

DISASTER & BEREAVEMENT LITURGIES

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1) Introduction

On St. George's Day 2002, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. George Carey), gave a speech to a private audience of politicians and opinion-formers in which he affirmed the links between Church and State. He referred to the commitment of a national Church to serve the entire community, noting that part of the expression of that commitment may be so deep-rooted that it is taken for granted as right and proper:

“At times of national celebration or mourning, for example, we expect great cathedrals to be a focal point ... That was true in the aftermath of September 11th last year. It was true earlier this month with the passing away of the Queen Mother.”

Perhaps the most obvious example in recent times was the aftermath of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales; but it is also the case that people look to their cathedral or similar large church to express the feelings of the local community in relation to events where the greatest impact is regional rather than national. Examples include the service held in Winchester Cathedral following the Clapham rail crash, where many of the victims were travelling up from Hampshire; or those who crowded Guildford Cathedral to commemorate the murdered Surrey schoolgirl, Sarah Payne; and the five hundred police officers from the West Midlands who attended Lichfield Cathedral for the funeral of one of their colleagues killed in the course of duty. Occasions such as these not only offer cathedrals the opportunity to respond to the pastoral needs of entire communities, but also thereby place them in the front line of the Church's mission to the nation. It is therefore vital that these events are properly prepared and professionally presented; and the purpose of this paper is to suggest some of the points and issues which need to be considered in the course of preparing and presenting disaster and bereavement liturgies.

2) The place of the funeral

This paper is not primarily about funeral services. All cathedrals will undoubtedly hold funerals for members of their own cathedral communities. Cathedrals which are also parish churches will be potential venues for funerals of the local population. And most cathedrals will, with greater or lesser frequency, be called upon to host funerals for people with regional or national significance, including bishops, politicians and the occasional “royal”. This latter category – what we might call “the public funeral” – brings with it its own particular problems, not least the difficult balance between ministering to the very personal needs of the immediate family and expressing the common mood of a much wider community. Perhaps the crucial issue here, as with other public occasions, is who actually takes control; and this is a subject to which we will return later in this paper.

Meanwhile, with regard to the funeral service itself, there is ample provision of textual resources, especially in *Common Worship : Pastoral Services*; and there is plenty of good guidance, for example in Michael Perham's *New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy* (SPCK 2000).

However, bereavement – personal or communal – is not so much an event as a process or series of stages in which the funeral service itself plays a pivotal role and represents the *liminal* stage. The *pre-liminal* (or preliminary) stage of bereavement may be seen as a time of separation from what has gone before – old certainties challenged and former patterns of life beginning to break up. The *post-liminal* stage represents the beginnings of reconstruction and re-integration, the establishment of new patterns of life and a fresh sense of identity. The funeral service provides the threshold (or *limen*) between these two stages, enabling the bereaved to make the journey from the one to the other. As Michael Perham says in his *New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy*, p.195:

A Christian funeral seeks to bring a community together:

- *to honour a life;*
- *to commend the dead to God;*
- *to give space for grief and yet to move people on;*
- *to express the love and compassion of God to the bereaved;*
- *to proclaim the gospel message of Christ's death and resurrection;*
- *to warn of the inevitability of death and to encourage them to walk in this life with an eye to eternity;*
- *to take leave of the body and to say farewell;*
- *to dispose of the body reverently*

To some extent, the funeral service is itself a microcosm of the whole grief process. The bereaved are confronted with the reality (and indeed the recapitulation) of the death through the physical presence of the coffin; they are given opportunity to express grief, including sorrow and guilt, and to remember; they begin to let go, by way of commendation and committal; and are encouraged to look to the future – theirs and that of the departed – in faith and hope.

Those who plan additional bereavement liturgies need to consider where each service fits into this process and which stage(s) it enhances in particular; so that a service which precedes a funeral does not entirely pre-empt it; and any later memorial service does not merely repeat the funeral, but serves to move people on

3) The immediate aftermath

Public reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, took many by surprise. The phenomenon was not entirely new (one may recall how soccer pitch at Anfield was transformed into a floral shrine following the disaster at Hillsborough Stadium); but the scale was surely unprecedented. It was as though a previously reticent and private people had at last been given permission to grieve; and perhaps the outpouring of emotion was partially the public expression of other, previously hidden or suppressed griefs. Whatever the case, it is notable since that event how society has become less inhibited about public expressions of grief. It is, for example, no longer unusual to find flowers laid at the scene of a fatal road traffic accident; and, despite all the laments about the secularisation of society, the churches (and especially cathedrals) seem to be under increasing pressure to offer an instant response to incidents of local or national tragedy.

