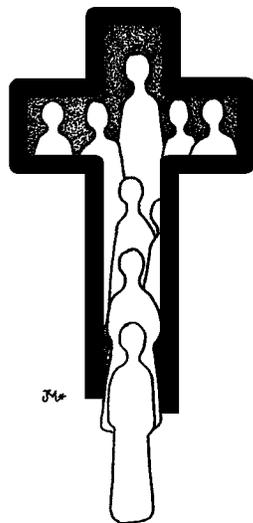


# **Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing**

**Advent 2021 - Ordinary Time 2022  
Cycle C**



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Department of Pastoral Services, Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester**

## AN INVITATION TO PRAY WITH YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

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—and focused on enabling the community to carry out the *mission* of the Church (to proclaim the Gospel, to worship God, to form community, and to serve especially those in need). As stated in the “Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines” of the Diocese of Rochester, the specific purposes of the pastoral council 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 rush to “get the business of the council done” we may forget that 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, followed by listening to one another in faith and love and listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love, and end again in prayer.

And so you are invited and encouraged to set aside time at the beginning and end of your pastoral council meetings to use these prayers. The quality of your relationships with one another and the community at large and the quality of your decisions will be enhanced as you take time for shared prayer in God’s presence.

Peace and blessings,

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## Hints for the Prayer Leader

It may be helpful to designate a different person on your council to lead prayer for each meeting. In this way, more and more of the leaders of your community will gain experience with leading prayer in small groups.

### 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 as suggested in the prayer sessions.
2. These prayer sessions, while designed for pastoral councils, can be used at the meetings of the parish staff and other parish committees 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.

**Reawakening Our Hope**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**November 28, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All: Loving and Gracious God:**

**We gather in your presence as a community of believers. We place our trust in you as we discern your will in our community in this season of Advent. Make your ways known to us and guide us in your truth. Be present to us throughout our meeting today so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions.**

*Scripture Reading: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36*

Jesus said to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,  
and on earth nations will be in dismay,  
perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.  
People will die of fright  
in anticipation of what is coming upon the world,  
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.  
And then they will see the Son of Man  
coming in a cloud with power and great glory.  
But when these signs begin to happen,  
stand erect and raise your heads  
because your redemption is at hand.

“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy  
from carousing and drunkenness  
and the anxieties of daily life,  
and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.  
For that day will assault everyone  
who lives on the face of the earth.  
Be vigilant at all times  
and pray that you have the strength  
to escape the tribulations that are imminent  
and to stand before the Son of Man

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

*Silent Reflection*

### ***Questions for Faith Sharing***

- 1. The gospel should reawaken our hope as we begin this Advent season. God is truly present in our world. How do our words and actions reflect this hope and the confidence we have in God and God's plan for our world? Do we get discouraged from time to time?*
- 2. Where is God calling us to consider this scripture reading in our meeting tonight?*

### **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

#### ***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That our faith community will always be hope-filled and accept the responsibility of living that hope for our world. Let us 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: **Gracious God:  
You bring forth new life in us as we strive to do your will.  
Hear our prayers that we may always strive to be people of hope.  
Help us to be people who believe in the promises  
of God's eternal presence with us.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**God's Work in Our Community**  
**2nd Sunday of Advent**  
**December 5, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: We gather together in Jesus' name.  
Abiding in his Spirit, as he abides in the Spirit of the Father,  
we pray:

**All: Open our hearts that we may hear your Living Word speaking to us  
in this time, in this place.**

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11*

Leader: There will be two readings tonight.  
After each of the readings there will be a time of silent reflection.

