

Informal Memorial Service Message

by Chaplain, Lt Col Bruce R. Brewer

Joint Base Andrews MD, xx Jan 20xx

Intro: Good afternoon, I am Chaplain Bruce Brewer, and it is my honor to be with our Readiness Team today as we recognize and honor our beloved comrade in arms, xxxxx... I'd like to begin by expressing my condolences to xxxxx family. The immediate family has shared with me how impressed they have been with the expressions of love and concern offered to them by their extended military family who are in attendance today.

I also want to Welcome You to the Old Post Chapel at Andrews. Since this historic chapel was built before the Civil War in 1854, persons of influence from around the world, have attended services here, have sat in the seats where you are now seated, and have paid tribute to our nation's heroes. There is no more fitting place to honor the memory of an Airman than within the walls of this Chapel and among the grounds of Joint Base Andrews.

This occasion has been listed as more informal, but I request that you join with me in a word of prayer as we begin our remembrance today. "Father in Heaven, Together, we express gratitude for your presence in all seasons of life, and thank you for what we know to be true, for our hope and our salvation. We ask for the comfort of your Spirit as we remember our brother xxxx. We thank you for giving him to us to know and to love as a companion in this life. Help us celebrate an Airman, and the amazing gift of life. And give us faith to see that death has been swallowed up in thee so that we may live in confidence and hope until, by your call, we are gathered to our heavenly home in the company of all your saints; In thy Holy Name Amen."

Today we remember xxxxx and all he has been. Your presence here today says more than my words can. Thank you for being here.

I also want to thank our leadership (XX) who honor us with their presence, and are ever vigilant in concern for life. Squadron X is no stranger to loss, and we also want to call in remember our love and respect for Karen [killed 1 yr prior].

The word of God soberly reminds us: "For our days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so we flourish. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer." While our lives are but a brief moment, the word of God

stands forever. The prophet Job proclaimed, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." And Isaiah prophesied, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." The Lord himself declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Eulogy The eulogy will be read by Chief XXX, afterwards, we'd invite any friend that would like to come forward and share a short remembrance of xxxxx.

Scripture Readings: Sharing Memories will be followed by a reading from the **23rd PSALM** by: Ret Chief, xxxxx.

Followed by scripture in the Gospel of our Lord, **Matthew Chapter 5 (2-9)** read by Chaplain xxxxxxx.

Homily: Blessed are they that mourn? This saying from Sermon on the Mount has brought comfort to God's people for many ages. What does it mean to be blessed when you mourn or grieve? I believe that to mourn is to remember. "There is a sacredness in tears, they are not the mark of weakness, but of power, they are messengers of overwhelming grief and of unspeakable love." Washington Irving

Xxxxx is remembered as a beloved worker, friend, husband and father. It was Gandi who stated: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow, learn as if you were to live forever."

Show xxxxx's Picture Collage: As you know, xxxxx was just 50 years old when he died. From what I've learned of his life, he lived a Christian centered life, and he led life to the fullest by maintaining positive relations with his outgoing and vibrant personality. Understandably, we feel robbed when we are not given more time with Kevin and with our loved ones.

Uncertainty as to our longevity is then one of life's basic realities for all of us. So you and I should pray in faith for the blessings we deeply desire, but then be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto us. Clearly our individual exit routes from this life vary; and so does the timing. From an eternal perspective, "it's not the length of years in your life that count, it's the life in your years." It's about prioritizing how we live that matters most. It's about keeping promises and not letting life pass us by.

"I have come to understand how useless it is to dwell on the whys, what ifs, and if only for which there likely will be no answers in mortality. To receive the Lord's comfort, we must exercise faith. The questions Why me? Why our family? Why now? Are usually unanswerable questions. These questions detract from our spirituality and can destroy our faith. [Instead] we need to spend our time and energy building our faith by turning

to the Lord and asking for strength to overcome the pains and trials of this world and to endure to the end for greater understanding.” (Elder Robert D. Hales, C.R. Oct 1998, 16).

In this mortal life, each of us is going to experience pain in one form or another. Pain may come from an accident or from a painful medical condition. We may feel pain from the mourning that appropriately comes from the loss of a loved one or the loss of affection from one we hold dear. We cannot avoid it.

The only question is how we will react to it. The Bible indicates that we are the offspring of God and that in our mortal bodies, we will have experiences that bring joys and disappointments, health and sickness. We also know that life brings an eventual physical death for each of us.

Perhaps there is much to remember about xxxxx, but above all remember that he is loved by God. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

To mourn then is to remember your loved one. Yet to be blessed in your mourning, don’t only remember him, but also our Lord’s promises to him and to you. The Lord’s promise to him and to you is the hope of salvation and the promised resurrection. Paul wrote: “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor 15: 21-22).

Our Gospel lesson closes with, “Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven.”

Lord’s Prayer: Now, as our Savior has taught us, we also pray: “Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. (Matt 6: 9-13).

I genuinely hope that our time together in this chapel has honored our Lord and xxxx. May you be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Benediction: Would you please rise for the benediction given by Chaplain xxxxxxxx

Note:

The Memorial Service was given at Joint Base Andrews for retired Air Force member, who was currently working as a government contractor. Because of his military involvement and current status, his colleagues requested a less formal Memorial Service which I conducted at the base chapel. This might serve as a useful AF example, informal in nature, lacking full military honors, entrance of casket etc.

I also wanted to acknowledge Chaplain Capt Loren Omer who provided me a sample Memorial Service template, which was adapted to fit setting and occasion. I'd recommend that you also reach out to Ch Omer who currently serves as a chaplain at Arlington National Cemetery. He could be a great resource to your request.

BRUCE R. BREWER, Ch Lt Col, PhD, USAF

Division Chief, Readiness & Resources

Intertim Division Chief, Plans & Programs

NGB/HC, Joint Base Andrews

xxx-xxx-xxxx