



# Orantes

Newsletter of the Office for Divine Worship  
of the Diocese of Worcester

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SPECIAL EDITION

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## ON THE DEATH OF A SHEPHERD

With the death of our Holy Father, parish priests and liturgical ministers have many questions regarding what now happens in Rome and how their parish communities might accompany the Universal Church in prayer for the soul of Pope Francis and the good of the Church which he shepherded.

This special edition of *Orantes* includes a brief description of the revised Funeral rites contained in the 2024 edition of the *Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis* (page 2), as well as suggestions concerning the ways in which these rites might be accompanied by prayers in our parishes. (page 4).

The issue concludes with the Pope Francis' final Lenten Message, published several days before his death. (page 8)

## *Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis (2024)*

The funeral rites for a deceased Pope are contained in the *Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis*, originally published in a postconciliar edition by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1988, and revised by Pope Francis on April 29, 2024.

Like the Order of Christian Funerals for every baptized person, the rites take place in three locations, or “stations.”

The first station is “at the home of the deceased.” Here the Pontiff’s death is certified in the papal chapel and the body is placed in a wooden coffin for the transfer to the Vatican Basilica.<sup>1</sup>



The second station is at the Vatican Basilica, where it is venerated by the faithful. At the end of the day before the Funeral Mass is to take place, the coffin is closed. The Funeral Mass takes place according to...

The third station will take place at the grave which has been prepared for the Holy Father at the Church of Saint Mary Major. The coffin in which the Holy Father’s body has already been placed is the only one used for the interment.

The current edition of the *Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis* contains all the rites, prayers and scriptural readings for each of these stays, many having been greatly simplified since the 1988 edition.

The Litany of the Saints is sung during the two transfers of the Pope’s body (to the Basilica and at the end of the Funeral Mass). In the first use, all the saints celebrated with the degree of obligatory feast or memorial in the General Calendar are included, along with all Popes in the General Calendar and some saints particular to the Church in Rome.

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<sup>1</sup> The previous edition of this ordo, approved by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1988, provided for the certification to take place in the room where the Pope had died and the viewing of the body on a open bier and without a coffin.

Following the Funeral Mass, nine Masses are offered for the repose of the Pope's soul, customarily referred to as the *novendiales*.



## *Parish Prayers in a Time of Interregnum*

The following suggestions are designed to assist parish priests and other liturgical ministers in the coming weeks of *sede vacante*. While our immediate intention is that God might look upon our Holy Father Francis with mercy, the focus of our prayers will soon turn to asking God to send the Spirit of Wisdom upon his Church as she prepares for the coming Papal Conclave.

### **Prayers for the Holy Father**

1. As a continual reminder of our prayers for Pope Francis, parishes might consider moving the Paschal Candle to the place it usually occupies during Funerals, while placing a portrait of the Holy Father in front of it. The Paschal Candle could be lit during all liturgical celebrations until a new Pope has been elected.



2. A Special Mass for the repose of the soul of the Holy Father might be scheduled in each parish. The *Various Prayers for the Dead*, #1, from the *Masses for the Dead* in the *Roman Missal* provides three Mass sets for praying for a deceased Pope. These prayers are found in the *Roman Missal* (Catholic Book edition) on pages 1245-1247.

Any of the readings from the *Lectionary for Mass* among the *Masses for the Dead* on pages 1085-1135 (Catholic Book edition) may be used.

3. One of the following or other intercessions might be added to the Prayer of the Faithful, especially at Sunday Masses.

That our Holy Father Francis,  
whom God has called from this world to himself,  
may happily enjoy the mercy of God  
and know the mysteries of Christ's grace and  
compassion;  
We pray to the Lord:



That God might mercifully bestow a blessed reward  
upon our Holy Father Francis,  
that he might know refreshment light and peace;  
We pray to the Lord:

That Pope Francis,  
who Christ chose to preside over his Church,  
might be welcomed by him into eternal glory;  
We pray to the Lord:

That Christ, the immortal shepherd of souls,  
might look with mercy on his servant Francis,  
and reward him as a faithful steward;  
We pray to the Lord:

4. Parishioners might be encouraged to pray for the Holy Father. Some of the following prayers from the *Roman Missal*, or others might be included in the Parish Bulletin.



O God, faithful rewarder of souls,  
grant that your departed servant Pope Francis,  
whom you made successor of Peter  
and shepherd of your Church,  
may happily enjoy for ever in your presence in heaven  
the mysteries of your grace and compassion,  
which he faithfully ministered on earth.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

O God, who in your wondrous providence  
chose your servant Pope Francis  
to preside over your Church,  
grant, we pray,  
that, having served as the Vicar of your Son on earth,  
he may be welcomed by him into eternal glory.  
Who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

O God, immortal shepherd of souls,  
look on your people's prayers  
and grant that your servant Pope Francis,  
who presided over your Church in charity,  
may, with the flock entrusted to his care,  
receive from your mercy  
the reward of a faithful steward.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you



### Prayers for the Church

Once the Holy Father's Funeral has been celebrated and the *novemdiales* has begun, all liturgical and devotional celebrations should include a prayer for the intentions of the Church as she prepares for the Papal Conclave.

1. Special Masses may be scheduled to pray for the Church during these days using the first section of the *Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions* from the *Roman Missal*, which contains prayers *For the Election of a Pope or a Bishop*. These prayers are found in the *Roman Missal* (Catholic Book edition) on page 1093.



Readings for this commemoration are provided in the fourth volume of the *Lectionary for Mass* (Catholic Book edition) on pages 622-627.