Initially, however, it was not so clear how the public mood would develop; and in the days following the death of Princess Diana, policy and practice were worked out on the hoof. There were some cathedrals which correctly anticipated (or, it could be said, were pro-active in shaping) public reaction and, for example, had a Book of Condolence available almost immediately and a memorial service ready within a day. But other cathedrals found themselves being swept along by a media-driven public bandwagon and having to react rather swiftly to the demand for a memorial service and somewhere to lay flowers.

Points of principle and practice which emerged from this and other disasters include:

- ***Who takes control?***

Judging what is an appropriate level of response, then managing it and holding the line is not always easy (except with hindsight!). There is now some concern being expressed about what has been called the “Diana-ising” of public grief with the assumption that books of condolence, acres of flowers and megawatts of candles are *de rigueur* in every case. Each cathedral therefore needs an established, clear and rapid procedure for reacting to a death, tragedy or disaster of regional or national significance, and for communicating plans to the media before the press, in effect, dictates what those plans should be! While being open to needs and opportunities, a firm stand will sometimes have to be taken against inappropriate external pressures and the desire of the press to “talk up” events. An agreed “chain of command” is therefore essential; so that if, for example, the Dean is on holiday, the Canon in Residence or another member of Chapter is empowered to assess the situation and initiate such action as he or she sees fit. It is important that staff be kept informed so that they can respond positively and accurately to specific, factual enquiries about the times of special services, hours of opening, etc; but it is equally important staff be clear as to what questions they should refer and to whom.

It is obviously helpful, where possible, to anticipate and plan ahead for likely events, such as an impending military conflict or the death of an elderly person of great national or local significance.

Mindful that a cathedral is the seat of the bishop, it is appropriate that the Bishop’s Office and the Diocesan Office/Communications Officer be at least kept informed of plans and intentions, and in cases of national, regional or diocesan significance, the Bishop should certainly be asked whether he wishes to be present and involved in, for example, any special service. In many cases, ecumenical involvement and/or representation will be appropriate, and a cathedral, presumably in consultation with the Diocesan Ecumenical Officer/Adviser will maintain an up-to-date list of both regional and local leaders of other churches.

The matter of civic representation may also need careful consideration, along with clarity as to who takes the initiative and “makes the running”. It is advisable for a cathedral office to maintain a directory of the local “great and the good”. Where a service is of particular national, royal, state or county significance it is sensible to involve the office of the Lord-Lieutenant(s) early

in the planning and decision-making phase; though it is also equally important to ensure that grieving families are not swamped by “the chain gang”.

- ***Impact on regular services***

To what extent should a tragedy or disaster dominate the regular round of worship? Diana, Princess of Wales, was killed early on a Sunday morning. For some of those officiating and preaching that day, it may have been more a matter of luck than judgement whether they heard the news before they went to church; but, if they did, it then became a matter of judgement as to what they did about it – whether to restrict mention to a brief notice and a sentence in the intercessions, or whether to make wholesale changes to music, readings and sermons.

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother died on the afternoon of Easter Eve. This perhaps made for easier decisions, because even the most diehard royalist or populist tabloid would have been hard-pressed to argue that Easter Day should have been superseded entirely. It would appear that it was found sufficient in many places to preface the Easter Eucharist with a quiet moment of remembrance and prayer and then, apart from a mention in the intercessions, to allow *Alleluias* to predominate.

By contrast, the tragic events of 11th September 2001 occurred on a Tuesday. By the time of the next Sunday, the enormity of what had happened was widely apparent. It would have been difficult if not impossible to proceed with the celebration of the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity as though nothing had happened; and indeed a number of communities used that Sunday to stage special services of prayer and remembrance. (*cf appendix 1: Choral Evensong on the Sunday following September 11th 2002*)

The extent to which events affect regular services will of course be different in each case. However, as a general principle, the cycle of the seasons and major festivals should not be over-ridden, but can be used to positive effect. (*cf appendix 2, Evening Prayer for Easter Monday in Commemoration of the Queen Mother*).

