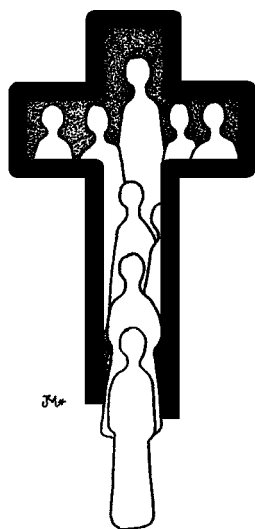


Pastoral Council

Prayers and Faith Sharing

**13th Sunday – 22nd Sunday in
Ordinary Time**

Cycle B



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Department of Pastoral Services, 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 form community, and to serve especially those in need). As stated in the “Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines”, 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, with listening to one another in faith and love, followed by 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,

Julie Gutierrez

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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.

Compassionate Living
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B
June 27, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very dark, God said, “Let there be light”

All: and there was Light.

Leader: In the beginning, when it was very quiet, the Word was with God

All: and what God was, the Word was.

Leader: When the time was right, God sent his Son.

All: He came among us; he was one of us.

Scripture Reading: Mark 5: 25 – 34 (Excerpt of Gospel Reading)

There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.” Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to Jesus, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Where do you see the need for compassionate love within our church community?
2. As we look beyond the walls of our church, whom do we see that needs us to bring God's compassionate love to them?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayer

Leader: As members of Christ's Body, we pray for our needs and for the needs of the world...
That we may grow in compassionate loving toward all...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That we may find the giftedness in every person...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Compassionate God, look with love upon us.
Give us your peace and help us bring your peace to those who suffer. Amen.**

Praise God Always
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 4, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Loving God, we praise and thank you for your constant care for us. Let us grow in our loving and serving. Give us the wisdom and courage to be witnesses to the world. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Mark 6-1-6

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his native place and among his own kin and in his own house." So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Who are the "prophets" in your life who have called you to greater consciousness and to a keener perception of truth?
2. What or who gives you the courage to be a witness in the world?

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: For all the suffering in our community and in the world...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the desire to give all to Jesus...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

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

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer:

**All: May peace be in our hearts and given to others.
Amen.**

We Are Sent
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 11, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Leader: May the Spirit enlighten the eyes of our hearts,
That we may know what is the hope that belongs to our call.

All: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Scripture Reading: Mark 6: 7 – 13

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two
and gave them authority over unclean spirits.
He instructed them to take nothing for the journey
but a walking stick—
no food, no sack, no money in their belts.
They were, however, to wear sandals
but not a second tunic.
He said to them,
“Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave.
Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you,
leave there and shake the dust off your feet
in testimony against them.”
So they went off and preached repentance.
The Twelve drove out many demons,
and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Why do you think Jesus ordered the apostles to take so little with them on their journey?
2. How does our parish console and care for the sick among us, especially during the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: As a people united in Christ, we pray for the need of our brothers and sisters throughout the world...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That we may continue to raise up those who are suffering in mind, body, and spirit...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That our young adults will desire to know the Jesus of the Gospel,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray this evening ...

After a few moments for personal intentions...for these and all those prayers we hold deep in our hearts, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: May the peace of Christ fill our hearts, our homes, and our community.
Amen.**

Rest Awhile...
16th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 18, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: O my Beloved, You are my shepherd, I shall now want;

All: You bring me to green pastures for rest and lead me beside still waters; you restore my soul.

Leader: You lead me in the path of goodness to follow Love's way.

Scripture Reading: Mark 6: 30 – 34

The apostles gathered together with Jesus
and reported all they had done and taught.

He said to them,

“Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”

People were coming and going in great numbers,
and they had no opportunity even to eat.

So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.

People saw them leaving and many came to know about it.

They hastened there on foot from all the towns
and arrived at the place before them.

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd,
his heart was moved with pity for them,
for they were like sheep without a shepherd;
and he began to teach them many things.

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. As leaders, how do we encourage and model the value of coming aside to pray?
2. Who are some of the significant “shepherds” (teachers/mentors/leaders) in your life, past and present?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Jesus, you call us to prayer and quiet, may we be faithful servants, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Jesus, you call us to compassion, may we imitate compassion for our brothers and sisters, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Jesus lived with an open heart, may we be open to the needs of our community, we pray ...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

After a few moments for personal intentions...for these and all those prayers we hold in our hearts we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer:

Leader: May the peace of Christ dwell in your heart.

All: Amen.

The Abundance of God
17th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 25, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Lord, you feed our every need. Your abundance is found in all creation. You surround us with beauty and goodness. Let this out pouring of love grace us to give abundantly to one another. Amen.

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44

A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing to Elisha, the man of God, twenty barley loaves made from the firstfruits, and fresh grain in the ear.

Elisha said, "Give it to the people to eat."

But his servant objected,

"How can I set this before a hundred people?"

Elisha insisted, "Give it to the people to eat."

"For thus says the LORD,

'They shall eat and there shall be some left over.'"

