

## Funeral Rite for Burial

*This ritual forms a framework upon which you can either use as is, or use the ideas to create your own ritual.*

### NOTES:

**Overall Time Limit:** *Unless 2 slots have been booked, it is usually 30 minutes from the time you enter to the time you leave. Therefore, allow a maximum of 15-20 minutes for the service itself – this allows for people entering, getting settled and leaving. However, if you are conducting the service outside by the burial plot then there is usually no time limit although do check with the Funeral Directors if their hearses and cars are being used as they may have another service to attend.*

### Eulogy:

- *Keep it simple. Try and avoid long winded speeches or moralizing. Brevity is the key to a well-received eulogy.*
- *Remember the Time Limit for the entire service, so keep to those points that will help people remember their loved one and especially those anecdotes that will bring a smile – humour is encouraged provided it is done carefully.*
- *Talk to the family of the deceased and get as much detail as possible of the Deceased' life, any awards or recognition received, any special memories that the family have.*
- *Get the names of family members – especially the genealogy.*
- *Ask if the family would like you to say anything specific during the eulogy.*
- *When reading through your notes try and find a theme for the life of the deceased so that you can build up the eulogy around it. E.g. was family important; love of animals – shelter work etc.; good sense of humour?*
- *When creating the eulogy start at the beginning of the deceased' life i.e. their birth and give a brief outline of their life. This is where you can include anecdotes, memories and details that capture the person's spirit.*
- *If you knew the deceased, bring in your personal memories e.g. if you went to school together or shared some interests.*
- *Be as brief as you can while still doing justice to the life of the deceased.*
- *Have your speech typed up clearly, in perhaps Font 14 size to enable ease of reading.*
- *It is good to practice before hand a few times. What is written may read well but when spoken comes out differently.*
- *If you feel emotional, do allow yourself time to collect yourself. There is nothing wrong in asking another to take over.*

**Music:** *We celebrate the Life of the deceased and the music should, where possible, reflect this. Generally speaking you should be able to use whatever music you wish. It is ideal to have it already set up on a CD to hand to the “organist” who will operate the music system. Ideally have a piece for background music as people enter; a piece for the entry of the coffin; a piece for background during silence of remembrance and a final piece for the exit of the coffin.*

**COFFIN BEARERS ENTER:** Celtic music or drum beat (or music of choice)

### **INTRO**

Many here today are practicing Pagans who will understand the significance of the ceremony that we are about to perform, but for others who have different beliefs I will explain what will happen. There should be nothing in what we are about to do that can cause offence to anyone, but if you would prefer to wait outside, then I am sure that <NAME of deceased> will understand.

You will see that there are four people standing at strategic points in the room, each one at a cardinal compass point. Their job is to call on the elements that supported <NAME of deceased> throughout his/her Life. We traditionally begin in the East, which represents Air. In the South is the element of Fire. Then we move to the West and the element of Water, then finally to North and the elemental spirit of Earth. It is of the Earth we are born and upon our death it is to the Earth that we return.

At the end of the Ceremony we will again return to the quarters and relieve them of the responsibilities of supporting <NAME of deceased>. As we believe in Life after life we look forward to meeting with him/her again.

### **THE RITUAL**

Let us take a few deep breaths to prepare ourselves.

Breathe deeply and remember the love you have for <NAME of deceased> and the joy he/she brought you. And so we begin.

Let us call for Peace, that in Peace the voice of the Spirit may be heard.

May there be Peace in the East!  
May there be Peace in the South!  
May there be Peace in the West!  
May there be Peace in the North!

**ALL:** May there be Peace throughout the whole world.

**EAST:** Spirits of the East, Powers of Air, we call you. Bring us bright memories of our beloved <NAME of the deceased> and of the <MUSIC OR SIMILAR IF APPROPRIATE> that surrounded him/her. Blessed Be!

**SOUTH:** Spirits of the South, Powers of Fire, we call you. Keep the fire of our love for <NAME of deceased> alive in the memory of this lover of the sun and of Helios. Blessed be!

**WEST:** Spirits of the West, Powers of Water, we call you. Open our hearts, let our tears and love flow. Bring us healing and renewal. Remember <NAME of deceased> who loved life, loved his/her friends and his/her magical family. Blessed be!

**NORTH:** Spirits of the North, Powers of the Earth, we call you. From you we come; to you we return. Bring us Strength. Remember <NAME of deceased> to whom you gave strength and wisdom and embraced in his/her passing. Blessed be!

### **EULOGY**

We meet here today in both sadness and joy to say a fond farewell to <NAME of deceased>, a much loved <BROTHER/SISTER, WIFE/HUSBAND, AUNT/UNCLE>.

We are sad because a chapter has closed yet we should be joyful by the closing that a new chapter can begin. We meet to commend <NAME of deceased> to the blessing of the God and Goddess, that he/she may rest, free from illusion or regret, until the time shall come for his/her rebirth to this world.