- ***What and when***

One of the difficult decisions is how to respond quickly to a tragic event and the pressure to “do something” while, at the same time giving adequate time to planning and preparation, including the involvement of appropriate diocesan, ecumenical, civic or community participation. Here it may help once again to remember that one is not just dealing with an *event* but a *process*; and therefore to think in terms of moving through a number of different but related liturgical expressions, for example:

*prayers of intercession within regular worship on the day of death;
a vigil or requiem on the eve or day of the funeral; (cf appendix 3,
Evening Vigil of Prayer on the Day of the Funeral of Diana, Princess
of Wales)*

mid-day prayers and silence exactly a week after the death;

allowing time to prepare a wider, public memorial service for two or three weeks to a month later. (*cf. 4 below*)

There may be some tension – theological as well as practical – between the secular and ecclesiastical agenda; between what the public (or the media) want to do and what might be deemed appropriate in a place of Christian worship. But in the first instance, much can be made of the non-liturgical use of sacred space. It would appear that many who entered cathedrals and other churches after the death of Princess Diana or September 11th were not so much wanting to attend a specific *service* but to come to a particular *place*. They also needed simply to *do something* – light a candle, sign a book, lay flowers, offer a prayer. While the scale and nature of such visits will vary according to each incident, it is important in advance:

to identify the place(s) where candles may be lit (preferably not immediately under the smoke detector!) ensuring that adequate stocks are held - ideally, such a place should be both easily accessible yet far enough inside the building to give a sense of pilgrimage;
to keep in stock a book or loose-leaf file which, if it is deemed appropriate can be put out and used immediately as a book of condolence; or, if felt to be a more appropriate, a book in which people are invited to write short prayers addressed to God rather than a message to the bereaved or deceased.
to maintain an adequate stock of small cards on which people can write a prayer (which may on certain occasions be more appropriate and less formal than a book of condolence);
to have ready a card or leaflet with two or three simple prayers on it which can be used generally following a death or disaster until more specific prayers can be compiled and printed;
(cf appendix 4 – Prayers for use in time of sorrow)
to identify a team of volunteers who, when necessary, can be called on to sort and arrange flowers brought to the church;
to establish a team of chaplains and trained volunteers to welcome and support those who come to express their grief.

Finally, if people are invited to sign a book of condolence or to write prayer cards, it is important to be able to say what will happen to them when they are removed. Indeed, the practicalities of disposal in each case may be a deciding factor in whether or not a book of condolence is appropriate. It may be possible after a State Funeral to send a book of condolence to the Lord-Lieutenant's office, either for storing in the county archives or for sending on, for example, to Buckingham Palace; but it may not be fair to expect the family or even the local parish of a murdered child to welcome the delivery of hundreds of ring-binder files from all over the country. Rather, in such cases, it may be more appropriate for prayer cards to be collected and placed on the cathedral altar at a subsequent memorial service; or perhaps distributed to members of a prayer group to pray through them before disposing of them carefully.

4) Memorial Services

Services of thanksgiving for the life and work of N... are a regular part of the ministry of many, probably most, cathedrals. But the needs they address and the shape they take may vary greatly from one occasion to another and from place to place. There is, for example, an increasing tendency to refer to the funeral itself as *A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Work of N...*; but if one accepts the pastoral theology of bereavement as *process* (cf. section 2 above), then clearly there will be a difference between a service which takes place shortly after the time of death and one which is held two, six or even twelve months later. The decision as to when it is appropriate to hold a “memorial service” will, of course, vary according to the circumstances. It was, for example, in keeping with the prevailing mood to hold a time of quiet vigil, even a full service of commemoration, a month to the date after the events of September 11th 2001; and, at the time of writing, one can foresee the possibility of services marking the first anniversary of that tragic day and the events which unfolded as a result. In contrast, admired though she was and much as her obsequies captivated the public beyond expectation, the death of the Queen Mother was old news within a month; and any memorial service held after such an elapse of time would in most places not have been greatly supported.

