



## NATURAL BURIAL SAMPLE RITUAL

### AT THE ENTRANCE TO LORETTO WOODS

- Hearse and cars arrive at the entrance to Loretto Woods.
- Loretto Woods staff provide an overview of what to expect.
- The body is transferred from the hearse to the burial cart.
- The presider invites people to take flowers from the large basket provided and place them on the body or use flowers guests have brought. At least half of the flowers should be kept to be used later.
- All are invited to process in silence following the cart to the burial site.

### AT THE BURIAL SITE

**Welcome.** Invite silence to see, hear, and feel all the life that is around us.

Here in this peaceful place, we prepare to give \_\_\_ *Name* \_\_\_ back to Earth so that he/she/they may become a part of it all.

*Lower the urn or casket.*

We return \_\_\_\_\_ to the nature he/she/they loved, to the trees, the grasses, the little creatures and the elements of Mother Earth.

**Sharing:** As we return \_\_\_\_\_ body to the earth, let's recognize their continuing presence. Those who have gone before us plant seeds in all of us whose lives they have touched. I invite you to consider something about \_\_\_\_\_ that might live on and grow like a seed through you, something you value about he/she/them, a particular

characteristic or gift that he/she/they had, something that they inspired in you. Feel free to share that in a word or phrase.

I invite anyone who wishes to cover the body with flowers. When all the flowers have been added, one or two people are invited to finish by placing more cedar branches on top.

**Prayer:** Let us bless this sacred space with a prayer. This prayer or any other can be used.

May perpetual light shine upon \_\_\_\_\_

May the remembering Earth  
Mind every memory he /she/they brought.

May the rains from the heavens  
Fall gently upon him/her/them.

May the wildflowers and grasses  
Whisper their wishes into the light.

May we reverence the village of presence  
In the stillness of these woods.

-- Adapted from "On Passing a Graveyard" by John O'Donohue

### **Any special readings if desired**

**Shoveling soil:** I welcome anyone who wishes to come forward and shovel some soil into the grave.

Name, go onward from this world  
carried gently by the greater  
hands who made you

We stand here hearts torn open in love and loss  
As we let you go now, borne into a deeper understanding  
Just as the dark earth, opened now beneath the sky,  
Has closed her safe arms around you  
You will become part of a greater embrace  
Everything pulled apart now will be brought back together  
Everything aching and hurt will be comforted and soothed  
Everything in chaos will find beauty and rest  
All shall be healed  
All shall be healed.

Adapted from The Inspired Funeral

**Any special prayers if desired**

**Alleluia or closing song if desired**

**Invitation to either remain in the woods for a time or return to their cars.**

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For more ideas see [The Inspired Funeral](#)