

REQUIEM

Though requiems are commonly performed at Samhain, they can be held at any time; you don't need to wait for Samhain or any other Sabbat, or for a dark Moon. We do recommend making it part of a full Circle, though.

Following is Lady Garr's requiem, from *Enchantment Encumbered*. We hope it is helpful. As you gather together the items you will need for a Requiem Circle, be sure to include plenty of tissues.

Unlike most of the rituals in *Enchantment*, this requiem is written for a *group* of mourners, though it is easily modified to do alone. It also includes brief explanatory comments which are reassuring to us, and help any non-Wiccan participants to understand our attitudes.

This ritual was written to celebrate the life of a female; if the person you're remembering was male, just make the appropriate changes. (You may also modify it to honor a group of people.) Wherever you see a blank line, insert the name of your loved one.

If possible, put some memento of your loved one on your altar, or keep it with you when you perform this rite. You may wish to pass it around, lift it in salute to each Direction as you call the Quarters, or otherwise create some "interaction."

It is also up to you whether to move around the Circle or sit or stand in place and face or look at each Element from the center as you call the Quarters, receive their blessings, and dismiss them.

You will note that the Quarter blessings are received widdershins, which is to say, going from right to left. They begin in the West, the direction of the setting sun. The counter-sunwise movement means that these are blessings for our loved one's journey away from the Sun, into the darkness of the Underworld and the realm of death. The Quarters are called and dismissed deosil to remind us that every death and every birth are part of the cycle of life.

On your own, you can take all the parts yourself. In a group, you may be able to ask others to help cast the Circle and/or to read parts of the service. You should modify it to include details about your loved one to make it even more personal. If you plan to ask other mourners to take a part or speak, be sure to let them know ahead of time.

Words in [ordinary brackets] are "stage directions," not meant to be read aloud. Words in <angle brackets> are included to add when you're honoring someone who was not Wiccan.

The <angle bracketed> words are included because Wicca respects other faiths. It wouldn't be appropriate to force our religion on the memory of someone who followed a different faith. Include <angle-bracketed words> when the deceased was *not* Wiccan.

If the person who has died *was* Wiccan, leave the angle-bracketed words *out* when you conduct the requiem. By the way, "Cakes and Ale" is often omitted from funeral or memorial services, so it is not included in this ritual.

THE RITE FOR A LOVED ONE

Cast the Circle in the usual way, and where you would ordinarily celebrate or work magic prior to sharing Cakes and Ale, proceed as follows:

The First Reading

We are comforted to hear the Goddess' words, adapted from Doreen Valiente's *Charge of the Goddess*. 'Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the Moon is full, you shall gather together in some sacred place, and adore the spirit of Me, queen of all the Witches. You who would learn magic, but have not yet gained its deepest secrets, there I will teach you. There you shall be truly free.

'Sing! Feast! Dance! Make music and love, all in My honor, for Mine is the spirit of ecstasy, and Mine also is joy on Earth. Love unto all beings is My law. Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever towards it, and let nothing turn you aside. For Mine is the secret door that opens upon the Land of Youth, and Mine is the cup of the wine of life that is the Cauldron of Cerridwen, the holy Grail of immortality.

'On Earth, I give knowledge of the spirit eternal and, beyond death, I give peace, and freedom, and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor do I ask aught of sacrifice, for behold, I am the Mother of all things, and My love is poured forth upon the Earth.'

The Homily

When the fullness of time arrived for a new incarnation, _____ was born into this world – a pulsating spark, a fragment of life veiled within a frame of mortal flesh. We come here today to celebrate the life of this special person. We are here in her honor, to say goodbye, and to celebrate the blessings she brought to our lives

In Wicca, we do not fear death, for it is just part of the cycle, the other side of the Wheel. We expect reincarnation, and know that, if we so choose, our souls will meet again somewhere along our journey. We smell the sweet scent of the Summerland, and it holds no fear for us.

_____ has passed into the arms of her ancestors, and those who have gone before. Yet she has also left us behind. When we cry, and mourn the passing of a loved one, it is simply our sorrow in losing that special person from our worldly lives. Our memories, and our spiritual connections, are timeless.

The Goddess is embodied as Mother Nature. Source of all life, She manifests in many forms, and with many names. She is the mother's womb, the primal ocean,

creation and destruction. Her triple aspect as Maiden, Mother and Crone shows in the never-ending waxing, full and waning phases of Her special symbol, the Moon. She is eternal, transforming but ever-present, and She has many faces. Today I call her Hecate, the Dark Lady of the Crossroads.