Apart from the matter of timing, the other preliminary question to be asked in making a decision about the holding of a memorial service is *Who is it for?* Is it primarily in support of the immediate family and friends, work colleagues, a wider local or national community or a combination of two or more of these and other categories? Only then can an appropriate planning group be assembled to include representatives of the various interests meeting with the cathedral’s own liturgical team. It may well be that members of the family or close friends will feel both more capable and more confident to contribute directly to the service (by way of ideas and active participation) than at the time of an earlier funeral. There needs to be some sense of continuity with a prior funeral – provided, for example, by the inclusion of a prayer, reading, hymn or other piece of music from the former service – but usually there will be greater emphasis on thanksgiving and celebration. Having said that, it may be the case that, if the funeral itself was a very public occasion or held within a period of communal shock, the subsequent memorial service might provide the first real opportunity to release feelings of grief.

As with any liturgy, it is important that the structure be clear and logical, for example:

The Gathering – it is especially important to get this right. Of all the communities which gather in church, the funeral/memorial congregation is probably among the least homogeneous, representing many aspects of the life and work of the deceased. Michael Perham’s comments in relation to creating a sense of community at funeral rites (New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy, p.195f) apply equally to memorial services. In particular, the form of Greeting, the careful crafting of a Bidding/Words of Welcome, and the choice of a first hymn in which many if not all can join, all help to bring a disparate community together.

The Word – (psalmody, Bible readings, sermon) with the possible inclusion of a suitable non-biblical reading, and the opportunity for members of the

family/representatives of the community to read the passages, always with the proviso that those who do so are capable and confident readers in public.

Reflection and symbolic action – responding to the proclamation of the Word by use of silence, music, the bringing forward of symbols of the life and work of the deceased

Prayer – of thanksgiving and intercession, possibly concluded by members of the family and/or the wider congregation lighting candles as a sign of their prayers

Conclusion – bringing the service to a strong and positive ending, perhaps signified by the use of Easter hymnody and/or dismissal with alleluias.

Lastly, but not least, it must be clearly agreed from the outset as to who is responsible for covering the costs of the service. It is indeed encouraging when a Lord Lieutenant is keen that services of county significance should be held in the cathedral; but, in general, Lords Lieutenant do not have a budget for such events; yet someone has to pay for the use of the cathedral (including lost income while it is closed to visitors for the duration of the service), the provision of music, service sheets, staffing, etc. If there are to be no nasty surprises after the event, the issue of costs must be an item on the agenda of the first planning meeting.

5) Seasons of Remembrance

The period from All Saints' Day to Advent, with its overtones of remembrance and eschatology, offers a number of opportunities for commemorative liturgies, including of course All Souls' Day, Remembrance Sunday and, increasingly observed, a Sunday in remembrance of the victims of road traffic incidents. Eastertide also is particularly appropriate for remembering the departed in the hope of resurrection - one common practice is the donation of Easter lilies (for decorating the church) in remembrance of loved ones whose names are read out in the prayers at a suitable service (eg: Choral Evensong on Easter Eve). But it is intended that *Seasons of Remembrance* should be the subject of another paper in due course.

6) Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Choral Evensong at Lichfield Cathedral on the Sunday following September 11th 2002.

The Gathering

THE INTROIT

Drop, drop slow tears

(Music : Orlando Gibbons)

The Dean lights the Easter Candle and says:

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
defender and protector of your people.
In the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
To dispel the darkness of our night,
you sent forth your Son, the first-born of all creation,
who wept over the sins of the city,
shedding tears for our shattered world.
In his suffering and death is the hope of healing for all;
in his rising again we find new light and life.
Let the light of your love now dwell in our hearts
and bring us comfort and peace,
that we may know your consoling presence with us now
and be set free to sing your praise,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

The choir sings

THE OPENING RESPONSES OF EVENING PRAYER

HYMN

Mannheim

Jesus, Lord of life and glory,
bend from heaven thy gracious ear;
while our waiting souls adore thee,
friend of helpless sinners, hear:
By thy mercy come and save us,
O deliver us, good Lord.

From the depth of nature's blindness,
from the hardening power of sin,
from all malice and unkindness,
from the pride that lurks within:
By thy mercy come and save us,
O deliver us, good Lord.

In the weary hours of sickness,
in the times of grief and pain,
when we feel our mortal weakness,
when the creature's help is vain:
By thy mercy come and save us,
O deliver us, good Lord.

