



St Laurence Church, Northfield

Registered Charity 1132975

As the death toll from the Coronavirus rises we offer this booklet as part of our '*Plan for the worst but Pray for the Best*' response.

We suggest that you sit down in a quiet place, maybe with a cup of tea, and read this through slowly and gently.

We know that we will all die and indeed we sing the hymn 'Awake, my soul,' with the line 'live this day as if thy last' but the reality is that if we were to do this, we wouldn't have any milk in the fridge for tomorrow or clean clothes to put on!

Nevertheless, clear instructions about what we would like to happen at our death and afterwards is a loving gift for those who have to cope after we have gone. Facing up to the reality of death may also help us to make peace with others, with ourselves and with God.

The current pandemic may mean that some of what we had hoped for will not be possible. For instance, ministers and priests are not, currently, able to visit those in hospital or close to death at home and administer last rites in person.

So here are some ideas of what you can do at home and Holy Week is a particularly good time to look at this....

1. Give thanks to God for the gift of life.
2. Give thanks to God for what you are glad to have done in your life. You may wish to write some of these things down and don't be modest with your achievements! You will have achieved them by the grace of God. You may wish to leave this list for others to find and they may be surprised at some of the things on it!
3. Express sorrow for your sins. Some may lay heavy on your heart. You may need to get in touch with a few people and try to put things right. If you may wish to make a list but make sure you destroy it after you prayed it through with God and asked for forgiveness.

The short service overleaf may help:

A short form of the Act of Reconciliation (Confession) for use on one's own.

The Lord Jesus, who came to reconcile sinners, welcomes all who are penitent, including me. May I know His grace, mercy and peace as I come before you, loving Lord, in sorrow for my sins

Most merciful God, I confess to you,
that I have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what I have failed to do and especially in these ways I lay
before You now

(you may wish to say them quietly or just run your finger slowly down your list)

and in the many ways I cannot remember or choose not to remember.

Lord have mercy upon me
Forgive me my sins,
heal me by your Spirit
and raise me to new life in Christ. Amen.

The prophet Nathan said to David, "The LORD has put away your sin;"
(2 Samuel 12. 13)

May I hear these words for myself and say, "The Lord has put away my sin."

Thanks be to God.

Coming to terms with oneself in this way is exhausting so maybe go for a quiet walk or listen to a piece of calming music, do a jigsaw or have (another)r cup of tea!

Maybe later in the day say the doxology from the hymn 'Awake, my soul.'

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Prayers as death approaches.

It may be that there is someone who can read these when they discern that the time is close. As we live in a city of many faiths, they have been chosen so that many of them can be read out by people, who may not be Christian, in their own faith.

Verses from the book of Lamentations

- 6 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
- 7 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
- 8 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in him.'
- 9 The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd :
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He shall feed me in a green pasture :
and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
- 3 He shall convert my soul :
and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness,
for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil :
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
- 5 Thou shalt prepare a table before me
against them that trouble me :
thou hast anointed my head with oil,
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life :
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