A reading from the letter of Paul *to the Church at Philippi---*

Brothers and sisters:  
I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you,  
because of your partnership for the gospel  
from the first day until now.  
I am confident of this,  
that the one who began a good work in you  
will continue to complete it  
until the day of Christ Jesus.  
God is my witness,  
how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.  
And this is my prayer:  
that your love may increase ever more and more  
in knowledge and every kind of perception,  
to discern what is of value,  
so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,  
filled with the fruit of righteousness  
that comes through Jesus Christ  
for the glory and praise of God

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

Leader: This time you are invited to listen to the same reading from a new perspective:  
A reading from the letter of Paul *to the Church at* \_\_\_\_\_  
(The leader proclaims the name of the community of this pastoral council and reads the scripture passage a second time)

### ***Silent Reflection***

### ***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. How did the meaning shift as I listened to this passage the second time?
2. *What words or phrases stood out for you?*
3. What sense do you have of a good work that God is beginning in the Church of \_\_\_\_\_?
4. *(Or) God began a good work in us, are we on track with our mission?*

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### ***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: Confident in the warm longing of Christ Jesus, in his name let us pray:

With joy, that our love for one another may grow...

**All: Lord, hear our prayer**

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

(When all who choose are finished voicing prayers)

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

**All: Lord, hear our prayer**

### ***Closing Prayer***

Leader: In communion with St. Paul, \_\_\_\_ (name the patron saints of this community), and all the saints, we pray:  
Ever-Creating God,  
you who have begun this good work in us, continue to complete it.

Men: Christ Jesus,  
We are your partners in the gospel,  
keep us ever mindful of your Good News.

Women: Holy Spirit,  
You deepen us in the love of God  
that we might truly discern what is of value.

**All: Blessed are you, God of Glory, God of Praise, forever and ever! Amen.**

**Our Life of Prayer**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**December 12, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: As we gather together today we are mindful of our baptismal call to spread the message of Christ by word and example.

**All: Lord, help us to rejoice always in your love  
and help us to share that love with others.**

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:4-7*

Brother and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!  
Brothers and sisters:  
Rejoice in the Lord always.  
I shall say it again: rejoice!  
Your kindness should be known to all.  
The Lord is near.  
Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,  
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
make your requests known to God.  
Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding  
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What issues cause anxiety in our community?*
2. *What needs should our community bring to prayer?*
3. *What can our pastoral council do to help the parish in its prayer life?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That prayers of thanksgiving be always on our lips, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That we continue to seek peace through justice, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That our worshipping community continue to support the poor and those in need, 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, we pray to the Lord.

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

### *Closing Prayer*

All: **Gracious God, source of love, hope and compassion, hear our prayers. Send the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ. May Jesus, the Prince of Peace, be always in our hearts and in our lives. Amen.**

**Waiting/Peace**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**December 19, 2021**

Visual suggestions:

- Small Nativity set
- Candle (or Advent wreath)
- Bible

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth our promise of peace!  
**All: O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth our promise of peace!**  
Leader: The One whose origin is from ancient days.  
**All: O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth our promise of peace!**  
Leader: The One who will come to feed his flock.  
**All: O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth our promise of peace!**  
Leader: The One in whom we shall all be secure.  
**All: O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth our promise of peace!**  
*(from Micah 5)*

*Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-45*

Mary set out  
and traveled to the hill country in haste  
to a town of Judah,  
where she entered the house of Zechariah  
and greeted Elizabeth.  
When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,  
the infant leaped in her womb,  
and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit,  
cried out in a loud voice and said,  
"Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb.  
And how does this happen to me,  
that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears,  
the infant in my womb leaped for joy.  
Blessed are you who believed  
that what was spoken to you by the Lord  
would be fulfilled."

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

*Silent Reflection*

### ***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *What do I find myself longing for and waiting for at this time?*
2. *As a parish, what are we longing for and waiting for?*
3. *As we meet tonight, how are we aware of cooperating in God's life giving plan for God's people?*

### **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

#### ***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

We pray for those in our community who feel estranged from God or from our parish community and who feel unable to join us in our liturgies at this time as we wait for the birth of our Savior. 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: **Lord our God,  
creator of dreams and author of peace,  
be with our community of faith as we patiently await the birth of your Son,  
Jesus. May our time of waiting be one of compassion to those in need  
as we prepare our hearts for your wonderful gift.  
We make our prayer in Jesus' name.  
Amen.**

**Following the Light of Christ**  
**Epiphany**  
**January 2, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:        God of all peoples,  
                  You announced the mystery of your Son's incarnation  
                  through the light of a star visible to all whose hearts searched for it.  
                  Let that star shine brightly in our own time  
                  so that we might focus our hearts and lives  
                  upon him who is the Light of the World.  
                  We ask this through the One  
                  who willingly joined his divinity to our humanity.

