

service

Sue Lubowitz

***“May every mark of affection and every gesture of friendship
be a sign of Christ’s peace for you.”***

The line above, from the Catholic funeral liturgy, moves me every time I pray it at a funeral. It reminds me that in every kindness that is extended to me and in every act of comfort and care, it is Christ himself who is present and acting to bring me peace. It also reminds me that I am called to do likewise for others.

The Order of Christian Funerals reminds us that each member of Christ’s body is called to participate in the ministry of consolation: to care for the dying, to pray for the dead, to comfort those who mourn.

As a sign of respect and gratitude for her service in the League, a guard of honour can be formed at the funeral of a deceased member, with the permission of the family and approval of the parish priest. For more instructions on funeral and honour protocol, please refer to the National Manual of Policy and Procedure, 2024 (pages 41 and 42).



In addition to receptions, prayer services and assisting with the annual memorial Mass, usually held on November 2, councils may wish to begin a Bereavement Ministry in their parish. A Bereavement Ministry provides hope, consolation, and compassionate support to individuals and families experiencing grief after the loss of a loved one. Key activities include sending sympathy cards, making support calls, offering empathy and a non-judgmental listening ear, conducting home visits, facilitating support groups, and assisting with memorial Masses and funeral rites. When I was part of this ministry at my parish it was called “Consolation and Hope” and we also held a monthly prayer service. The goal is to help the bereaved feel cared for and supported; preventing them from experiencing their grief in isolation and connecting them to the resources and their faith community.

Many resources are available online through various diocesan offices. The Archdiocese of Toronto offers a list of resources from the initial stages of a ministry to resources for parishes that have an established ministry:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/fr/offices-and-ministries/pastoral-ministries/formation-for-discipleship/home/ministries/bereavement/>

The CWL also has many resources but councils may find that the resource **#637 Toolkit for Service** (found at the [CWL national website](#) under the "Manuals" tab) is especially useful as it has developed service project that may interest your council. You can adapt these materials to your council and community needs. They are meant to assist in planning.

Other suggested online resources include:

1. Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association:

<https://www.chpca.ca/awareness/national-grief-and-bereavement-day/grief-and-bereavement-resource-repository/>

2. Sick Kids <https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/support-services/grief-bereavement-resources/>

3. Ontario Funeral Service Association

https://www.ofsa.org/grief_support_resources

We believe that we are all, past and present, connected in Christ, loved by God, part of the body of Christ. We are blessed and comforted in our mourning.