2. One of the following samples or other intercessions might be added to the Prayer of the Faithful, especially at Sunday Masses.

That God might grant to the Cardinal Electors  
the wisdom and grace  
as they elect a new Bishop of Rome  
according to the heart and mind of Christ;  
We pray to the Lord:

That Christ the eternal shepherd  
might guide the minds and hearts  
of the Cardinal Electors  
as they gather to a pastor for Christ's Church;  
We pray to the Lord:

That through the discernment of the Cardinal Electors,  
we might be blessed with the gift of a shepherd  
who will imbue our minds with the truth of the Gospel;  
We pray to the Lord:



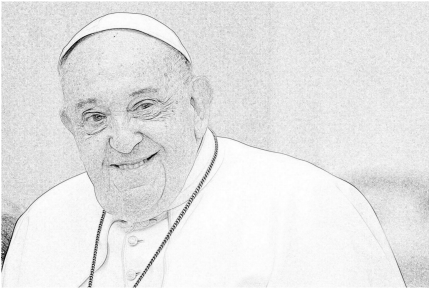
3. Parishioners might also be encouraged to pray for the intentions of the Church. The following prayer from the *Roman Missal*, or others might be included in the Parish Bulletin.

O God, eternal shepherd,  
who govern your flock with unfailing care,  
grant in your boundless fatherly love  
a pastor for your Church  
who will please you by his holiness  
and to us show watchful care.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

## Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

We begin our annual pilgrimage of Lent in faith and hope with the penitential rite of the imposition of ashes. The Church, our mother and teacher, invites us to open our hearts to God's grace, so that we can celebrate with great joy the paschal victory of Christ the Lord over sin and death, which led Saint Paul to exclaim: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Cor 15:54-55). Indeed, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the heart of our faith and the pledge of our hope in the Father's great promise, already fulfilled in his beloved Son: life eternal (cf. Jn 10:28; 17:3).

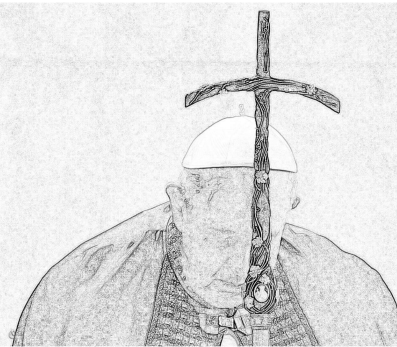


This Lent, as we share in the grace of the Jubilee Year, I would like to propose a few reflections on what it means to journey together in hope, and on the summons to conversion that God in his mercy addresses to all of us, as individuals and as a community.

First of all, to journey. The Jubilee motto, "Pilgrims of Hope", evokes the lengthy journey of the people of Israel to the Promised Land, as recounted in the Book of Exodus. This arduous path from slavery to freedom was willed and guided by the Lord, who loves his people and remains ever faithful to them. It is hard to think of the biblical exodus without also thinking of those of our brothers and sisters who in our own day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones. A first call to conversion thus comes from the realization that all of us are pilgrims in this life; each of us is invited to stop and ask how our lives reflect this fact. Am I really on a journey, or am I standing still, not moving, either immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone? Am I seeking ways to leave behind the occasions of sin and situations that degrade my dignity? It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or

foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father. This would be a good “examination of conscience” for all of us wayfarers.

Second, to journey together. The Church is called to walk together, to be synodal. Christians are called to walk at the side of others, and never as lone travelers. The Holy Spirit impels us not to remain self-absorbed, but to leave ourselves behind and keep walking towards God and our brothers and sisters. Journeying together means consolidating the unity grounded in our common dignity as children of God (cf. Gal 3:26-28). It means walking side-by-side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded. Let us all walk in the same direction, tending towards the same goal, attentive to one another in love and patience.



This Lent, God is asking us to examine whether in our lives, in our families, in the places where we work and spend our time, we are capable of walking together with others, listening to them, resisting the temptation to become self-absorbed and to think only of our own needs. Let us ask ourselves in the presence of the Lord whether, as bishops, priests, consecrated persons and laity in the service of the Kingdom of God, we cooperate with others. Whether we show ourselves welcoming, with concrete gestures, to those both near and far. Whether we make others feel a part of the community or keep them at a distance. This, then, is a second call to conversion: a summons to synodality.

Third, let us journey together in hope, for we have been given a promise. May the hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5), the central message of the Jubilee, be the focus of our Lenten journey towards the victory of Easter. As Pope Benedict XVI taught us in the Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, “the human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say: ‘neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else



in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom 8:38-39)." Christ, my hope, has risen! He lives and reigns in glory. Death has been transformed into triumph, and the faith and great hope of Christians rests in this: the resurrection of Christ!

This, then, is the third call to conversion: a call to hope, to trust in God and his great promise of eternal life. Let us ask ourselves: Am I convinced that the Lord forgives my sins? Or do I act as if I can save myself? Do I long for salvation and call upon God's help to attain it? Do I concretely experience the hope that enables me to interpret the events of history and inspires in me a commitment to justice and fraternity, to care for our common home and in such a way that no one feels excluded?

Sisters and brothers, thanks to God's love in Jesus Christ, we are sustained in the hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5). Hope is the "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul." It moves the Church to pray for "everyone to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4) and to look forward to her being united with Christ, her bridegroom, in the glory of heaven. This was the prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila: "Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one" (The Exclamations of the Soul to God, 15:3).

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope, intercede for us and accompany us on our Lenten journey.

*Franciscus*