**All:            Amen**

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6*

Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.  
See, darkness covers the earth,  
and thick clouds cover the peoples;  
but upon you the LORD shines,  
and over you appears his glory.  
Nations shall walk by your light,  
and kings by your shining radiance.  
Raise your eyes and look about;  
they all gather and come to you:  
your sons come from afar,  
and your daughters in the arms of their nurses.

Then you shall be radiant at what you see,  
your heart shall throb and overflow,  
for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you,  
the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.  
Caravans of camels shall fill you,  
dromedaries from Midian and Ephah;  
all from Sheba shall come  
bearing gold and frankincense,  
and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

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

## ***Silent Reflection***

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

1. *How have you experienced the light of Christ during this Christmas season within your home and in our parish?*
2. *Who are the Magi who have led you/us to follow the light of Christ in your/our life?*
3. *What are some of the distractions that can divert you/us along the way from following Christ, our Light?*
4. *What are some ways you think we can continue to focus attention (personally and in our parish) on Christ?*

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### ***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That the church may always have the courage to spread the light of Christ to the nations, we pray:

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

*(The leader may add prayers that address the subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)*

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, our light, hear our prayer.**

### ***Closing Prayer***

**All: God of the nations,  
let your light shine upon your people.  
Guide the hearts of all peoples to turn to you  
so that all nations may truly walk by your light  
and bring about justice and peace on this earth  
to your radiant glory.  
We ask this in the name of the One who is our Light and our Hope.  
Amen.**

**Baptism and Discipleship**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
**January 9, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Praise to you, God our Creator.

**All: Jesus, our Savior.**  
**Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life.**

Leader: May we listen to your Word  
and follow your path.

*Scripture Reading: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22*

The people were filled with expectation,  
and all were asking in their hearts  
whether John might be the Christ.  
John answered them all, saying,  
“I am baptizing you with water,  
but one mightier than I is coming.  
I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.  
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

After all the people had been baptized  
and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,  
heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him  
in bodily form like a dove.  
And a voice came from heaven,  
“You are my beloved Son;  
with you I am well pleased.”

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What do you know or remember from your own baptism? What expectations filled that day?*
2. *How is your life different today because of your baptism?*
3. *What are the future directions being considered for our parish with which God might be “well pleased”?*

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence and trust we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
That we might point others toward Christ just as John the Baptist did,  
we pray.

**All: Gracious God, 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: Gracious God, hear our prayer.**

***Closing Prayer***

**All: Loving God,  
you call us to be signs of your presence in our world.  
May our actions serve you and others with love and compassion.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**An Abundance of Spiritual Gifts within the Community**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**January 16, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: God our Creator,  
we proclaim your marvelous deeds.

**All: Jesus our Savior,  
we bless your name.**

Leader: Holy Spirit, the giver of life,  
we respond to your presence among and within us.

*Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11*

Brothers and sisters:  
There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;  
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;  
there are different workings but the same God  
who produces all of them in everyone.  
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit  
is given for some benefit.  
To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom;  
to another, the expression of knowledge according to the  
same Spirit;  
to another, faith by the same Spirit;  
to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit;  
to another, mighty deeds;  
to another, prophecy;  
to another, discernment of spirits;  
to another, varieties of tongues;  
to another, interpretation of tongues.  
But one and the same Spirit produces all of these,  
distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

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

*Silent Reflection*

### ***Discussion Starter for Faith Sharing***

*We are all parts of the Body of Christ and essential to building up Christ's Church. Pass a Bible around to each person in turn. All pastoral council members are invited to share aloud a spiritual gift they recognize in the person holding the Bible.*

### ***Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting***

#### **Intercessory Prayers**

*Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.*

*That, as leaders in our community, we may recognize, encourage and affirm the spiritual gifts of all of our parishioners, we pray:*

***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: Gracious God,  
may we always recognize the abundant ways you have gifted us  
so that this, your community, may carry out your mission  
to the poor, prisoners, the hungry, the broken-hearted  
and all in need of our love and care.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus our brother.  
Amen.***

**Jesus' Mission and our Mission**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**January 23, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Merciful God, you call us to share in the life of Christ,  
you fill us with the power of your Spirit.

