

Rite of Welcoming Home of a Service Member Returning From War

P: With joy and thanksgiving to God, today we welcome home (Name). On our behalf, (Name) has served our country in (Theater of Operations) for (Length of Deployment).

(Name), on behalf of (Name of Congregation), thank you for your service in the (Branch of Service). We thank you for the sacrifice that you and your family have made during these (Length of Deployment).

War is a horrible and tragic witness to the brokenness of a fallen humanity. Sin, death, and the devil are still active in the world and in times of war it seems as if they are in control. However, the scriptures assure us that in the face of such struggles and in the midst of such wars that Christ is Lord. The scriptures reassure us that as we face such times Jesus is with us in the midst of such suffering and darkness.

Hear the words from Holy Scriptures:

From John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Jn 1:1-5

Again, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Jn. 10:11, 14-18

To those who have seen and gone through such turmoil, Jesus speaks words of comfort to us.

From John, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Jn. 14:27

From Matthew, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Mt. 11:28-30

To the Congregation.

P: I would ask at this time the congregation pledge their prayers and support to (Name) in this time of transition.

C: (Name), as your family in Christ, we pledge our support to you as you begin again your life back home. As Christ has called us all into one body, into one family, we are here for you. We will keep you in prayer, encourage and support you through conversation, and walk with you in your life. We make this pledge in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray.

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father; we give you thanks for the safe return of your *son/daughter*, (Name), from (Theater). We rejoice and praise you for keeping *him/her* safe these past (Lenth of Deployment) and bringing *him/her* safely back to *his/her* family, *his/her* friends. We ask your blessings upon *him/her* and *his/her* family as *he/she* transitions from the burden of war to the everyday tasks of life back home. Grant *his/her* family and us the strength to know how to support *him/her* in this transition. Be with *him/her* and grant *him/her* the peace of soul, mind, and body, which can only come from your beloved Son. We pray that you would send the Holy Spirit into *his/her* life to comfort *him/her*, to walk with *him/her* and to help *him/her* know that at all times *he/she* can lean on you as *his/her* heavenly Father.

As we give thanks to you for (Name) return, we are reminded of those who did not return. We lift before you those who have fallen in battle. We commend to your care those who have died in service and their families. Be with them and give them the comfort of your presence. We ask all these things through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: (Name), Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

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