

Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing

**September - November 2022
Cycle C**

AN INVITATION TO PRAY WITH YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

These opening and closing prayers have been prepared to help your pastoral council become what it is intended to be: a *leadership body* in *communion* with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and focused on enabling the community to carry out the *mission* of the Church (to proclaim the Gospel, to worship God, to form community, and to serve especially those in need). As stated in the “Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines” of the Diocese of Rochester, the specific purposes of the pastoral council are:

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

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

And so you are invited and encouraged to set aside time at the beginning and end of your pastoral council meetings to use these prayers. We are confident that 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,

Shannon Kilbridge, Ph.D.
Associate Director
Department of Pastoral Services

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.

Called To Serve
23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
September 4, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Loving and gracious God, we gather in your presence as a faith community of believers. You call us to discipleship, removing all things that get in the way of us truly following you. We place our trust in you as we discern your will in our parish community. Help us to be open to your will. Be present to us throughout our meeting today so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions. Amen.

Scripture reading: Luke 14:25-33

Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, ‘This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.’ Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms. In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Jesus is telling his disciples that the cost of discipleship is steep. We are to give our lives over for the good of others. As a Pastoral Council, how far are we willing to go for the good of our parish community? Are we willing to sacrifice for the good of the community, even when our decisions are unpopular?

2. Where is God calling us to consider this reading in our meeting today?

As we continue our meeting, let us remember that we are all called to be disciples of our Lord and to follow his will in all that we say and do.

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

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

That our faith community will always strive to follow the will of God and to put the good of others ahead of our own, 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 seek to do your will. Hear our prayers that we may always strive to give our best in whatever way we are called. Help us to give our service for the good of others, that we may seek you in others. We ask all this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Being Found
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
September 11, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let hearts rejoice who search for God,

All: Seek the Holy One, seek the face of God.
Glory to you, Creator God,
Living Word, Indwelling Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be forever. Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 51

All: Teach me wisdom of the heart.

Women: Have mercy on me,
according to your steadfast love;
forgive me where my thoughts and deeds have hurt others.

Men: Lead me in the paths of justice, guide my steps on paths of peace!

Women: Create in me a clean heart,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

Men: Enfold me in the arms of love,
and fill me with your Holy Spirit.

All: Restore in me the joy of your saving grace,
and encourage me with a new spirit.

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. When and where do I let my focus lose sight of God's constant love for all creation?
2. What spiritual practice can I cultivate in order to walk with a new spirit? How can I encourage others to do likewise?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Gracious God, we remember the needs of others, so that we may reach up to claim your love for them and reach out to share your love in the name of Christ.

For families suffering loss and alienation, for children abandoned and unloved, for the forgotten elderly, we pray:

All: Compassionate God, hear our prayer.

Leader: For aliens and refugees, for those who are prisoners of conscience, for those who labor for human rights, we pray:

All: Compassionate God, hear our prayer.

Leader: And for what else do 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: Compassionate God, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

All: God of all peoples, make us one with all your saints and with any who are in need. Teach us to befriend the weak and welcome the outcast, that we may serve the Lord Jesus Christ and live as he taught us. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

Psalm 51, Psalms for Praying, Nan C. Merrill, Continuum, New York

Sharing our Abundance
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
September 18, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Loving and gracious God, we gather in your presence as a faith community of believers. You call us to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us. We place our trust in you as we discern your will in our parish community. Help us to be open to your will. 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 16:1-13

Jesus said to his disciples, “A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, ‘What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.’

The steward said to himself, ‘What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.’ He called in his master’s debtors one by one. To the first he said, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He replied, ‘One hundred measures of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.’ Then to another the steward said, ‘And you, how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘One hundred kors of wheat.’ The steward said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.’ And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. “For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon.”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Jesus is calling us to be good stewards of all that has been entrusted to us. These resources are a means to an end. How are we using our resources to help God in building up the Kingdom?
2. Where is God calling us to consider this reading in our meeting today?

As we continue our meeting, let us remember that we are all called to be good stewards of our Lord and to follow his will in all that we say and do.

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

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

That our faith community will always strive to be good stewards and to help bring the love of God into our world, 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, you bring forth new life in us as we strive to do your will. Hear our prayers that we may always strive to give our best in whatever way we are called. Help us to give our service for the good of others, that we may seek you in others. We ask all this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Responding to the Need
26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
September 25, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God our help,
all we have is gift from you.
You have created this world and its peoples.
You protect us and guide us, comfort and console us.
Give us the ability to see the needs of your people
and to respond to them effectively,
with kindness and patience.
We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 146: 5 - 10

Blessed the one whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord, his God,
The maker of heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry.
The Lord sets prisoners free;
the Lord gives sight to the blind.
The Lord raises up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord protects the resident alien,
Comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the way of the wicked.
The Lord shall reign forever, your God, Zion, through all generations!
Hallelujah!

