

St. Frances Cabrini Fraternity
Secular Franciscan Order

FRANCISCAN WAKE SERVICE

LEADER:

“Welcome, my Sister Death!” (II Cel. 217) With those words our Seraphic Father indicated his disposition toward that which causes fear and sorrow among much of the human family. The reality and tragedy of death cannot be ignored on the human level; and yet, as Christians, we believe that death has “lost its sting” through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. As Franciscans, we believe even more strongly that “it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.” In view of this faith stance, death takes on an entirely new meaning. Thus, we celebrate the passing of a sister or brother to a new and more fruitful life in the company of the saints.

While we express our feelings of loss, we continue to hope and trust in the promises of Christ. Death teaches us to cling to the cross of the Lord with the knowledge that having “been conformed with Him in his death, we will be conformed with Him in His resurrection from death.” (cf. Phil 3:10-11)

For our Father Francis, life was to search and strive for union with Christ through faith. Death was for him not a harsh reality, but the door through which he passed toward his ultimate goal of total union with the Father. What Francis sought through faith on earth, he achieved totally after death. The celebration of the death of a Franciscan shows forth the same faith as that which Francis possessed: our belief that death is the gateway to total union with God.

MINISTER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.
Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

ALL: *May God be praised for His mercy to us, and may we experience His consolation now in our sorrow and be strengthened and enabled to share His love with all people.*

MINISTER:

Our brother/sister N: _____, was washed clean in Baptism and nourished with the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist. As a Secular Franciscan, he/she was united more closely with the Lord and with us through the observance of our way of life. As he/she strove to follow this Rule of Life, may the Lord now take him/her to a place among His saints in glory.

As we contemplate the mystery of death and how it has affected our Fraternity in the passing of our brother/sister N: _____, let us listen to the account of our Father Francis' passing to the Lord.

LEADER:

As the moment of his death drew near, the saint had all the friars who were there called to his side. He spoke to them gently with fatherly affection, consoling them for his death and exhorting them to love of God. He mentioned patient endurance and the necessity of holding to the faith of the Holy Roman Church, and gave the Gospel pre-eminence over any other rule of life.

The friars were grouped about him and he stretched out his arms over them in the form of a cross, because he loved that sign, and blessed all the friars, both present and absent, in the power and in the name of the Crucified. Then he added, "I bid you good-bye, all you my sons, in the fear of God. Remain in Him always. There will be trials and temptations in the future, and it is well for those who persevere in the life they have undertaken. I am on my way to God, and I commend you all to His favor."

At last, when all God's mysteries had been accomplished in him, his holy soul was freed from his body and assumed into God's glory. Francis fell asleep in God. One of the friars, a disciple of his, saw his soul being borne on a white cloud over many waters to heaven, under the appearance of a radiant star. It shone with the brightness of sublime sanctity, full of abundance of divine wisdom and the grace which had earned for him the right to enter the home of light and peace, where he rests with Christ forever.

READER:**PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD:**

A reading from the letter to the Romans (Ch 6:3-9)

“Or 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.”

MINISTER:

The Lord Jesus said: “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in me, even if they die, will live, and every living person who puts faith in me will never suffer eternal death.” Let us pray to Him for our brother/sister N: _____, Lord Jesus, you raise those who sleep in death to life. Give N: _____ Life Eternal.

ALL: *Lord have mercy.*

MINISTER:

You washed our brother/sister clean in the waters of Baptism and sealed him/her with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Bring him/her to a place of light and refreshment in Your Kingdom.

ALL: *Lord have mercy.*

MINISTER:

Our brother/sister was fed with Your Body and Blood, may he/she find a place at table with You at the heavenly banquet.

ALL: *Lord have mercy.*

MINISTER:

Our brother/sister was united with us in the Franciscan family. Grant him/her all that was promised by our Father Francis.

ALL: *Lord have mercy.*

MINISTER:

Rememeber us Lord, when you come into Your Kingdom and teach us to pray:

ALL: *Our Father who...*

MINISTER:

Lord Jesus Christ, we trust in You and hope in Your glorious resurrection. Hear our prayers for our brother/sister N: _____, whom you called to Yourself, and grant him/her eternal life. We praise and glorify You who live in perfect Trinity and simply Unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

ALL: *AMEN*

MINISTER:

Before we take a leave of our brother/sister for the last time, let us bless him/her with the Blessing of St. Francis.

(All raise their right hand toward the casket)

PRIEST: (in the absence of a priest, all will say together)

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He show his face to you and be merciful to you.

May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

May the Lord bless you brother/sister N:_____.

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

Amen.

Our prayer for our brother/sister has ended.

Let us go now, and until that time when the Lord shall gather us all into his Kingdom, let us live in His peace.

ALL: *Thanks be to God.*