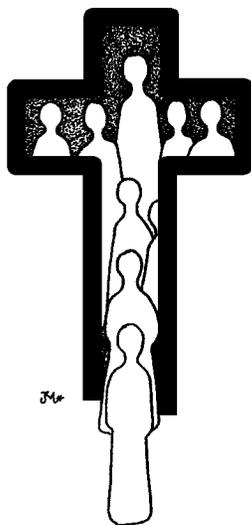


# Pastoral Council Faith Sharing Sessions

September - November 2021  
23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time –  
Our Lord Christ, King of the Universe, Cycle B



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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 form community, and to serve especially those in need). As stated in our diocesan “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*

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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, 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.

**A Call to Service**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**September 5, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:        God of promise,  
                  you have created us out of love,  
                  and want only the best for your people:  
                  healing, wholeness, true peace.  
                  Help us to imitate you.  
                  Guide us in making decisions  
                  that will bring about good for the people we serve.  
                  We ask this in the name of Jesus.

**All:            Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a*

Thus says the LORD:  
Say to those whose hearts are frightened:  
Be strong, fear not!  
Here is your God,  
he comes with vindication;  
with divine recompense  
he comes to save you.  
Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,  
the ears of the deaf be cleared;  
then will the lame leap like a stag,  
then the tongue of the mute will sing.  
Streams will burst forth in the desert,  
and rivers in the steppe.  
The burning sands will become pools,  
and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *How has serving on the pastoral council been a way of opening our eyes and ears to the needs of our faith community?*
2. *Are there any fears we need to address with our people? Any areas of healing that our parish needs us to consider, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic?*
3. *How can we, as pastoral council members, become springs of living water for 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 church, that God might guide our leaders and our people to act boldly and without fear to bring healing and wholeness to our world...

**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 of healing and promise,  
you who give healing and wholeness,  
nourishment for body and spirit  
protection and justice for those in need,  
be with us as we make our way home.  
Protect us each day of our lives, guide us to do your will,  
and bring us safely home to you when this life is ended.  
We ask this as we ask all things  
+in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

**Identity**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**September 12, 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. You are gracious and just, merciful and full of love. As we walk before you in the land of the living, give to us your guidance and wisdom, that we may be images of your love in both word and deed.**

*Scripture Reading: Mark 8:27-35*

Jesus and his disciples set out for the villages of Caesarea Philippi. Along the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" They said in reply, "John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter said to him in reply, "You are the Christ." Then he warned them not to tell anyone about him.

He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *Jesus is sharing his identity with his community. How do we share our identity as disciples of the good news in our community?*
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.

As disciples of Christ, may we always follow Christ, mirroring the image of Christ in our words and deeds, 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: Gracious God:  
You bring forth new life in us as we strive to do your will. Hear our prayers that we may always live in the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, and give of ourselves as our parish community becomes a reflection of your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Passion, Wisdom, Peace**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**September 19, 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,  
at this time, in this place.**

*Scripture Reading: James 3:16-4:3*

Beloved:  
Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,  
there is disorder and every foul practice.  
But the wisdom from above is first of all pure,  
then peaceable, gentle, compliant,  
full of mercy and good fruits,  
without inconstancy or insincerity.  
And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace  
for those who cultivate peace.

Where do the wars  
and where do the conflicts among you come from?  
Is it not from your passions  
that make war within your members?  
You covet but do not possess.  
You kill and envy but you cannot obtain;  
you fight and wage war.  
You do not possess because you do not ask.  
You ask but do not receive,  
because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

- 1. Our passion can be the gift of fire from the Holy Spirit, energizing us to move God's desire into action. Our passion can be driven by cravings that take us away from God's desires. How do we discern the best path forward? How do we help others discern?*
- 2. How can we as leaders in this community cultivate wisdom and peace?*

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

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

Leader: Confident that God will lead us to ask rightly, let us pray:  
May our desires be fitting in your eyes, we pray to the Lord...

**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 and Holy Creator,  
in each one of us you have planted a seed of your passionate love.  
Help us to see clearly the gifts you have planted within each of us  
and to recognize the source of our passions.

Women: Christ Jesus, our Wisdom,  
through the Mystery of your passionate life, death and resurrection  
you brought us into right relationship with God.  
Help us to know your pure desire.

Men: Holy Spirit,  
forever you are tending the life of God in us.  
Open us to receive the nourishment of your grace,  
that our work today may bear good fruit  
and many will come to know the blessings of God.

**All: Amen.**

**Support and Encouragement**  
**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**September 26, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Send forth your Spirit, Lord.  
All: **Send forth your Spirit, Lord,**

Leader: that we might hear your word of life.  
All: **Send forth your Spirit, Lord,**

Leader: that we might speak your truth.  
All: **Send forth your Spirit, Lord,**

Leader: that we might do your good works.  
All: **Send forth your Spirit, Lord.**

*Scripture Reading: Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48*

At that time, John said to Jesus,  
"Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name,  
and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us."  
Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him.  
There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name  
who can at the same time speak ill of me.  
For whoever is not against us is for us.  
Anyone who gives you a cup of water to drink  
because you belong to Christ,  
amen, I say to you, will surely not lose his reward.

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,  
it would be better for him if a great millstone  
were put around his neck  
and he were thrown into the sea.  
If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed  
than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire.  
And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life crippled  
than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna.  
And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Better for you to enter into the kingdom  
of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, where 'their worm  
does not die, and the fire is not quenched.'"

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What “mighty deeds” taking place in this community reveal to us the power of God?*
2. *How do we as a parish support one another, compassionately, in the name of Christ?*
3. *How might we as a pastoral council support each other?*

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

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

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

For the good people of this community, that through their good works we may recognize the presence of Jesus, 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***

Leader: Holy God,  
Voice of Truth, Heart of Compassion,  
bless the work of this community,  
that your light may shine for all to see  
as we work, rest and pray together in your name.  
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

**United in Christ**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**October 3, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All: Lord God, Creator of all living things,  
help us to work together to become one in Christ your Son.  
We can do nothing alone. Only with your help can we accomplish your  
mission of peace and love. Be with us always on our journey through life.**

*Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:18-24*

The LORD God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone.  
I will make a suitable partner for him."  
So the LORD God formed out of the ground  
various wild animals and various birds of the air,  
and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them;  
whatever the man called each of them would be its name.  
The man gave names to all the cattle,  
all the birds of the air, and all wild animals;  
but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man,  
and while he was asleep,  
he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.  
The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib  
that he had taken from the man.  
When he brought her to the man, the man said:  
"This one, at last, is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called 'woman, '  
for out of 'her man' this one has been taken."  
That is why a man leaves his father and mother  
and clings to his wife,  
and the two of them become one flesh.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *How well do we invoke God's help when differences arise?*
2. *Are we united as partners and as followers of Christ?*
3. *How do we as a council help to unite the people of our worshipping community?*

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

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

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

For peace in our world, in our nation, in our Church, in our homes  
and in our hearts, 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 God, as we leave this meeting may we leave not alone but as partners and helpers of one another, sharing our joys and our sorrows. May we walk with each other and with you in loving kindness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**Calling Upon the Wisdom of God**  
**October 10, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer (based on Psalm 90)*

**All: Holy Wisdom, come into our midst.**

Leader: Teach us to number our days aright  
that we might gain wisdom of heart.

**All: Holy Wisdom, come into our midst.**

Leader: Fill us with your kindness that we might shout for joy and gladness all our days.

**All: Holy Wisdom, come into our midst.**

Leader: Inspire and guide us. Prosper the work of our hands!

**All: Holy Wisdom, come into our midst.**

*Scripture Reading: Wisdom 7:7-11*

I prayed, and prudence was given me;  
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.  
I preferred her to scepter and throne,  
and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,  
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;  
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,  
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.  
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,  
and I chose to have her rather than the light,  
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.  
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,  
and countless riches at her hands.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How has God's wisdom guided me in life? Share one or two examples.*
2. *What are some concrete ways we can help our parish and community grow in the wisdom of God?*

## **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 be guided by the Wisdom of God and, in turn, be a source of wisdom for the world, we pray...

**All: Holy Wisdom, 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: Holy Wisdom, hear our prayer.**

### ***Closing Prayer***

Leader: O God, you are the Source of all Wisdom.  
Fill us with your understanding and insight  
so that we might bring your kindness and compassion  
to our parish community and our world.  
Guide us with your Spirit  
and help us imitate Jesus, who is our Wisdom forever.

**All: Amen.**

**Service**  
**29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**October 17, 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 parish community. Continue to shower us with your wisdom, mercy, and love. Be present to us throughout our meeting today so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions.**

*Scripture Reading: Mark 10:35-45*

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him,  
"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."  
He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?"  
They answered him, "Grant that in your glory  
we may sit one at your right and the other at your left."  
Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking.  
Can you drink the cup that I drink  
or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"  
They said to him, "We can."  
Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink,  
and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;  
but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give  
but is for those for whom it has been prepared."  
When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John.  
Jesus summoned them and said to them,  
"You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles  
lord it over them,  
and their great ones make their authority over them felt.  
But it shall not be so among you.  
Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant;  
whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.  
For the Son of Man did not come to be served  
but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."  
The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Jesus is teaching his disciples about greatness being rooted in service. Is our parish community one that roots itself in service to others? Do we put others first?*
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 rooted in service that brings justice, peace and life to all 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...

**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 live in the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, and give of ourselves as our parish community becomes a reflection of your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Help in Difficult Times**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**October 24, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.  
**All: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.**  
Leader: Lord, hear my voice!  
**All: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.**  
Leader: Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleadings!  
**All: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.**  
*(from Psalm 130)*

*Scripture Reading: Mark 10:46-52*

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd,  
Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus,  
sat by the roadside begging.  
On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth,  
he began to cry out and say,  
"Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."  
And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.  
But he kept calling out all the more,  
"Son of David, have pity on me."  
Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."  
So they called the blind man, saying to him,  
"Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you."  
He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.  
Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?"  
The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see."  
Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you."  
Immediately he received his sight  
and followed him on the way.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *Where in our personal life, or parish life, do we find ourselves crying out to Jesus for help?*
2. *What is our blindness? Where do we need to see more clearly?*
3. *What dark areas in our parish life or community life do we avoid?*

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

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

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

For those who live in the darkness of illness, depression or addiction; that they may come to know God's healing light...

**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: Bless us this night, Lord.  
As we enter the darkness of the evening,  
may we remember your promise of light.  
May we rise with joy and gratitude  
as the new day greets us tomorrow.  
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

**Growth in Faith and Love/Spiritual Renewal**  
**31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**October 31, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: My God, my refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation, my stronghold!

All: Praised be the Lord, I exclaim, and I am safe from my enemies.

*Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:2-6*

Moses spoke to the people, saying:  
"Fear the LORD, your God,  
and keep, throughout the days of your lives,  
all his statutes and commandments which I enjoin on you,  
and thus have long life.  
Hear then, Israel, and be careful to observe them,  
that you may grow and prosper the more,  
in keeping with the promise of the LORD, the God of your fathers,  
to give you a land flowing with milk and honey.

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!  
Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God,  
with all your heart,  
and with all your soul,  
and with all your strength.  
Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today." "

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *As a faith community, what are we currently doing to promote our faith?*
2. *How can this council help the community to grow in spirituality?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For an ever increasing faith in our loving God whose statutes and commandments we hold dear to our hearts, 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, your love for us is without boundaries.  
May our actions serve you and others with love and kindness.  
May your name be always on our lips.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Generous Stewards of our Time, Talent & Treasure**  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**November 7, 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 parish community. You secure justice for us, give food to satisfy our hunger, and set us free. Be present to us throughout our meeting so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions.**

*Scripture Reading: Mark 12:41-44*

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury  
and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury.  
Many rich people put in large sums.  
A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents.  
Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them,  
"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more  
than all the other contributors to the treasury.  
For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth,  
but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had,  
her whole livelihood."

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Jesus is teaching his disciples about generosity. Who in my own life reminds me of the generous widow?*
2. *Where have we seen this kind of generosity in our community? How does this Scripture reading challenge us?*

## 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 good and faithful stewards who give generously to help all who are in need. 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, we pray to the Lord...

**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 give our best in whatever way we are called. Help us to be more like the poor widow who reminds us to give from the very depths of our being, from our whole livelihood. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Change/Creation**  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B**  
**November 14, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!  
**All: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!**  
Leader: Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth.  
**All: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!**  
Leader: Let the sea roar and all that fills it.  
**All: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!**  
Leader: Let the hills sing together with joy.  
**All: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!**  
Leader: For God will judge the people with fairness.  
**All: The Lord has done marvelous things. Praise God's name!**  
*(from Psalm 98)*

*Scripture Reading: Mark 13:24-32*

Jesus said to his disciples: "In those days after that tribulation the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

"And then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds' with great power and glory, and then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

"Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that he is near, at the gates. Amen, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

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

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

*Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *What changes have we had to face over the past year as a community?*
2. *What have we lost and gained as a result of these changes?*
3. *Name an area of change that we have handled well. How can we celebrate that gift?*

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

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For those in our parish, community and world who live in fear of oppression, aggression or the forces of nature...

**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: Praise you, Lord,  
for the great signs of your power and goodness that surround us.  
Our world is ever changing;  
tides ebb and flow, night and day alternate.  
The changes of colors with the seasons increase our sense of wonder  
at your beautiful works.  
Keep us focused on you as we move from familiar to unfamiliar, old to new.  
May the glory of your presence illuminate our way. We make our prayer  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Challenges of Serving in the Kingdom of Christ**  
**The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Cycle B**  
**November 21, 2021**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: God of truth,  
you challenge us to live lives that are faith-filled, genuine, and holy. Open our  
minds and hearts to truth grounded in love.  
Help us stand firm as your servants when our faith is challenged;  
guide us in the ways we can serve you to bring about your kingdom on this earth.  
We ask this, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Christ who is our King.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: John 18:33b-37*

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?"  
Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own  
or have others told you about me?"  
Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I?  
Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me.  
What have you done?"  
Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world.  
If my kingdom did belong to this world,  
my attendants would be fighting  
to keep me from being handed over to the Jews.  
But as it is, my kingdom is not here."  
So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?"  
Jesus answered, "You say I am a king.  
For this I was born and for this I came into the world,  
to testify to the truth.  
Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

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

*Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. What challenges have you faced in your day-to-day life as you try to bring about the kingdom of God?
2. What challenges do you see our parish facing as we strive to serve Christ as our king?
3. What are some ways this parish family can testify to the truth and help bring about the kingdom of God in our midst?

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

#### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

That our church may always testify to the truth of God's love for the world,  
we pray:

**All: Christ our King, 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: Christ our King, hear our prayer.**

#### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Sovereign God,  
grant us the strength and courage that we, your servants,  
need in order to testify to the truth of your love.  
Guide and inspire us  
so that we might bring your loving kindness,  
your Kingdom, to the world around us.  
Grant this through the Savior who reigns forever.  
Amen.**