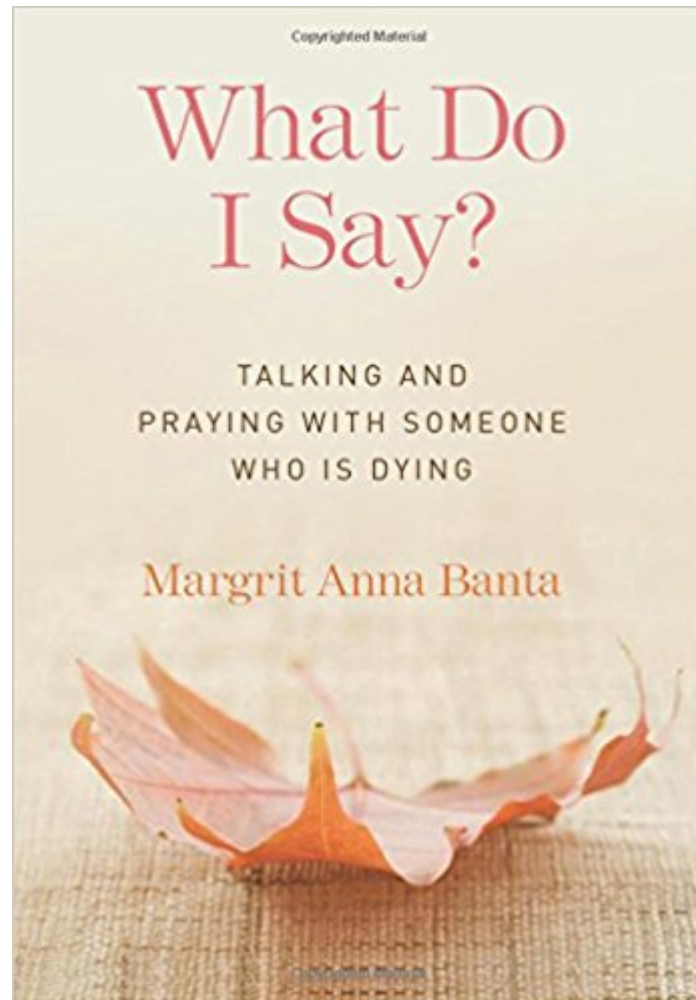




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# **What Do I Say?: Talking And Praying With Someone Who Is Dying**



## Synopsis

Talking with those who are dying can be difficult even in the best of circumstances. There is a need for guiding family members of the terminally ill, as well as friends, caregivers, and even those more experienced in talking with the dying—clergy, pastoral ministers, hospice workers, and medical personnel—in understanding the best ways this can be done. *What Do I Say?* provides that guidance. It comes from the heart of author Margrit Anna Banta who, in her work as a pastoral minister with the dying and terminally ill, noted the lack of an accessible resource for family and friends caring for a loved one that can help them in their conversations with the dying person. *What Do I Say?* covers both practical matters and spiritual and emotional topics, always mindful of the fact that many people in their final days are not able to talk about or express what they are going through. It touches on areas that should be addressed before someone dies, such as a will, DNR orders, funeral planning, and other topics, and gives suggestions for what to do if someone is non-communicative or unconscious. The last chapter includes prayers to say when family and friends visit with their loved one. This is not a comprehensive end-of-life planning or medical guide, but a brief overview of how to communicate with someone who is dying. Above all, the book stresses that conveying a sense of loving presence and a willingness to listen are usually what is most needed.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Margrit Anna Banta leads a grief support group at Holy Trinity Parish in Norfolk, Virginia. She holds

a master's degree in religious education from the Catholic University of America. Among her published works are the student and teacher's manuals for the "I Call You Friends" series (grades 7-12), Parish Reconciliation Services, Reconciliation Services Through the Church Year, and Words of Comfort As You Grieve.

Excellent, easy to read book if you have/know someone at end of life.

An excellent guide for a hospice caregiver and family members.

For thirty years Margrit Banta has worked as a pastoral minister, caring for terminally ill and dying patients and their families and friends. In "What Do I Say?" she shares what she has learned from that experience. Though she writes of general medical, legal, and religious issues it is always from the perspective of a layman. One example that mirrors an incident in my own family is that of recognizing the physical signs of impending death. When Margrit was a teen, her mother was taken to the hospital in the terminal stage of cancer. In what turned out to be the last visit between the two, Margrit missed the signs and engaged her mom in talk of recipes and routine daily activities. Shortly after Margrit left, her mother died. In the chapter titled "Approaching the Arms of Angels," Banta explains the most common physical signs of near-death from terminal illness or advanced age. She then describes two specific incidents of witnessing a peaceful death. Throughout the book Banta stresses the importance of attentive, impartial listening whatever our situation and relationship with the person. Separate chapters on unresolved issues and reviewing life suggest ways in which one might help by taking and transcribing notes, recording spoken words, and helping craft a letter. Banta also addresses religious issues such as wavering faith and psychological areas including denial by the patient and family members and friends. The chapter on final arrangements touches on DNR orders, living wills, hospice services, funeral arrangements, and after-death demands regarding notifications, insurance, and distribution of personal items. The last chapter, a discussion on praying with the patient, consists of six pages of appropriate prayers and a list of psalms. All this in a pocket-sized, 53-page book.

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