And when they had eaten, there was some left over, as the LORD had said.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Where in your life do you see scarcity that God might be planning to turn into abundance?
2. What are we doing as a parish community to help those who are food insecure, what more can we do?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Creator God, you have generously blessed us with an abundance of gifts. Help us to share that generosity in a way that ensures that your gifts will continue to be available for future generations.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the grace to respect and care for Your Creation, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the talents and the abundance of gifts that are ours, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For the many people who have been instrument of your goodness in our lives, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other prayers...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

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

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Bless us O God with the abundance of your presence.

All: Amen.

Where do we find Christ
18th Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 1, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Lord Jesus, you are in our midst today, you feed us with the bread of life, you mold us in the life of the Holy Spirit. May we act with grateful hearts and joy as we serve one another. Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 6: 24 –35

When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus. And when they found him across the sea they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered them and said, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him the Father, God, has set his seal.” So they said to him, “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent.” So they said to him, “What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert, as it is written: *He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*” So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” So they said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.”

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

Silent Reflection

Question for Faith Sharing

1. How is Jesus giving you bread from heaven every day? How do you remain faithful?
2. How does our hospitality to those who gather for the Eucharist invite them to nurture their relationship with Jesus, the Bread of Life?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Eucharist means “To Give Thanks”, we give thanks to the Lord for He is good.

All: “We praise you O Giver of Life.”

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

All: “We praise you O Giver of Life.”

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us...

All: Our Father...

Bread of Life
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 8, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are the bread of life, the manna which sustains us in the desert of our daily lives. Without you, we hunger for righteousness but will forever be found wanting. Sustain us, O Lord, and keep us in your graces through the vessel of your most holy body and blood.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 6:41-51

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, It is written in the prophets: *They shall all be taught by God.* Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. How has the Father drawn you to Jesus?
2. How do we nourish our relationship with Jesus in our community?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.
For all who serve others in any capacity, that they do so humbly and with loving kindness. 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: Tender God, creator of all that is good, we thank you for all that you give us. Lead us, as we go forth from this gathering, to a deeper understanding of your call to holiness. Amen.

**Solemnity of The Assumption
of The Blessed Virgin Mary
August 15, 2021**

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let us quiet our hearts and focus our minds on being together in God's name... Almighty God, you gave a humble virgin the privilege of being the mother of your Son and crowned her with the glory of heaven. May the prayers of the Virgin Mary bring us to the salvation of Christ and raise us up to eternal life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:46-55 (Excerpt of Gospel Reading)

And Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Mary is a model of discipleship. What does Mary's prayer say about how a disciple places her or himself in relation to God?
2. What needs to be brought to life in you so that it reflects your discipleship?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Men: Take the divisions in our world and

All: heal us, O God.

Women: Take any divisions in our parish and

All: heal us, O God.

Men: Take divisions in our families and relationships, and

All: heal us, O God.

Women: Take stresses and pressures that keep us from being our best selves and

All: heal us, O God.

Men: Take the pain or sufferings or illness of anyone in need and

All: heal us, O God.

Women: Take the sins of our church, and of each of us, and

All: heal us, O God.

Closing Prayer:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven....

Leader: May God give us a restful night and peaceful day.

All: Amen.

Spirit and Life
21st Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 22, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Lord, as we go into this meeting, we place ourselves before You, for You are filled with the beauty and light and care deeply about us. Help us to value and appreciate those we are gathered with today. May your light enfold us. May Your Spirit guide us. May your grace abound in us.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 6:60-69

Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe."

Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. What steps can you take to increase your commitment to your faith?
2. How do we nourish our relationship with Jesus in our community?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: That we may be living witnesses to the Christ who gave himself for love of us, we pray...

All: Live in us, Christ our brother and savior.

Leader: That our witness will strengthen others to know Jesus, we pray...

All: Live in us, Christ our brother and savior.

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, we pray...

All: Live in us, Christ our brother and savior.

Closing Prayer:

All: We give thanks to you for your kindness and compassion.

We trust that you hear our prayers and guide our actions. Amen.

Be Doers of the Word
22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 29, 2021

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

**All: God of the seasons, you have gifted us with the rhythm of dying and rising.
 May the beauty of this rhythm be a source of refreshment and renewal as we
 journey to You. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.**

Scripture Reading: James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

Dearest brothers and sisters:
All good giving and every perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of lights,
with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change.
He willed to give us birth by the word of truth
that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you
and is able to save your souls.

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this:
to care for orphans and widows in their affliction
and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

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

Silent reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. In what ways are you putting your faith into action? How are you a “doer of the word”?
2. As a parish, how to do we show care and concern for the most vulnerable in our midst?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Sometimes it seems that our faith exists only in our minds and words. Help us find new and practical ways to live our commitment to your will, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God of our ancestors, help us be faithful to the task of handing on the faith to future generations, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: You give us the choice to be light or darkness for one another. Help us to choose generosity over selfishness, 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

Leader: Lord, we trust that your Spirit of Wisdom has guided our deliberations this night and will continue to guide us “into a future full of hope.” Help us to discern your guidance and discover your will in every facet of our lives.

All: We pray through Jesus, the perfect reflection of the Father’s will, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.