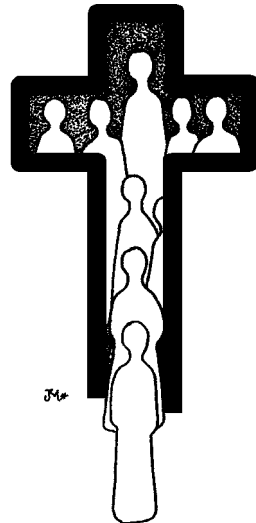


# Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing

Advent through the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of  
Ordinary Time

Cycle B



## AN INVITATION TO PRAY WITH YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

**Begin and end with prayer!!** These opening and closing prayers have been prepared to help your pastoral council become what it is intended to be: a *leadership body* in *communion* with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—focused on enabling the community to carry out the *mission* of the Church. As stated in the “Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines” of the Diocese of Rochester, the specific purposes of the pastoral council, in harmony with the goals of the Pastor, are:

- to develop a common vision and purpose, actively advocate for the poor and the powerless, and to extend Christian commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods and communities;
- to orchestrate a statement of mission for the parish community and become the reference point for activity in the parish;
- to provide recommendations for priorities, directions, and policies through pastoral planning for worship, evangelization, outreach, stewardship, etc.;
- to promote communication, understanding, and collaboration among parish organizations and between the parish, the diocese, and the universal Church.

In our enthusiasm to “get the business of the council done” we may forget that we are to role model spiritual leadership. As a pastoral council, we are challenged to ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. Because of our familiarity with secular boards of directors, we may forget that we are a body of church leaders engaged with our pastor or pastoral administrator in discerning the ways God is speaking to this community in this time and place. For our actions to be imbued with the wisdom of God, they must begin with prayer, with listening to one another in faith and love, followed by listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love.

We strongly encourage you to set aside time at the beginning and end of your pastoral council meetings to pray. These prayers are a tool used by many councils and other groups. We are confident that the quality of your decisions as well as your relationships with one another and the faith community at large will be enhanced as you take time for shared prayer in God’s presence.

**Betsy McDermott**  
**Liaison for Pastoral Councils**  
**Pastoral Services, Diocese of Rochester**

## HINTS FOR THE PRAYER LEADER

We recommend designating a different person on your council to lead prayer for each meeting,

### **Preparation before the Pastoral Council meeting**

1. Read through the prayer session for the Sunday following your meeting. Become familiar with it.
2. Make enough copies of the prayer for all you expect to attend the meeting. You may distribute these at the beginning of the meeting or send them out to members ahead of time along with the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting.
3. If a visual image is suggested for this particular prayer session, bring it to the meeting if possible. Having an image in the center of the gathering will help members remember throughout the evening that the meeting unfolds in God's presence.

### **A Walk through the Prayer Outline**

*Prayer at the beginning of the meeting (allow 10-15 minutes on your agenda):*

1. Invite those present to become quiet and remember that they are in the presence of God. After a brief pause, begin the *Invitation to Prayer*.
2. Either read the *Scripture* passage yourself or have someone else do so (ask them before the meeting begins).
3. Allow several minutes for *silent reflection* and consideration of the faith sharing questions.
4. Invite those present to respond (in groups of two or three or in the larger council group) to any of the suggested *questions for faith sharing* out loud. People may also choose to share how the reading spoke to them in general. All do not need to respond but allow silent pauses so that people can reflect comfortably.
5. Go on to the beginning of your meeting's agenda.

*Prayer at the end of the meeting (allow 5 minutes on your agenda):*

1. Begin the *intercessory prayers* as written in the prayer session.
2. Invite others to share their own prayers aloud.
3. When all who choose to share prayers are done, say "For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts."
4. Begin the *closing prayer*.

### Notes

1. The intercessory prayers may be moved to the end of the "prayer at the beginning of the meeting" or offered in the middle of the meeting—as well as at the end.
2. Some communities like to develop one intercessory prayer relative to the issues on which the pastoral council is working. This prayer is prayed by the entire community at Sunday liturgies over the course of the month. This practice provides spiritual support for the parish's leadership, helps the entire congregation to be conscious of issues under consideration by the pastoral council, and helps all to focus on the God who leads the community into the future.