In the solemn hour of dying,
in the face of judgement day,
may our souls, on thee relying,
find thee still our rock and stay:
By thy mercy come and save us,
O deliver us, good Lord.

Jesus, may thy promised blessing
comfort to all souls afford;
may they now, thy love possessing,
and at length their full reward,
ever with thy saints in heaven
praise thee, good and glorious Lord.

The Word of God

The choir sings

PSALM 67

God be merciful unto us and bless us

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING

Micah 4:1-5

read by

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire

The choir sings

MAGNIFICAT

Setting in A minor by T. Tertius Noble

[sometime Organist of St. Thomas's Church, 5th Avenue, New York]

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

St. John 14:1-7, 27

read by

The Canon in Residence

THE SERMON

given by
The Dean

PSALM 23

(Metrical Version – Criomnd)

The Prayers

AN ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

The Dean says

Confident in Christ, and claiming his promises,
let us remember before God and commend into his hands
all victims of violence and of man's inhumanity to man,
especially those who lost their lives this past week
in Washington and New York.

Stand Silence is kept for one minute before the Dean continues:

Almighty God,
from whose love in Christ we cannot be parted,
either by death or life:
hear our prayers for all whom we remember this day;
fulfil in them the purpose of your love;
and bring us all, with them, to your eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Remain standing as the choir sings

NUNC DIMITTIS

*during which light from the Easter Candle
is passed to candles among the congregation*

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

led by

Ecumenical Representatives of the Churches

Encouraged by our fellowship with the saints
and all the faithful departed,
let us pray that the light of Christ
may dispel the darkness of our world.

Father, we bring before you the sins and shortcomings of the world,
its pride, its selfishness, its greed,
its evil divisions and hatreds.
We confess our share in what is wrong,

and we ask you to help us seek and establish that peace
which is your will for your children.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Guide and direct all in authority,
especially President Bush and those who work with him,
that they may have wisdom to know
and courage to do what is right.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Strengthen the resolve all who work
to improve international relationships,
that they may bring reconciliation
to people of differing race, colour and creed,
and particularly at this time in the Middle East.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Comfort and heal all who suffer
as a result of war or acts of terrorism,
particularly the citizens of New York and Washington.
Give them courage and hope in their troubles
and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Console with the knowledge of your love
those who mourn their dead,
those who have lost husband or wife,
children or parents,
that they may be sustained in their grief
and find light in the darkness.

Silence

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Renew our hope and trust in you,
that we may face the future calm and unafraid,
always confident that neither death nor life
can part us from your love in Jesus Christ our Lord,
in whose name we pray
for the fulfilment of your kingdom of justice and peace
here on earth as in heaven:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven....

Remain seated or kneeling as the choir sings

MOTET
My soul, there is a country
(*Music : Hubert Parry*)

The Dean concludes the Prayers:

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen and to all nations,
peace and prosperity;
and to us and all his faithful servants,
life everlasting:
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and within your homes,
this day and for evermore.

All: Amen.

The Dismissal

HYMN

NEH 364 (t.408i)
Blaenwern

God is Love: let heav'n adore him;

The Dean says

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace;

All: And rise with Christ in glory.

Go in the peace of Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

APPENDIX 2

Evening Prayer (without choir) for Easter Monday 2002 in Commemoration of the Queen Mother

The Gathering

The Dean gives the Easter greeting:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The Dean adds further words of welcome before leading

THE OPENING RESPONSES OF EVENING PRAYER

O Lord, open our lips

All: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

In your resurrection, O Christ

All: Let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia!

THE BLESSING OF THE LIGHT

*during which a light is brought from the Easter Candle
to a commemorative candle at the front of the Nave:*

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord,
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to you be glory and praise for ever!
From the deep waters of death you brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
Through him dark death has been destroyed
and radiant life is everywhere restored.
As you call us out of darkness into his marvellous light
may our lives reflect his glory
and our lips repeat the endless song:
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever. Alleluia! Amen.

The Word of God

All sing

PSALM 23

(Metrical Version from the Scottish Psalter, 1650)

THE FIRST READING
Wisdom 4:7-9, 13-14a, 15

All sing

MAGNIFICAT
(Metrical Version)
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord:

THE SECOND READING
Revelation 21:1-7

THE SERMON

All sing

HYMN
The strife is o'er, the battle done

The Prayers

Let us offer our prayers in thanksgiving, confidence and hope.

