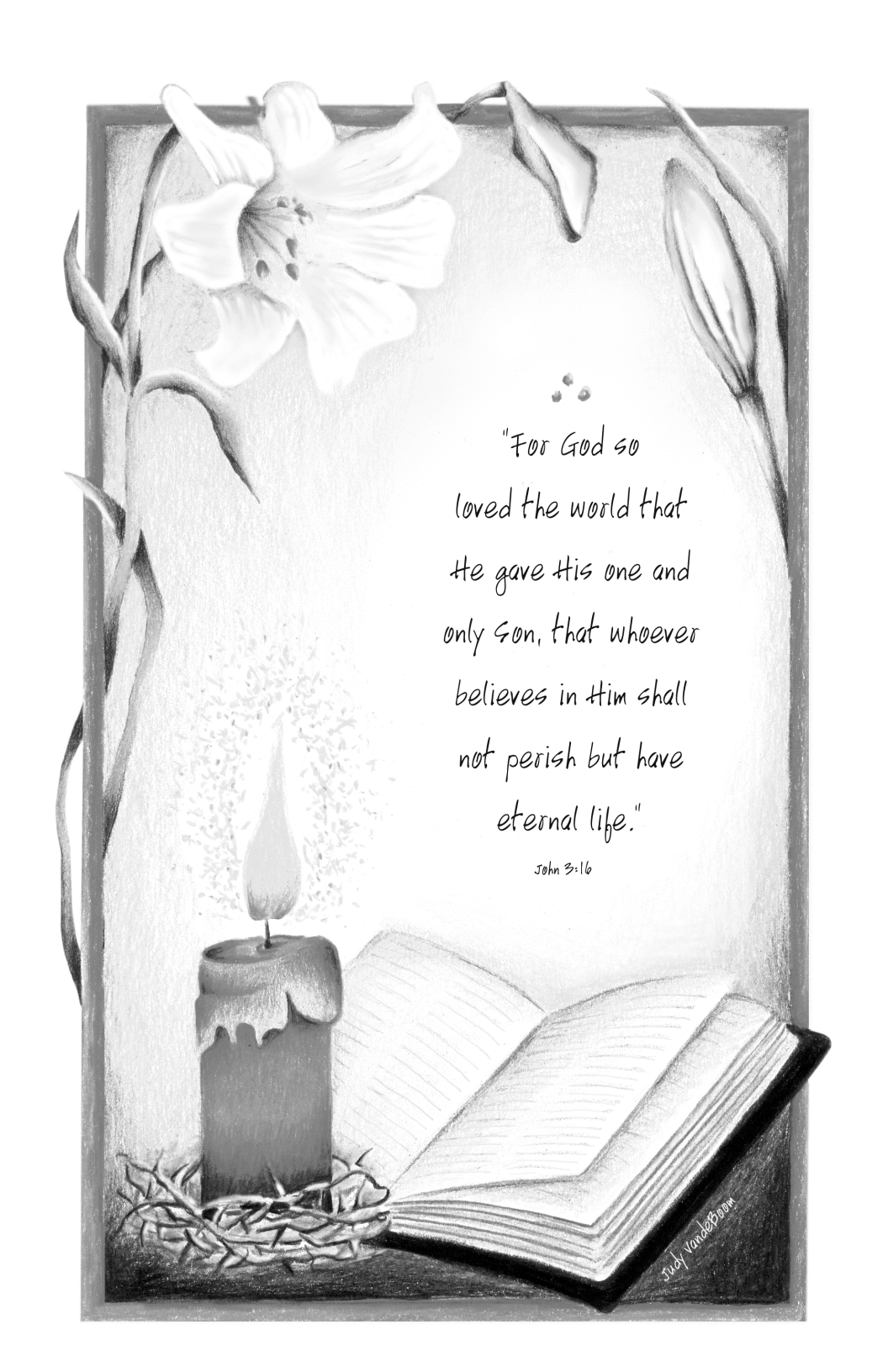
ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

ALL: AMEN.

A black and white illustration. At the top left is a large, detailed lily flower with its stem and leaves. To the right is a lily bud. In the center, there are three small dots. Below the text is a lit candle with a flame, sitting on a bed of thorns. To the right of the candle is an open book with lined pages. The entire scene is set against a light, textured background.

"For God so
loved the world that
He gave His one and
only Son, that whoever
believes in Him shall
not perish but have
eternal life."

John 3:16

Judy Vandenberg