3. These prayer sessions, while designed for pastoral councils, can be used at the meetings of the parish staff, other parish committees, and the planning group council with minor adaptation.

### ***Faith Sharing Guidelines***

Each person is led by God on his or her personal spiritual journey. Faith sharing refers to shared reflections on the action of God in one's experience as related to Scripture and faith. Faith sharing is not discussion, problem solving, or scripture study. The purpose is an encounter, between a person in the concrete circumstances of life and the Word of God, which leads to a conversion of heart. The entire faith sharing process is seen as prayer, i.e. listening to the Word of God as revealed in scripture and in each other's experience.

1. Participants are given time to reflect before sharing begins, and a period of comfortable silence might occur between individuals sharing. Silence is a vital part of the total process of faith sharing.
2. Sharing is optional. Each person shares at the time and on the level where he or she feels comfortable.
3. There is no set order for sharing (you do not need to go in a circle around the group).
4. Listen respectfully and openly. If someone does not hear the sharing or does not understand, he or she can ask for clarification.
5. There is no discussion or commenting on what is shared. An appropriate response from the prayer leader or group might be a smile, a nod, or a "thank you."
6. The prayer leader and group are not there as "problem solvers" or "advice givers."
7. Participants are encouraged to share in the first person (I feel...I believe...etc.).
8. Anything that is shared in the group is confidential and does not leave the group. It is meant to be a gift for this group only.

*Keep Watch*  
**First Sunday of Advent, Cycle B**  
**December 3, 2017**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord God, as we enter into a new liturgical year, help us to watch for you. Give us the eyes of faith that we may follow in your path. Bless our conversation at this meeting and may all we do be pleasing to you. This we ask in the Holy Name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Mark 13:33-37*

Jesus said to his disciples:

"But of that day or hour, no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: "Watch!"

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. When we sleep we are cut off from the rest of the world. Our eyes are closed to the needs of others. Perhaps this is why the metaphor of sleep is seen in a negative way within this passage. How is God calling you out of sleep, out of passivity, to awaken your faith to serve God and others?
2. What are some of the challenges to stay watchful?

3. How is God using this passage of scripture to help you to grow in your faith?
4. How is God using this passage of scripture to help our parish to grow in faith?

### **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: For our local Church, may we be attentive to the voice of God, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Awaken us, Lord.**

Leader: For an increase in vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and lay ecclesial ministry, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Awaken us, Lord.**

Leader: For each of us, as we enter into the Advent season, that this will be a time of drawing closer to Christ, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Awaken us, Lord.**

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...  
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts.

**All: Awaken us, Lord.**

#### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Our Father . . .**

Leader: Go in peace  
+in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**



*Comfort, Give Comfort to My People*  
**Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle B**  
**December 10, 2017**



**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord God, you have said through your prophet Isaiah,  
“*Comfort, give comfort to my people.*”  
Help us both to experience and to minister that comfort in your name.  
This we ask through Jesus Christ, who is our Peace and our Comfort.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11*

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end,  
her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the Lord double  
for all her sins.

A voice cries out: in the desert prepare the way of the Lord!  
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!

Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low;  
the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all humankind shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Go up onto a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings;  
cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news!  
Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God!

Here comes, with power, the Lord God, who rules by his strong arm;  
here is his reward with him, his recompense before him.

Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. How and when do you experience the gift of God's comfort in your daily life?
2. During these times of tremendous turmoil in our country, how do you receive God's comfort?
3. How does our parish family extend God's comfort to others?

### **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: For all who bring comfort to those who are sick in heart, soul and body, may they too be blessed and comforted by God, we pray,

**All: Send us your comfort, Lord.**

Leader: For our country, our city, our parish and our families, that we may be faithful to God's Word and Love, we pray,

**All: Send us your comfort, Lord.**

Leader: For those who are experiencing any distress or persecution, that the comfort of God will be shown to them, we pray,

**All: Send us your comfort, Lord.**

Leader: For what else shall we pray...  
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts,

**All: Send us your comfort, Lord.**

#### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: The child Jesus experienced comfort and love while being held in the arms of Mary, his mother, and so we pray,

**All: Hail Mary. . .**

**+In the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**



*Pray Without Ceasing*  
**Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle B**  
**December 17, 2017**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**Leader:** Gracious God, your son Jesus taught us how to pray. Through the gift of your Spirit, guide our prayer. May this time of conversation and discernment bring us closer to you and help us to understand better *your* direction for our church. This we ask in the holy name of Jesus.

