# A Simple Ritual for those Unable to attend a Funeralabridged and adapted from *‘A simple religious funeral’Deeply Connected, 2015, Dorothy McRae-McMahon*

*This ritual may be adapted to suit circumstances. It may be led by a friend, family member, or minister. You may wish to use all or part of it and may wish to include other readings and prayers from other sources that reflect the life of the one being remembered. It may be used at the same time as the funeral or another time.*

## Opening

Friends, we have come together because we loved *(name)*as *(mother, brother, family, friend etc)*.
Here we will mourn *her/him* leaving us,
honour *her/his* life and death,
and comfort each other.

We have come believing that all human life is valuable,
that the love which resides in each life, lives on.
We come, believing that *(name)*’s life,
lived in its uniqueness with us
is joined in the continuum of human endeavour,
stretching into the past and into the future.
The gifts, graces, and love, which *she/he* offered are never lost to us.
They lie now within our own lives
 and travels into the future with us.
Our lives are more beautiful because we live with *her/him*.

##

## Four Candles

**The first candle represents our grief –**

The pain of losing you *(name)* is with us
and the flame of light will shine on our tears
and warm us as we honour your life.

**The second candle represents courage –**

That which lay in your life
and the strength which we will give to each other in our loss

**The third candle we light for memories –**

It celebrates your human journey with us,
the times when we laughed and cried together,
the gifts which you gave to us
and those we gave to you,
the hard times and the good
and the life which your life invited in us all.

**The fourth candle celebrates love –**

It shines fort in joy
as we know that love never dies.
It goes on from person to person,
from moment to moment in every age
and adds to the life of the universe in delight.
Thanks be to you, whose love still surrounds us
and thanks be to God.

## PrayerOr Silent Reflection

O God, at this moment,
as we come face to face with death and our own mortality
we have many feelings as well as grief.
Please come close to us with your love,
and open our hearts to each other. Amen.

## Readings and Reflection

*Traditional and/or contemporary reading may be read*

We do not know the whole truth about what lies beyond death. Yet, death invites us into total awareness and to know whether what we have valued in ourselves has eternal value.

We are safe in the hands of an infinitely gracious God.

The God who stands with us knows the struggles of life and understands the choices we have made.

## Tributes

*(The things we would like to remember about the person)*

*(Name)* all these things and more you have given to us.
We respect your journey through life, with all of its realities.
Travel safely with our love in this next part of your journey.

We pray or reflect in silence on this life and what it has meant to us:

*(Silent prayer or reflection)*

Thanks be to God for the gifts we have received in *(name)*.
Thanks be to God for a life lived with *(courage, honesty, grace, determination – as appropriate)*

## Farewell

As say farewell, part of our grief may be regret
for things done or left undone.
We lay aside all those regrets to honour *(name)*who would never want them carried into our future.
Let us receive that gift of generosity from *(name)*and the forgiveness of God.

*(silent reflection)*

To love someone is to risk the pain of parting.
Not to love is never to have lived.
The grief which we now experience is the honouring of our love.

## Sending Out

Let us now in a quiet moment make our farewell to *(name)*

*(silence)*

Go in peace, *(name)*.held safe in the hollow of God’s hand
and celebrate with lightness of being
all that has been and all that is to come.
Go in grace *(name)*, with our love, into the hands of God. Amen.

## Going Out

Even as we grieve this loss,
let us surround those who miss her/him most with our love
and pray for the comfort of God.
And now let us go into the world,
glad that we have loved,
free to weep for the one we have lost,
free to hold each other in our human frailty,
empowered to live life to the full
and to affirm the hope of human existence. Amen.