For Elizabeth the Queen Mother:
for her upbringing in Scotland and her life-long love of the countryside;
for the life she shared with her husband, King George,
and for the encouragement and support she gave to her wider family,
let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

For her example in war and peace
of courage, fortitude and faithfulness;
for her delight in children
and her devotion to those of her own generation,
let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

For her warmth and welcome to those of every nation;
for the faith that sustained her and the affection that surrounded her,
let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

For her unfailing service to the people of this realm
in days of hardship and in times of prosperity;
for the wisdom of her counsel
and for her words of comfort to those in distress,
let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

For her continuing determination and inspiration in later years;
for all she became to us and the place she has in our hearts,
let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

For the repose of her soul,
that she may rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory,
let us pray to the Lord,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For Elizabeth our Queen, Philip, Duke of Edinburgh,
Charles, Prince of Wales and all the Royal Family,
that all who mourn may know the consoling love of God,
let us pray to the Lord,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For this nation and Commonwealth;
for the Church throughout the world;
for our families and local communities,
that all people may share the peace of the risen Christ,
let us pray to the Lord,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

For those whom we love but see no longer,
that we may come with them to a joyful resurrection,
let us pray to the Lord,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the presence of our risen Lord,
we pray as he taught us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven....

Sit for

ORGAN MUSIC

*during which those who wish to do so may come forward and light a candle
to take home as a sign of their prayers of thanksgiving and remembrance*

Stand to say together

NUNC DIMITTIS

THE EASTER COLLECT

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity.

All: Amen.

All sing

HYMN

Love's redeeming work is done

THE BLESSING

concluding

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace;

All: And rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

APPENDIX 3

Evening Vigil of Prayer on the Day of the Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales

The Gathering

The congregation gathers in silence, and the lighting is dimmed.

The Bishop greets the people:

In the name of Christ, who died and was raised by the glory of the Father, we welcome you; grace, mercy and peace be with you all.

As we gather here to remember Diana, Princess of Wales, we are united with countless others in shock and sorrow at the sudden and tragic death of one who seemed to embody the hopes and concerns, the ambitions and the frustrations of so many people here and throughout the world.

We bring before God those mixed emotions which constitute human grief: numb disbelief and sad bewilderment; the bitterness of anger and the guilt of regret; the deep sense of loss; and our helpless and vulnerable feelings when confronted with the fact of our human mortality.

Our thoughts and prayers reach out especially for Diana's children; for her family and close friends; for the families and friends of those who died with her; and for all those whose painful memories have been reawakened or sharpened by this event. We share and, by sharing, we support them and each other in our time of grief.

Yet we also meet in a spirit of thanksgiving for her life and work. We rejoice in the radiant beauty, enthusiasm and natural warmth that she brought to public life. We recall her gifts of love and compassion, her sense of humour, and her ability to understand and encourage the suffering and the needy, not least by her openness and determination in the face of her own personal problems. We give thanks for the work of the charities that benefited from her active and highly committed patronage; for the comfort and hope she brought to sick children, to the victims of AIDS and leprosy, to the homeless and to those afflicted by land-mines. For the way in which her life has touched and enriched the lives of so many across the world, and for all that she means to each of us, we thank God this evening.

But above all, we gather in this Cathedral Church to reaffirm and celebrate our Christian faith in the resurrection to eternal life. In the person of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, we see that no depth of suffering and sorrow, not even death itself, is beyond the power of the love of God to heal, transform and raise to new life and light. We commend Diana into his hands with confidence. For we believe that Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. He is the light of the world, a light that no darkness can quench.

The Easter candle is carried through the Nave to the sanctuary, lighting the candles of the people as the choir sings

INTROIT AND KYRIE
from Requiem by Gabriel Fauré
(full text and translation printed)

THE ACCLAMATION

Blessed are you, Lord our God, lover of souls:
you uphold us in life and sustain us in death:
to you be glory and praise for ever!
For the darkness of this age is passing away
as Christ brings to his faithful people the light of life.
As you give light to those in darkness, who walk in the shadow of death,
so remember in your kingdom your servant, Diana,
that death may be for her the gate to life
and to unending fellowship with you;
where with your saints you live and reign
in the perfect union of love, now and for ever. **Amen.**

HYMN

Blaenwern

God is Love: let heav'n adore him;

The Word of God

A READING
Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9
read by
A Representative of the Baptist and United Reformed Churches

SILENCE

THE GOSPEL READING

St. John 20:1-18

This is the gospel of the Lord.
All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
All: He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Let us therefore pray with confidence in Christ,
the Resurrection and the Life of all the faithful.