**All:** Amen.

*Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil. May the God of peace make you perfectly holy and may you, entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will also accomplish it.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

*Prayer is not only a posture, but also an attentive and open spirit. Given that, consider the following questions:*

1. What does it mean to pray without ceasing?
2. In addition, how do regular, focused prayer times help to form us spiritually?
3. When do you find it difficult to pray? In these situations, how does Paul's exhortation, "Pray without ceasing" work?



## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: The Holy Spirit guides our prayer; let us turn to our Advocate in our need:

Leader: When we are distracted in our prayer, we turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

Leader: In planning our liturgies, we turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

Leader: As we teach our children to know God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--we turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

Leader: For the sick, in spirit and in body, we turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

Leader: For those who do not know how to pray, we turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

Leader: For other prayers we now mention...  
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)  
We turn to you.

**All: Holy Spirit, bless our prayer.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Our Father . . .**

Leader: Go in peace + in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

*I Will Serve the Lord*  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B**  
**December 24, 2017**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: God our Father, you sent your angel to Nazareth to reveal to Mary your plan for salvation. Send your Spirit into our hearts so that everything we do may make Jesus known. May his concern be our concern, and may his love for the poor be our love for the poor. In this we will follow the example of Mary, his mother and ours. This we ask in the holy name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38*

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

"And, behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



### *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. When she is visited by Gabriel and told that she will give birth to Jesus, Mary has one question, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" What questions did you have before you began your ministry, your vocation in your family, church, school, or work? How have your questions been answered?
2. In the living of your vocation and your ministry, what can you learn from Our Lady's example as found in this passage?

### **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: For all those seeking to discover their vocation or God's will at this time of their lives, we pray to the Lord.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...  
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

#### *Closing Prayer*

**All: God our Father, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son, help us to remember that He is our life and our peace. Bless our preparations and strengthen our faith that he may be born through our gestures of love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**



**By Faith We Follow the Lord**  
**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Cycle B**  
**December 31, 2017**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, open us up to the mysteries of faith in you. Let us understand the depths of Your love so that we can give you our complete trust and obedience without hesitation or fear. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

All: **Amen**

*Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19*

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go.

By faith he received power to generate, even though he was past the normal age—and Sarah herself was sterile—for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy. So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.” He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. How would you define faith in this context? How does that meaning correlate with your experience of faith?
2. Have you been put to the test in your walk with God? If so, how did it end?
3. In what areas are we being called as a leadership group to have faith?

### **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Let faith in You be the cornerstone of all that we do, we pray.

**All: Deepen our trust in you, oh God.**

Leader: For those we hold up for prayer, who are sick or suffering, lonely or searching for meaning, we pray:

**All: Deepen our trust in you, oh God.**

Leader: For what else shall we pray?  
(When all are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, we pray:

**All: Deepen our trust in you, oh God.**

#### *Closing Prayer*

**All: God of all families, we thank you for the many examples of faith you have given us, both in the scriptures and in our own lives. Give us the desire to grow in the faith that you have generously bestowed on each one of us so that our trust in you may be complete. We ask this, as we ask all things, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.**



*Heirs of the Promise*  
**The Epiphany of the Lord, Cycle B**  
**January 7, 2018**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:        Loving God,  
                  You have called us to be your children,  
                  heirs of the promise made in Christ Jesus.  
                  Grant us your grace and your guidance  
                  in this meeting and all days.  
                  Help us to reveal your love to all we encounter.  
                  We ask this in the name of the One who is Love Incarnate, Jesus Christ.

**All:            Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6*

You have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, namely, that the mystery was made known to me by revelation.

It was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. Do you truly feel like an heir of the promise revealed in Christ? What privileges and responsibilities does this give you?
2. We will be celebrating the feast of Epiphany this next weekend. How have you revealed the good news to others, inviting them to become an integral part of the body of Christ?
3. How can we, as pastoral council members, serve our people and build up the community as we exercise the power of our position?

