

# Suggestions for enshrinement ceremony (placing ashes in the reliquary) and offering of blessings.

## Preparation

### Set up ceremony table.

- Position in a place where everyone can see the ceremony clearly.
- Use table or raised surface covered with cloth.
- Ceremonial spoon and funnel
- Ashes in urn from crematorium wrapped in cloth to disguise ugly plastic if necessary.
- Reliquary in a box or on a tray
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### Set up a separate higher shrine table or shelf in the home with.

- Flowers in two vases
- Two candles in holders
- Incense sticks in holder.
- Framed portrait of deceased (in centre)
- Box or raised surface (books covered in cloth) to place reliquary in prominent position.

## Celebrant

Positioned at the ceremony table the celebrant may have the ashes, spoon and funnel, and the reliquary respectfully offered at different moments during the ceremony, while he or she delivers words of instruction and reflections to the family and friends present.

Some practice may be necessary in delicately opening the ash container, and spooning some of the contents into the reliquary, remembering that their every move is studied by an audience! If the tray holding the reliquary is large enough to catch and spilt ashes, they could be respectfully replaced in the urn.

It is strongly advised that the ceremony is held indoors, even a gentle breeze can be a real problem with the fine ash dust particles.

Once the reliquary has been sealed the celebrant carries it over to the higher table and places it, respectfully in its place on the shrine table.

Suggested reflections and words for the service.

offered by the celebrant or others.

We are gathered here to remember the valuable contribution our dearly beloved ‘friend, mother, grandmother’ (as applicable) has made in our lives, to reflect upon the natural course of all our lives and to foster a sense of love and gratitude for all that has happened.

Science has shown us that everything we see living on this planet is essentially carbon based, all creatures are created and sustained by the same nutrients bound together with earth, air, heat, and water in a perfect yet delicate balance. If we were to look at the Earth from a distant viewpoint, we would see a single beautiful blue and green living organism floating through space in just the right place, just close enough to a star for life to flourish, not too close to burn, or too far to freeze. Close up it is billions of separate little critters eating or being eaten, competing for what they need.

When we look at our wonderful and extraordinary bodies at a respectful distance, they too are amazing. Close up they are made up of what might be described as a united cellular republic, blood cells, nerve cells, brain cells, bones, organs that need feeding with other creatures’ cells before making food for more creatures. All constantly recycling and hosting all sorts of alien germs, viruses, and bacteria which both help us live and some threaten the whole republics existence.

In short, we might see ourselves all originating from the same source, endlessly recycling. All space dust changing from one form to another. But united in creation and dissolution.

We have here the earthly remains of ..... A body with all the water element removed, mostly carbon and calcium, once an independently living bright soul we knew and loved, now returned to the same substances we all originated from.

Today we take a small sample of these remains, we keep them safe, honour them and raise them up to a higher place of reverence and respect. Like many traditions of old we value these elements and treat them as we might them as a member of the family, a teacher or guide. In gratitude to the person and for all this person has given to us.

The rest of these remains we may scatter into the world nourish and continue to reform, grow, and develop anew. In the wind these ashes have no boundaries, having limitless space to find a resting place.

The offering (can be repeated in stages by all the family members)

We enshrine this small element of the body of ..... out of gratitude, honour, and respect for the wonderful contribution he (she) has made in our lives. We keep this reliquary safe and raise it up, keeping it always in a special place, not just in our home but also in our hearts and minds. We take the opportunity to offer our thanks and praise to ..... through the reliquary on special occasions, anniversaries, or family gatherings. To share as families, the grief as well as the blessings his (her) life brings us still.

### The blessing (at the higher table)

We make these offerings together in honour and gratitude to our dear ..... So that your gifts and blessings given to us might be remembered and cherished. To reconnect with that which was once you and has now become me. To recognise that we can't be completely separated in a world of constant change, only by a thought we are always at one, inseparable.

### Completion

Perhaps other members of the family may wish to place items on the shrine, or a book of remembrance placed there.

They might also have a family discussion where the rest of the ashes could be dispersed.

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