**All: Open our hearts that we may worthily and fittingly proclaim your Holy Word.**

*Scripture Reading: Luke 4: 14-21*

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.

He said to them,  
“Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”

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

## *Silent Reflection*

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

- 1. In this passage Jesus proclaims his mission. What is the mission of those who are followers of Jesus?*
- 2. Is there a particular phrase of Jesus' mission statement that especially speaks to you?*
- 3. In what ways do you feel led to move this proclamation into action?*

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: With confidence that our God will lead us to fulfillment,  
let us offer our prayers now.  
Lord God, release us from all that bars us from our life in you.  
**All: Lord, hear our prayer**

Leader: For what else shall we pray...  
(When all who choose are finished voicing prayers)  
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...  
**All: Lord, hear our prayer**

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: God our Father,  
you have born us into a world filled with your grace  
and made us to live out your tender caring.  
Strengthen us with your spirit.

**Women:** Jesus Christ, our Brother and Friend,  
born into our struggles  
you lived and died that we might know the good news of our redemption.  
Teach us how to care for one another.

**Men:** Holy Spirit, Giver of Life,  
you are our confirmation as we journey together into wholeness.  
You give us the power to pray:

**All: The Spirit of the Lord is upon us, because God has anointed us to bring good news to the poor. God has sent us to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. All glory and praise be yours, O God. Amen.**

**Faith, Hope and Love**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**January 30, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord God, you bestow all good things upon us. Help us to use your gifts wisely and fruitfully. May we be always mindful of each other's God-given gifts, respect them and encourage them.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13*

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts. But I shall show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.  
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,  
It is not inflated, it is not rude,  
it does not seek its own interests,  
it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,  
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing  
but rejoices with the truth.  
It bears all things, believes all things,  
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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

## *Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What is the hope of this council for our community?*
2. *How do we express our faith in Christ's love for us?*
3. *How can this council be an example of faith, hope and love as it considers the future of the community?*

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
For an increase in faith as we go out into the world, we pray to the Lord.

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

Leader: For an increase in love as we walk among those in need of love, we pray to the Lord.

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

Leader: For an increase in hope as we encounter those who have lost hope, 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, we pray to the Lord.

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

### *Closing Prayer*

All: Lord God, we place our prayers and needs before you.  
Increase our steadfast love for you  
and make us always aware of your loving presence among us.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

**God's Invitation, Taking Risks, Trusting in God**  
**5th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**February 6, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.  
**All: In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
Leader: I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart.  
**All: In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
Leader: I will worship at your holy temple and give thanks to your name.  
**All: In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
Leader: When I called, you answered me; you built up strength within me.  
**All: In the sight of the angels I will sing your praises, Lord.**  
*(from Psalm 138)*

*Scripture Reading: Luke 5:1-11*

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

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

*Silent Reflection*

## ***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” When has God called you to do something that seemed difficult, maybe even impossible? What was the result?*
2. *When has our community been called to take a risk and trust in God’s support? How are we being called to “put out into deep water” right now?*

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### ***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

For those people in our lives who have invited us to follow Jesus and served as our teachers and guides, we pray:

**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, we pray to the Lord.

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

### ***Closing Prayer***

Leader: Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.

**All: With your help, we will do as you ask.**

Leader: Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.

**All: With your help, we will do as you ask.  
For you are our Lord and Savior. Amen**

**Finding True Happiness**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**February 13, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord, may we fix our eyes on you so that we may know you better  
and recognize your presence among us.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Luke 6:17, 20-26*

Jesus came down with the twelve  
and stood on a stretch of level ground  
with a great crowd of his disciples  
and a large number of the people  
from all Judea and Jerusalem  
and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon.