The antlered Horned God, Her Consort and Son, is the game that dies so the hunter may live, and the grain harvested in the Fall to be planted again in Spring. He is the fertilizing life force symbolized by the Sun, projective and free. It is He who dances through life being born, living, dying and being reborn of the Goddess. Various names speak to His different aspects; we do not fear any of them. <He has *no* relation to the Christian anti-God Satan, who is not recognized by Wicca.> The god Cernunnos is appropriate to call today.

The Invocations

Cernunnos, Lord of the Cosmic Dance of Life and Death and Rebirth, we ask You to offer Your blessings upon _____, who has entered Your realm of spirit. Hold her close to her own faith, with love and transformation, and bring her, if she is willing and when the time is right, back to the Earth once more.

Dark Lady of the Shadows, Hecate, Guardian of the Crossroads, be with us as we come together to contemplate the passing of _____ from our arms into Yours. Help us to remember her love, her courage, and her wisdom. Teach us to feel the touch of Your compassion even as this death stabs us with the pain of mourning.

Move through our midst and brush us with the mantle of Your mystery, which gives insight into mortality as the end of an incarnation and the prelude to new beginnings. Bless our departed loved one as well, as _____ takes her well-earned rest in the realms of spirit. Hold her close in her own beliefs, and nurture her, until it is her choice to return to Earth once more.

We remember. _____ has touched our lives in many ways. We remember her wisdom and her smile, her love and her humor.

[At this point, speak or meditate about what the deceased person meant to you.]

The Quarter Blessings

Spirits of the West, Guardians of Water, emotions, and endings, open our hearts and let our tears and love flow. Offer blessings to _____ as she travels through Your realm, bringing her, and us, healing and renewal

Spirits of the South, Guardians of Fire, bring us courage to face the transitions that are upon us. Offer blessings to _____ as she transforms, keeping her passions alive within her. For ourselves we ask the gentle warmth of the hearth in our souls, to comfort our sorrow, and the

cleansing power of the flames.

Spirits of the East, Guardians of Air, we look to you for new beginnings. Offer blessings to _____ as she takes this new path, with the clarity of soul that brings joy. Bring us, too, clear vision, bright memories of our beloved, and the knowledge that sunrise and Spring will ever follow the dark.

Spirits of the North, Guardians of Earth, powers of grounding, and of the balance we seek, we ask your blessings on your daughter _____. Embrace her as her body nurtures other life, and guide her on her chosen path through the transformations to come. For ourselves we ask the strength and security to remember the unending cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, with the roots of mountains as our anchors.

The Second Reading

All days fade and new ones come to be.
Time will stop for no one on the river of eternity,
And the wise must learn to float its tide
On the rippling paths of tomorrow.
For the waters of forever do not run dry.
And the force of life of which all are part
Will ever ride the waves.

(from "All Days Fade," by Arwen)

The Closing Blessing

Now be at peace, each of you who came to say farewell. May _____'s legacy of love and laughter live on in your heart and guide your path. Remember that none of us stay forever on this earthly plane, so let your time be meaningful and your actions be a blessing to all whose lives you touch. Blesséd be.

Remember, in requiems it is common to skip Cakes and Ale, so now it's time to open the Circle in your usual way.

We'll finish with one of the funeral songs Lady O'Gaea has written, *In the Cycles of the Planet*. If you can't read music, feel free to recite it as a poem, or make up your own tune.

Feel free, too, to write your own poems and songs to honor your beloved dead. They and the Gods will appreciate it more than you know.

"Beyond death, she brings
peace, freedom, and reunion."

— Doreen Valiente
The Charge of the Goddess

BLESSÉD BE

In the Cycles of the Planet

In the cycles of the planet
dwell our human lives and spirits:
in the patterns of the water,
in the rhythms of the sun.
In the air that we are breathing
hangs the story of our future;
in the heartbeat of the earth
we hear the course our lives will run.

And for all the spirits living
in our work and in our mem'ries,
we gather now to sing the songs
of darkness and of light.

For those who've gone before us,
oh, we sing of how we miss them ...
and for those who're yet to join us,
we sing welcoming tonight.

A musical score for the poem 'In the Cycles of the Planet'. The score is written on ten staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is in a simple, melodic style. At the bottom of the page, it says 'Adapted by Doreen Valiente'.



MOTHER EARTH MINISTRIES-ATC
OFFERS

A REQUIEM FOR A LOVED ONE

In Wicca, death is known as "passing through the Gates." The energies wakened by death can be directed to good purpose, bringing healing to ourselves and to the world. When we honor death's place in the cycle of life, we enable ourselves and our loved ones to pass through the Gates – and return again, as we believe everyone will – with dignity, love, and trust.

— adapted from *In the Service of Life*
by Ashleen O'Gaea and Caarol Garr

From MEM's *Enchantment Encumbered*, here is a Wiccan requiem that can be performed in any place, and at any time it is needed.

Blesséd be.



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