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

Silent Reflection

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

1. How has your call to the Pastoral Council been a call to serve God's people?
What particular gifts do you feel are being called forth?
2. What are the needs you believe the parish community has that the Pastoral Council should be addressing this year?

3. What are some practical ways that we, as Pastoral Council members, can tend to the most pressing of these needs?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs. Please reply “God our help, hear our prayer” to our petitions.

For our church—that we might secure justice for the oppressed, give food to the hungry, set prisoners free, and give sight to the blind, we pray:
All: God our help, hear our prayer.

Leader For our world—that nations may seek to raise up those who are bowed down, to protect the stranger, sustain the orphan, and care for the widow, we pray:
All: God our help, hear our prayer.

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

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray together the Magnificat, the song of Mary:

**All: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.
He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy,
according to his promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever.**

Leader: May God grant us a safe journey home and a peaceful night.
+in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

Increase our Faith
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
October 2, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Faithful God, your great love stands firm from generation to generation; your mercy is always abundant. Give us open and understanding hearts. By responding to your call, may we bring your presence to all whom we meet. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:5–10

The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” The Lord replied, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to the mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

“Who among you would say to your servant who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here immediately and take your place at table’? Would he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Put on your apron and wait on me while I eat and drink. You may eat and drink when I am finished’? Is he grateful to that servant because he did what was commanded? So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.’”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. As a leader in our faith community, what do you do to nourish your faith?
2. How can we nourish a spirit of faith in the larger community?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: As members of Christ's Body, we pray for our needs and the needs of the world...

That we may praise and thank God for an ever-growing faith, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: That we may live in oneness with one another, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: And for what else should we pray...

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 the risen Christ fill our hearts and may we share that peace with one another. Amen. Alleluia.

Always be Thankful
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
October 9, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Loving and gracious God, we gather in your presence as a faith community of believers. You call us to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us. We place our trust in you as we discern your will in our parish community. Help us to be open to your will. Be present to us throughout our meeting so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:11-19

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” Then he said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Jesus offers the gift of healing to the ten lepers. Healing is a manifestation of God’s love for us all. How do we show gratitude to God in our daily lives for all that has been given to us? How does our community show its gratitude for God’s blessings?
2. Where is God calling us to consider this reading in our meeting today?

As we continue our meeting, let us remember that we are all called to be good stewards of our Lord’s mission and to follow his will in all that we say and do.

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

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

That our faith community will always respond with compassion to the needs of others, 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: Father in heaven, the hand of your loving kindness powerfully yet gently guides all the moments of our day. Go before us in our pilgrimage of life, anticipate our needs, and prevent our falling. Send your Spirit to unite us in faith, that sharing in your service, we may rejoice in your presence. Amen.

Persevering in Hope
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
October 16, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God of hope,
sometimes we feel the darkness
setting in and believe that our
prayers are not being heard.
Renew our hope;
strengthen our perseverance.
Remind us that your love always
surrounds us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his followers a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said,

"There was a judge in a certain town, who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.'

"For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.'"

The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

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. When you have felt that your prayers have not been answered as you hoped, what have you done?
2. How do you feel such experiences might have helped you in your faith life?
3. How can we, as pastoral council members, help our community when difficult times come upon us and it seems like our prayers are not being heard?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Persisting in our prayer, we now offer God our concerns and needs.
Please reply “Lord, help us to grow in our faith,” to our petitions.

For our church—that when we are experiencing difficult times we might hold on to our belief that God will hear us and save us, we pray.

All: Lord, help us to grow in our faith.

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

(When all who choose to share are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, we pray.

All: Lord, help us to grow in our faith.

Closing Prayer

**All: Loving God,
you are full of understanding and patience.
Help us to remain faithful to you
throughout times of darkness and uncertainty.
Grant us your wisdom, your guidance, and your protection;
help us to be strong and to persevere in our faith
through all the difficulties of life.
We ask this as we ask all things
+in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Act with Justice
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
October 23, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Provident God, you gather us as your servants. Prepare our hearts to love justice, to care for the lowly, to love the Christ in every person. Give us a spirit of wisdom as we ponder the needs and concerns of our community. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Sirach 35: 12-14, 16-18

The Lord is a God of justice, who knows no favorites. Though not unduly partial toward the weak, yet he hears the cry of the oppressed. The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan, nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint.

The one who serves God willingly is heard; his petition reaches the heavens. The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds, it does not rest till it reaches its goal, nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly and affirms the right, and the Lord will not delay.

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Justice is embraced through our being rooted in the Gospels. What is your practice of praying with the Gospels? How can you cultivate this as a daily part of your prayer?
2. Sirach reminds us that God wants justice for those on the margins. Who are the marginalized, the oppressed whom our community supports? Are there others to whom we need to reach out with God's compassion and justice?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Let us raise our hearts in gratitude and name one thing for which we are grateful this day...

