

## **PART B: Ritual for relatives who cannot be present with their loved ones**

### **Introduction**

Make the preparations: mark if possible a day and time with the caregivers to perform this ritual together. Inform all relatives and friends who want to say goodbye. Try to find suitable symbols or texts that belong to your loved one. For example jewelery, books or pictures or any valuable symbols. Try to find out which music is important for you and choose a text or poem. If possible, establish a video connection through Skype, Google Hangouts, Facetime etc.

### **STEP 1**

Gather the symbols, including a candle and maybe flowers and a musicbox and make a holy place in your own room.

### **STEP 2**

Light the candle and say the names of your loved one out loud. By calling someone by the name you express your connectedness and life cycle from birth to death.

### **STEP 3**

Talk about your favourite memories together and share the grief and gratitude. Share your emotions, be as you are. Share what your loved one has done or meant to you in your life. Say how he/she will be remembered.

### **STEP 4**

Read a letter, poem or text that is of importance to you. Maybe a verse from the Bible. Or a songtext. Or something you wrote yourself.

## STEP 5

Listen to music that has a special meaning to you and your loved one. Music opens the heart. Feel the connection with your loved one.

## STEP 6

Share your last wishes and prayers with your loved one. In thoughts and feelings you can bless each other (to bless means wish each other well), you can choose these or other words:

May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
the rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.  
May the road rise up to meet you  
May the wind be always at your back  
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home  
And may the hand of a friend always be near.  
May green be the grass you walk on,  
May blue be the skies above you,  
May pure be the joys that surround you,  
May true be the hearts that love you.

Finish the ritual with putting out the candle. Share with your relatives and friends what you experienced. Support each other now and in the days to come.

Remember that:

A caring heart, a listening ear,  
A thoughtful word, a gentle tear  
Will help to lift the heavy load,  
Of weary souls along life's road.

[D. Dehaan]

# SAYING GOODBYE TO A LOVED ONE

## rituals for exceptional situations

### Introduction

Mark a day and time with the caregivers or chaplain who is near your loved one. Ask family and friends to join in their own homes. Find out whether you can use video calling. Find appropriate music and texts to read.



### Holy space

Create a 'holy space' on your table: with important items like a picture, flowers, a candle, a textbook, music and personal items



### Light a candle

Light a candle and say the names of your loved one out loud



### Memories

Talk about your favourite memories together and share the grief and gratitude. Share everything important.



### Texts

Read a letter, poem or text that is of importance to you



### Music

Listen to music that has a special meaning for you or your loved one



### Wishes

Share your last wishes and prayers with your loved one

We wish you strength, faith and hope for the near future and thank you for finding the connection with your loved ones in these difficult times.

*Luis Kaserer and Beatrijs Hofland, Dutch Chaplains.*