And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for the kingdom of God is yours.

Blessed are you who are now hungry,  
for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who are now weeping,  
for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you,  
and when they exclude and insult you,  
and denounce your name as evil  
on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day!

Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.

For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are filled now,  
for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will grieve and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you,  
for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”

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

*Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Reflect on Jesus' description of the blessedness in the Kingdom of God. When considering the warnings, what is most surprising or challenging to me?*
2. *What is the measure of success in the Kingdom of God?*

### **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
We pray that we will always seek the lasting happiness of the Kingdom of God, 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)

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

#### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Dream your dream in us, O Lord,  
that in this place we call Church  
your reign will take shape  
and your people will be transformed by joy.**

**Amen.**

**Reflecting God's Mercy**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**February 22, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Gracious God,  
you give us examples of mercy, forgiveness, and gentleness. May we be  
patient, forgiving, and gentle with one another during our meeting tonight.

**All: Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23*

In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph  
with three thousand picked men of Israel,  
to search for David in the desert of Ziph.  
So David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night  
and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade,  
with his spear thrust into the ground at his head  
and Abner and his men sleeping around him.

Abishai whispered to David:  
"God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day.  
Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear;  
I will not need a second thrust!"  
But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him,  
for who can lay hands on the Lord's anointed and remain unpunished?"  
So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head,  
and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening.  
All remained asleep,  
because the Lord had put them into a deep slumber.

Going across to an opposite slope,  
David stood on a remote hilltop  
at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops.  
He said: "Here is the king's spear.  
Let an attendant come over to get it.  
The Lord will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness.  
Today, though the Lord delivered you into my grasp,  
I would not harm the Lord's anointed."

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

*Silent Reflection*

## *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Is there a particular line in the story about King David that stands out for you?*
2. *What can we learn from the way David treated Saul, the king who sought his death?*

As we continue our meeting, may we listen to each other attentively and work together for the good of our community.

## **Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
For our council, that we might respond to our parish's needs generously,  
we pray to the Lord...

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

Leader: For each of us, that we might be gentle and forgiving...

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

Leader: For our parishioners, that they might know God's love and mercy...

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

(The leader may add prayers that address the subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...  
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)  
Let us pray as our Lord taught us

**All: "Our Father...."**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: God of truth and mercy,  
We know that it is difficult to forgive, to love, to share,  
but with your help we can follow and honor you.  
Thank you for loving us enough to help us follow your teaching  
and to forgive us when we fail.  
Amen.**

**Bear Good Fruit**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**February 27, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Gracious God,  
you challenge us to live the mission of your Church. May you, who have entrusted to us this mission, be in our thoughts and on our lips throughout this meeting.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Luke 6:39-45*

Jesus told his disciples a parable,  
"Can a blind person guide a blind person?  
Will not both fall into a pit?  
No disciple is superior to the teacher;  
but when fully trained,  
every disciple will be like his teacher.  
Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye,  
but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?  
How can you say to your brother,  
'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,'  
when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye?  
You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first;  
then you will see clearly  
to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

"A good tree does not bear rotten fruit,  
nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit.  
For every tree is known by its own fruit.  
For people do not pick figs from thornbushes,  
nor do they gather grapes from brambles.  
A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good,  
but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil;  
for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How does this Gospel passage challenge me?*
2. *What fruits has our council demonstrated to show that we are following Christ?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs:

That we might always speak the way God wants us to speak...

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

Leader: That the Lord might grant this council wisdom...

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

(The leader may add prayers that address the subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

Let us pray as our Lord has taught us

**All: "Our Father...."**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All : God of all wisdom and goodness,  
you have blessed us abundantly.  
You have given us the awesome gift and responsibility to serve you as  
a Council.  
May you grant us wisdom in our minds, hearts, and mouths  
to discern how we might live your mission more fully in our parish.  
Amen.**