Closing Prayer

**All: As you have made this day, O God, you also make the night.
Give light for our comfort. Come upon us and still our souls,
that we may listen for the whisper of your Spirit and be
attentive to your nearness in our dreams. Empower us to rise again
in new life to proclaim your praise and to show Christ to the world.
Amen.**

How do we see...
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
October 30, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

All: Loving and gracious God, we gather in your presence as a faith community of believers. You call us to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us. We place our trust in you as we discern your will in our community. Help us to be open to your will. Be present to us throughout our meeting tonight so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-10

Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost."

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Zacchaeus seeks Jesus out and is changed in the encounter. How are we transformed as a community in our encounter with Christ in the Eucharist and in each other? Do we seek Christ in each other?
2. Where is God calling us to consider this reading in our meeting tonight?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

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

That our faith community will always be one that seeks the love of God through the mercy and forgiveness of others, 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: Father in heaven, God of power and Lord of mercy, from whose fullness we have received, direct our steps in everyday efforts. May the changing moods of the human heart and the limits which our failings impose on hope never blind us to you, source of every good. Faith gives us the promise of peace and makes known the demands of love. Remove the selfishness that blurs the vision of faith. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Calling on God, Our Savior
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
November 6, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God of promise,
 you are ever faithful to your people.
 Guard us and guide us,
 preserve and protect us
 through all the days of our lives
 until we are one with you forever.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5

Brothers and sisters:
May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father,
who has loved us and given us everlasting encouragement
and good hope through his grace,
encourage your hearts and strengthen them in every good deed
and word.

Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us,
so that the word of the Lord may speed forward and be glorified,
as it did among you,
and that we may be delivered from perverse and wicked people,
for not all have faith.
But the Lord is faithful;
he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one.
We are confident of you in the Lord that what we instruct you,
you are doing and will continue to do.
May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God
and to the endurance of Christ.

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 God's faithfulness in your life? When have you felt God's strength and protection in the face of evil?
2. What fears have you heard our parishioners express?
3. How can this pastoral council build our community's faith and confidence in God's steadfast love?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs. Please reply "Protect us, O Lord," to our petitions.

For our church—may we stand firm in our faith in the face of doubt and opposition, we pray:

All: Protect us, O Lord.

Leader For world leaders and those whose efforts to do good are met with ridicule and hate, we pray:

All: Protect us, O Lord.

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

(When all who choose to share are finished offering prayers)

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

All: Protect us, O Lord.

Closing Prayer

**All: Good and gracious God,
turn your ear to us; hear our prayer.
Keep us as the apple of your eye;
hide us in the shadow of your wings.
Show us your wondrous love.
Guard us, O Lord,
while we are awake
and keep us safe while we sleep,
that waking we may keep watch with Christ
and sleeping we may rest in his peace.
We ask this as we ask all things
+in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

God is Present
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C
November 13, 2022

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

In silence be aware of God's presence within you, around you and in all creation.

Leader: Let hearts who search for God rejoice.

All: Seek always the face of the God who loves us.

Scripture Reading: Luke 21:5-19

While some people were speaking about how the temple was adorned with costly stones and votive offerings, Jesus said, "All that you see here—the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down."

Then they asked him, "Teacher, when will this happen? And what sign will there be when all these things are about to happen?"

He answered, "See that you not be deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and 'the time has come.' Do not follow them! When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for such things must happen first, but it will not immediately be the end."

Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be powerful earthquakes, famines, and plagues from place to place; and awesome sights and mighty signs will come from the sky.

"Before all this happens, however, they will seize and persecute you, they will hand you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and they will have you led before kings and governors because of my name.

"It will lead to your giving testimony. Remember, you are not to prepare your defense beforehand, for I myself shall give you a wisdom in speaking that all your adversaries will be powerless to resist or refute.

"You will even be handed over by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name, but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives."

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Where do you find the presence of God in your life?
2. How can we help others to discern God's presence in challenging times?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayer

Leader: Reconciling God, your touch brings life; your hand makes all things new.
Hear our prayers.

For the Church, a community of wounded healers, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who have gone before us to their place of rest, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: And for what else do we pray...

(When all who choose to share 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 the blessing of God enfold us, bring us a restful night, and give us refreshment for a new day. Amen. Alleluia!

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Cycle C
November 20, 2022

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: To Jesus Christ our Sovereign King, who is the world's salvation,

**All: all praise and honor do we bring and thanks and adoration.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:12-20

Brothers and sisters;
Let us give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light.

He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross through him, whether those on earth or those in heaven.

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

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Which image of Jesus or description of his actions, found in this passage, stands out for you?
2. How do you praise and thank God for the gift of Jesus? How can we help our parish to do the same?

Prayer at the End of the Meeting

Prayer of Gratitude

Leader: In a word or phrase, share the gratitude that is in your heart at this moment...

Closing Prayer

All: You raised up your Son, O God, and seated him at your right hand as the shepherd and king who seeks what is lost, binds up what is wounded, and strengthens what is weak. Empowered by the Spirit, may we share with others that which we have received from your hand, to the honor of Jesus Christ. Amen.