## Prayer at the End of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: For the people we work with and the people we serve, we pray:

**All: Lord, help us reveal your love.**

Leader: For those who are sick or suffering, those who are lonely or in need of any kind, we pray:

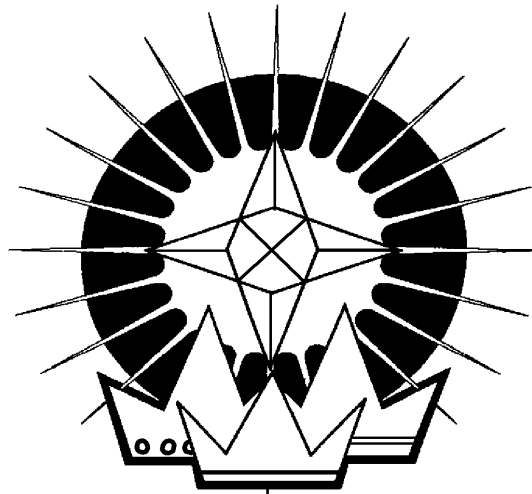
**All: Lord, help us reveal your love.**

Leader: For what else shall we pray?  
(When all are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, we pray:

**All: Lord, help us reveal your love.**

### *Closing Prayer*

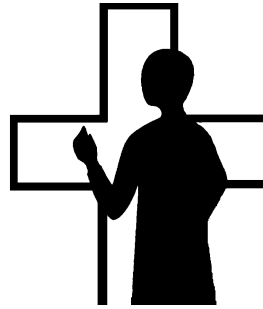
**All: Gracious and merciful God, the magi traveled far to see your glory, revealed in Jesus. Help us appreciate the gift we have been given: the revelation that we are your beloved children, your holy apostles, your prophets by the Spirit. Give us the courage and strength we need to act as members of the same body, coheirs and copartners in the promise revealed by Christ Jesus. Grant that we might live the good news of the gospel and share that news with all we meet. We ask this, as we ask all things, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.**





## *Discerning Our Call*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time,  
Cycle B  
January 14, 2018**



### **Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

#### *Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: O Holy God,  
many voices call our names; many paths open up possibilities.  
Only your call invites us to true life.  
Help us to listen carefully, to discern your voice,  
to have the courage to follow you.  
We ask all these things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

#### *Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19*

Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was. The Lord called to Samuel, who answered, "Here I am."

He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I did not call you," Eli said. "Go back to sleep." So he went back to sleep.

Again the Lord called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli. "Here I am," he said. "You called me." But he answered, "I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep."

At that time Samuel was not familiar with the Lord, because the Lord had not revealed anything to him as yet. The Lord called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said, "Here I am. You called me." Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the youth.

So he said to Samuel, "Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'"

When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the Lord came and revealed his presence, calling out as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Samuel grew up, and the Lord was with him, not permitting any word of his to be without effect.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

#### *Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. Many voices--from our families, friends, merchants, and media--call out to each of us every day. How are you able to discern the voice of God among them?
2. How do you, as a follower of Christ, help others to hear the voice of God and follow?
3. We hear of a vocations crisis, yet some would insist the call is for new ways of serving God in the world today. What are some new ways God may be calling you or the people of this community? How will you answer?

**Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

*You may want to end the meeting with the song "Here I Am Lord" instead of or in addition to the following prayers of petition and closing prayer.*

*Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: God calls each of us to love and service. Let us take some time to think about the ways God is calling us today and how we might best listen to that call.

Lord, in the midst of many voices, we long to hear your one, true summons. Teach us to listen and respond to whatever you ask of us, we pray:

**All: Here we are. You called us.**

Leader: When we see situations of injustice or need, may we be your instruments of mercy and compassion, we pray:

**All: Here we are. You called us.**

Leader: When we see distress of body, mind, or spirit, may we be your instruments of healing, we pray:

**All: Here we are. You called us.**

Leader: When we encounter disagreements and divisions, may we be your instruments of peace, we pray:

**All: Here we are. You called us.**

Leader: When we see death, mourning and despair, may we be your instruments of gentleness and hope, we pray:

**All: Here we are. You called us.**

*Closing Prayer*

**All: Gracious and merciful God,  
help us to hear your voice every day, every moment of our lives.  
Be with us and do not permit any word of ours to be without effect as long as it is spoken in your name. We ask this, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*Seeking God's Guidance*  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B**  
**January 21, 2018**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:        Compassionate and loving God,  
                  everything we are comes from you. Everything we have is your gift.  
                  Guide us to become the people you intended us to be. Teach us to use our  
                  gifts and our material goods to help others and to bring about your reign.  
                  We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, and your Holy Spirit.