The Prayers

SILENCE is kept as a Representative of the Methodist Churches carries the Book of Condolence through the Nave and lays it upon the altar before saying:

Loving Father, we come before you at this time
united in thought and prayer with many others
here and throughout the world.
Give to us and all people your light and your peace.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Help us, we pray, to trust you
in the midst of things we cannot understand.
Forgive us our fears and our failings,
and renew us in faith, hope and love.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

A Representative of the Roman Catholic Church continues:

Hear us, therefore, as we entrust Diana, Princess of Wales,
to your never-failing love.

As we thank you for her life and work, for her vitality and compassion,
and for the light and joy she brought to so many people,
we pray that you will enfold her in the arms of your mercy
and let your eternal light shine upon her.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Hear us as we pray for all who mourn:
for Elizabeth our Queen, Charles, Prince of Wales
and all the Royal Family,
especially the young Princes, William and Harry;
for Diana's brother and sisters, other relatives and close friends;
for those who grieve for Dodi al Fayed and Henri Paul;
and for all who are passing through the pain of bereavement at this time.
Grant them a sure confidence in your loving care,
that casting all their sorrow upon you,
they may know the consolation of your love.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Hear us as we pray for any who suffer,
and especially for those supported by the charities
of which Diana was patron.
Bless and prosper the work of all who minister to those in need,
and increase in us the spirit of compassion and generosity.

Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

The Canon in Residence continues:

Grant us the wisdom and the grace
to use aright the time that is left to us here on earth.
Lead us to repent of our sins,
the evil we have done and the good we have not done;
and strengthen us to follow the steps of your Son,
in the way that leads to the fullness of eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Jesus taught us to call God our Father;
so in faith and trust we pray:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven...

Sit as the choir sings

AGNUS DEI
from Requiem by Gabriel Fauré
(Full text and translation printed)

SILENCE

The lights in the Nave are fully illuminated as all sing

HYMN

Maccabaeus

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,

The Bishop proclaims

THE BLESSING

God, in his infinite love and mercy,
bring the whole Church, living and departed in the Lord Jesus,
to a joyful resurrection and the fulfilment of his eternal kingdom;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and upon her whom we have entrusted to his care,
this night and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Go in the love and peace of Christ.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Book of Condolence is collected from the altar by the Lord-Lieutenant who carries it in the retiring procession from the Cathedral ready for sending to the Royal Family.

APPENDIX 4

Some prayers for use in time of sorrow (*eg: on a Prayer Card to be given to visitors*)

God of hope, we come to you
in shock and grief and confusion of heart.
Help us to find peace in the knowledge
of your loving mercy to all your children,
and give us light to guide us out of our darkness
into the assurance of your love,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those who have lost their lives:

Lord God, Creator of all,
you have made us creatures of this earth,
but have also promised us a share in eternal life.
We commend into your hands all who have died.
According to your promises,
bring them to the joy of heaven,
where there is neither sorrow nor pain,
but life everlasting;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those who mourn:

Most merciful God,
whose wisdom is beyond understanding,
give to the suffering and the bereaved
the consolation of your love.
Sustain them in their anguish
and strengthen them to meet the days to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the peace of the world and those who bear responsibility for government in time of crisis:

Lord God, you desire the well-being of humanity
and not our destruction.
Take all violence from our midst
and extinguish hatred in our hearts.
Curb the passions in us
that make us seek the lives of others.
Give peace on earth,
to us and to all humanity.
We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen and to all nations,
peace and prosperity;
and to us and all his faithful servants,
life everlasting. Amen.

*May the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and within your home this day and always.*

SEE ALSO RESOURCES IN COMMON WORSHIP (*especially Pastoral Services pp.214ff; and New Patterns for Worship – the resource section and especially “Facing Pain: a Service of Lament”, pp.443 ff).*)