And knowing that this shall be so, we know too, that the sadness is nothing and that the joy is all.

### *SPEAKER OR OTHER TO GIVE THE MAIN EULOGY*

### **PRAYER**

O Great Spirit, Mother and Father of us all, we ask for your Blessings on this our Ceremony of thanksgiving, and honouring and blessing of <NAME of deceased>.

We stand at a Gateway now.

A Gateway that each of us must step through at some time in our lives. <NAME of deceased> has stepped through this gateway already.

His/Her soul is immersed in the shining light of the Unity that is the Mother and Father of us all. The sadness and pain that we feel now is in our knowledge and our experience of the fact that we ourselves cannot yet cross that threshold to be with <NAME of deceased> until our time has come.

### **SPEAKER**

Let's spend some time in silence to remember <NAME of deceased>, to call her/him up in our minds and to speak to her/him in the private places of our heart, saying to her/him those things that we always wanted to say to her/him.

(2 mins silence with some favourite music of the deceased to evoke happy memories of life with her/him).

### **MEMORIES OF <NAME of deceased>'s LIFE**

*This is for personal memories, who they were, their interests, etc. People can speak of them here.*

*NOTE: Ask them in advance to keep it to, say, 1 or 2 mins. Remember your time limit.*

## **PRAYER**

The Blessings of the Ancestors and of Family and Friends are with you, <NAME of deceased>, as you travel beyond. There is a reason for leaving, to pause, to rest, and to wait for those that are loved. For the world beyond is a land of Eternal Summer, and of Joy, far from the cares of this world, with happiness and youth renewed. So Mote it Be!

## **ALL CHANT**

Earth my body  
Water my blood  
Air my breath  
Fire my spirit.  
*(Repeat 3 times)*

## **FRIEND** *(This can be a friend or relative)*

Did you know it was time to fly?  
I didn't want to say Goodbye.  
We all know this is not the End,  
Farewell for now, my dear, dear, Friend.

## **RESPONSE** *(This can be a friend or relative – or the Speaker)*

Do not weep for me for I have not gone.  
I am the wind that shakes the mighty Oak.  
I am the gentle rain that falls upon your face.  
I am the spring flower that pushes through the dark earth.  
I am the chuckling laughter of the mountain stream.  
Do not weep for me for I have not gone.

I am the memory that dwells in the heart of those that knew me.  
I am the shadow that dances on the edge of your vision.  
I am the wild goose that flies south at Autumn's call and I shall return at Summer rising.  
I am the stag on the wild hill's way.  
I am just around the corner.

Therefore, the wise weep not,  
But rejoice at the transformation of my Being.  
So Mote it Be!

## **ALL SAY**

*Celtic Devotional by Caitlin Matthews: (As this is being said, petals to be sprinkled over the coffin.)*

You have been called from the place of your dwelling,  
May blessed soul-friends guide you,  
May helping spirits lead you,  
May the Gatherer of Souls call you,  
May the homeward path rise up under your feet  
And lead you gladly home.

**SPEAKER:** We will now leave the chapel and follow the hearse to the woodland burial site (or wherever the burial plot is).

*(At the burial site, children or other participants hold bowls of petals so that mourners can throw handfuls of petals on to coffin. Or use seasonal flowers.)*

**SPEAKER:**

Deep Peace of the Blazing Sun to You.  
Deep Peace of the Radiant Moon to You.  
Deep Peace of the Shining Stars to You.  
Deep Peace of the Flowing Wind to You.  
Deep Peace of the Running Wave to You.  
Deep Peace of the Quiet Earth to You.  
And the Blessing of the God and Goddess be with You and remain with You this today and forever.

Hail and Farewell!

*A moment of silence for all to reflect and remember*

**NORTH:** Spirits of the North, Powers of the Earth. Thank you for the land that <NAME of deceased> walked upon, for the beauty in the plants and trees that gave him/her so much pleasure. Thank you for sustaining him/her. Hail and Farewell!

**WEST:** Spirits of the West, Powers of Water. Thank you for quenching <NAME of deceased>'s thirst, inspiring and washing him/her. Hail and Farewell!

**SOUTH:** Spirits of the South, Powers of Fire. Thank you for the warmth of the summers <NAME of deceased> enjoyed and for the warmth of his/her heart. Hail and Farewell!

**EAST:** Spirits of the East, Powers of Air. Thank you for supporting <NAME of deceased> with every breath that he/she took, and may the last breath that he/she took in this life become the first that he/she took in the next. Hail and Farewell!

**BLESSING** *(Speaker)*

May the Blessings of the Uncreated One, of the Created Word and of the Spirit that is the Inspirer be with you all.

*Appropriate music as people leave – can be a favourite song/melody of the deceased.  
Try and end the ceremony on an upbeat note so that people feel it has been a celebration  
of the life of the Deceased.*