**All:            Amen.**

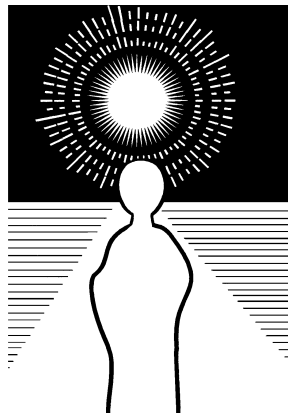
*Scripture Reading: Psalm 25: 4-5, 6-7, 8-9*

*Read this passage slowly...pause for silent reflection. Reread it and ask people to write down a word or phrase that spoke to them in a special way. Reread it a third time and have people share a word or phrase that spoke to them in a special way.*

Make known to me your ways, Lord; teach me your paths.  
Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.  
For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, Lord.  
Remember your compassion and love, O Lord; for they are ages old.  
Remember no more the sins of my youth;  
remember me only in light of your love.  
Good and upright is the Lord, who shows sinners the way,  
guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way.

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. Why do you think this word or phrase was so significant to you at this time?
2. What do you believe God is telling you through this?
3. What could this mean for this meeting and any decisions that are to be made?



## Prayer at the End of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: We believe God answers all who humbly ask for guidance. When shades of doubt cross our hearts and minds:

**All: Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.**

Leader: When we are challenged by unkind words or hateful actions:

**All: Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.**

Leader: When faced with the challenges of sickness, aging, or death:

**All: Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.**

Leader: For what else shall we pray?  
(When all are finished offering prayers)  
God, answer these prayers of our hearts in kindness and compassion:

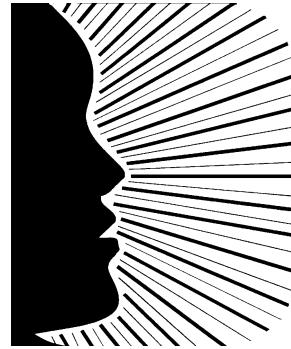
**All: Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.**

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: Let us pray Psalm 25 slowly together, remembering the words and phrases that spoke to us in a special way earlier:

**All**      **Make known to me your ways, Lord; teach me your paths.**  
**Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior.**  
**For you I wait all the long day, because of your goodness, Lord.**  
**Remember your compassion and love, O Lord; for they are ages old.**  
**Remember no more the sins of my youth;**  
**remember me only in light of your love.**  
**Good and upright is the Lord, who shows sinners the way,**  
**guides the humble rightly, and teaches the humble the way.**  
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,**  
**who is, who was, and is to come at the end of the ages. Alleluia.**

*Discerning the Voices of True Prophets*  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B**  
**January 28, 2018**



**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Holy and loving God,  
in every age you call your people to speak out  
against wrongdoing and injustice in order to defend your truth.  
Help us to recognize these prophets  
and grant us the courage to follow their call.  
We ask this as we ask all things, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-22*

Moses spoke to all the people, saying:  
“A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your  
own kinsmen; to him you shall listen. This is exactly what you requested of the  
Lord, your God, at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let us not  
again hear the voice of the Lord, our God, nor see this great fire any more, lest we  
die.'

“And the Lord said to me, 'This was well said. I will raise up for them a prophet  
like you from among their kinsmen, and will put my words into his mouth; he  
shall tell them all that I command him. If anyone will not listen to my words  
which he speaks in my name, I myself will make him answer for it. But if a  
prophet presumes to speak in my name an oracle that I have not commanded him  
to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, he shall die.'

"If you say to yourselves, 'How can we recognize an oracle which the Lord has  
spoken?', know that, even though a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if his  
oracle is not fulfilled or verified, it is an oracle which the Lord did not speak. The  
prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you shall have no fear of him.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. What is a prophet? What prophets have you heard in your lifetime (famous and not)? How has their message affected you?
2. Have you ever acted as a prophet to others? What was their reaction?
3. How can we, as Pastoral Council members, help our people recognize and hear the voices of God's prophets today?

**Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: We ask God for the wisdom to recognize and heed the voices of the true prophets in our midst. When the cries of prophets rise up among us to fight injustice, we pray:

**All: Guide us in your truth and help us do your will.**

Leader: When we are challenged by those who oppose God's life-giving ways, we pray:

**All: Guide us in your truth and help us do your will.**

Leader: When we face persecution for proclaiming our Christian values, we pray:

**All: Guide us in your truth and help us do your will.**

(The leader may add or invite prayers that address the concerns dealt with in this meeting.)

Leader: For what else shall we pray...  
(When all are finished offering prayers)

For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts,

**All: Guide us in your truth and help us do your will.**

Leader: God, grant us the ability to hear the true prophets among us and to follow the call that reflects your will. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**All: Amen.**

*Closing Prayer*

Leader: Let us pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit:

**All: Breath into me, Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may all be holy.  
Move in me, Holy Spirit,  
that my work too, may be holy.  
Attract my heart, Holy Spirit,  
that I may love only what is holy.  
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may defend all that is holy.  
Protect me, Holy Spirit,  
that I always may be holy. Amen.**



*Ministry Rooted in Prayer*  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time,**  
**Cycle B**  
**February 4, 2018**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:       Healing God,  
                  you sent Jesus, the Word Incarnate, to dwell among us  
                  and to bring your healing, peace and promise to all.  
                  Help us to imitate him in his drive to serve others tirelessly while  
                  remaining deeply grounded in his relationship to you. We ask this as we  
                  ask all things, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

All:            **Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Mark 1:29-39*

On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you."

He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."

So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two questions for faith sharing)*

1. Jesus moves quickly from healing Simon's mother-in-law and healing those of the town to other villages. He knew that was his calling. How clear am I about my calling and how willing am I to work tirelessly in serving God's people?
2. Jesus took time to go off to a deserted place and pray. When I am busy and filled with urgency, do I find time to pray? How can I do so?
3. How can we help our community to remember that the foundation of our call to serve and heal is in being rooted in prayer?

**Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: When we see people in need, help us to be moved to assist them, we pray:  
All: **Lord, let us fulfill your purpose in our lives.**

Leader: When we are overcome with stress and the pressures of everyday life, remind us that we are your own and call us to pray:  
All: **Lord, let us fulfill your purpose in our lives.**

Leader: For what else shall we pray?  
(When all are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts:  
All: **Lord, let us fulfill your purpose in our lives.**

*Closing Prayer*

*(Note: the Prayer of St. Francis may also be sung.)*

Leader: Let us pray the words of St. Francis together, praying that we might truly fulfill God's will for our lives:

All: **Ephesians 3:14-21**

**For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**



*Serving the Greater Good*  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B**  
**February 11, 2018**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just.  
All: **Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just.**

Leader: Happy are those who forgive.  
All: **Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just.**

Leader: Happy are those who are forgiven.  
All: **Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you just.**

*Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 10: 31- 11:1*

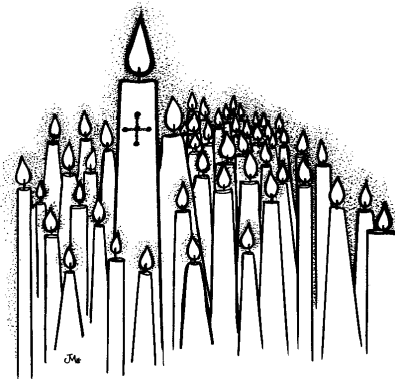
Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.  
Avoid giving offense,  
whether to Jews or Greeks or the church of God,  
just as I try to please everyone in every way,  
not seeking my own benefit but that of the many,  
that they may be saved.  
Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. What does it mean for us to glorify God?
2. What is an example of us instead of giving offense, glorifying God?
3. What are the ways that we glorify God in our parish or community?



## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In gratitude for good people, compassionate hearts and new ideas, we pray...

**All: Glory to God!**

Leader: For our loved ones, who bring us such joy, we pray...

**ALL: Glory to God!**

Leader: For the beauty of God's world that lifts our hearts...

**All: Glory to God!**

Leader: For what else shall we praise God today...  
(When all are finished offering prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts:

**All: Glory to God!**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: God of all goodness,  
we rejoice in the good gifts you give to us, your people.  
Create in us hearts of gratitude and praise.  
We make our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen**