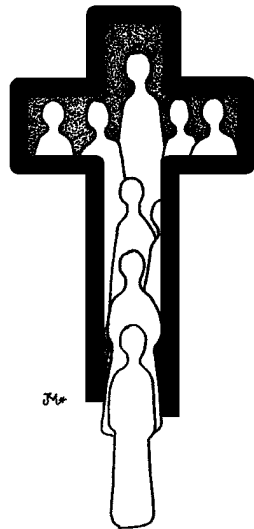


# Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing

**Advent 2018 - Ordinary Time 2019**  
Cycle C



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## AN INVITATION TO PRAY WITH YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

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

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

In our enthusiasm to “get the business of the council done” we may forget that we are to role model spiritual leadership. As a pastoral council, we are challenged to ongoing spiritual 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 and listening to one another in faith and love and be followed by listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love.

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

**Nicholas Frega**  
**Liaison for Pastoral Councils**  
**Pastoral Services, Diocese of Rochester**

## HINTS FOR THE PRAYER LEADER

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

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

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

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

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

1. Invite those present to become quiet and remember that they are in the presence of God. After a brief pause, begin the ***Invitation to Prayer***.
2. Either read the ***Scripture*** passage yourself or have someone else do so (ask this other person 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 on the things shared aloud.
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. You may keep them at the end as well.
2. Some communities like to develop one intercessory prayer relative to the issues on which the pastoral council is working. This prayer is prayed by the entire community at Sunday liturgies over the course of the month. This practice provides spiritual support for the parish's leadership, helps the entire congregation to be conscious of issues under

consideration by the pastoral council, and helps all to focus on the God who leads the community into the future.

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

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

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

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 at which 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**  
**December 2, 2018**

**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, "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?*

As we continue our meeting, let us remember that we are all called to be people of hope who reflect that hope in all of our words, decisions, and actions.

### **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**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**December 9, 2018**

**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 1:3-6, 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*---

I thank my God whenever I think of you, and every time I pray for you all, I always pray with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the very first day up to the present. I am quite confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the Day of Jesus Christ comes. God will testify for me how much I long for you all with the warm longing of Christ Jesus. It is my prayer that your love for one another may grow more and more with the knowledge and complete understanding that will help you to come to true discernment, so that you will be innocent and free of any trace of guilt when the Day of Christ comes, entirely filled with the fruits of uprightness through Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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 (choose one or two for faith sharing)*

1. *How did the meaning shift as you 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?*

Let us remember, as we continue our meeting, that we are to discern how God is calling us to live our mission as a Catholic parish.

## **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 16, 2018**

**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! 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?*

Let us remember, as we continue our meeting, that we are here to support the spiritual lives of those we serve in the parish.



## 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 23, 2018**

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*

During those days 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, "Most 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 (choose one or two 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?*

As we continue our meeting, may we listen to the voice of the Lord with joy and anticipation.

**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 6, 2019**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

(You may want to invite the group to sing “We Three Kings” or simply listen to a good recording of it.)

***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! 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?*

As we continue our meeting, let us remember that Christ is our light.

**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 13, 2019**

**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”?*

As we continue our meeting, might we remember that Pastoral Council is one of the ways we can live our Baptismal call, and we need to support those in the parish who are living theirs.

**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.

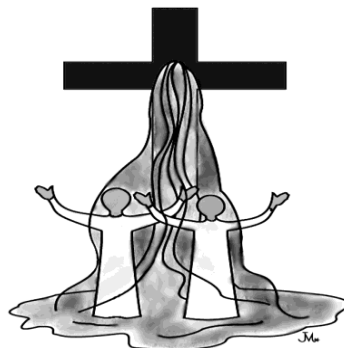
**All: Gracious God, hear our prayer.**

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 20, 2019**

**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.*

As we continue our meeting, might we realize that different members of our council have different spiritual gifts, and allow each person to use these gifts to serve the parish.

### **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.**

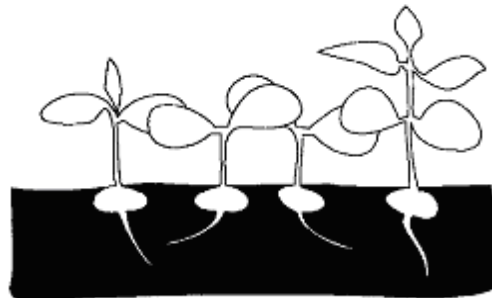
Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(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 27, 2019**

**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*

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me 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.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. He said to them, “Today this scripture has been 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?*

As we continue our meeting, may the mission of the Church be the focus of what we do.

## 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**  
**February 3, 2019**

**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***

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, love 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?*

As we continue our meeting, might the Spirit inspire us in faith, hope, and love.

**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**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**February 10, 2019**

**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?*

As we continue our meeting, might we remember to trust God and know of God’s support during difficult conversations.

## **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.**





**Seeing as God Sees**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**February 17, 2019**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Gracious God,  
you challenge our assumptions and expectations at every turn.  
Keep our minds and hearts open to your wisdom.  
Through your Spirit, help us to see as you do  
and let us see you in each person we meet,  
particularly those who are in need, rejected or outcast.  
We ask this, as we ask all things, in the name of your Son.

All: Amen.

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



And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. 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 came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and even those who were tormented by unclean spirits were cured. Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.

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.  
But 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 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 Gospel, Jesus heals every person who comes to him. Are we a community that is welcoming and healing for all who come to us? How? How can we do this better?*
2. *Do we see blessing in those who are poor, who are hungry in their bodies and their spirits, in those who mourn, in the rejected? How do we support these humans? How do we learn from them about God?*
3. *What actions can this council take to heal wounds that have occurred in our community? What actions can we take to serve the poor and the hungry, to help those who mourn for the condition of the world as well as out of their own loss, for those who are more easily dealt with by excluding them?*
4. *What warnings can we take from this Gospel passage that will guard our discussions this evening?*

As we continue our meeting, might we be inspired by Jesus' humble service as we work through our agenda.

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
For the leaders of the universal church, our diocese, our region, and our parish:  
May they always attend to the needs of the poorest, the weakest, the most fragile among us, we pray:

**All: Healing 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 offer the prayer that our Lord has taught us

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

*Closing Prayer*

Leader: God of all consolation and goodness,  
you have blessed us richly with our faith and with many material goods.  
Rouse us from our complacency  
and help us to remember that all we have is a gift from you.  
Through your Holy Spirit,  
guide us that we might see the poor among us in all their many faces.  
In seeing them and caring for them, let us touch you.  
We ask this through Jesus, our teacher and healer.

**All: Amen.**

**Reflecting God's Mercy**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**February 24, 2019**

**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.**

**Avoiding Hypocrisy**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C**  
**March 3, 2019**

**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. *What in this Gospel stands out to you?*

2. *What fruits has our council demonstrated to show that we are following Christ?*  
As we continue our meeting, may we remember to follow Jesus in our words and actions.

## **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.**

