

# **Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing**

**Ordinary Time**  
(June – November 2023)

**Cycle A**

## 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,

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Associate Director  
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## Hints for the Prayer Leader

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

### Preparation before the Pastoral Council meeting

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

### A Walk Through the Prayer Outline

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

1. Invite those present to become quiet and remember that they are in the presence of God. After a brief pause, begin the *Invitation to Prayer*.
2. Either read the *Scripture* passage yourself or have someone else do so (ask them before the meeting begins).
3. Allow several minutes for *silent reflection* and consideration of the faith sharing questions.
4. Invite those present to respond (in groups of two or three or in the larger council group) to any of the suggested *questions for faith sharing* out loud. People may also choose to share how the reading spoke to them in general. All do not need to respond but allow silent pauses so that people can reflect comfortably.
5. Go on to the beginning of your meeting's agenda.

*Prayer at the end of the meeting (allow 5 minutes on your agenda):*

1. Begin the *intercessory prayers* as written in the prayer session.
2. Invite others to share their own prayers aloud.
3. When all who choose to share prayers are done, say "For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts."
4. Begin the *closing prayer*.

## Notes

1. The intercessory prayers may be moved to the end of the “prayer at the beginning of the meeting” or offered in the middle of the meeting—as well as at the end as suggested in the prayer sessions.
2. These prayer sessions, while designed for pastoral councils, can be used at the meetings of the parish staff and other parish committees with minor adaptation.

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

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

1. Participants are given time to reflect before sharing begins, and a period of comfortable silence might occur between individuals sharing. Silence is a vital part of the total process of faith sharing.
2. Sharing is optional. Each person shares at the time and on the level where he or she feels comfortable.
3. There is no set order for sharing (you do not need to go in a circle around the group).
4. Listen respectfully and openly. If someone does not hear the sharing or does not understand, he or she can ask for clarification.
5. There is no discussion or commenting on what is shared. An appropriate response from the prayer leader or group might be a smile, a nod, or a “thank you.”
6. The prayer leader and group are not there as “problem solvers” or “advice givers.”
7. Participants are encouraged to share in the first person (I feel...I believe...etc.).
8. Anything that is shared in the group is confidential and does not leave the group. It is meant to be a gift for this group only.

**Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**  
**June 4, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All: Glory to you, Source of all Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13*

Brothers and sisters, rejoice.  
Mend your ways, encourage one another,  
agree with one another, live in peace,  
and the God of love and peace will be with you.  
Greet one another with a holy kiss.  
All the holy ones greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Question for Faith Sharing*

1. *Where are we called to mend our ways and reconcile in our faith community?*
2. *To an outsider, would our parish be a place of welcome? How do we reflect the Holy Trinity?*

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers:*

**All: Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;  
to God who is, who was and who is to come. Alleluia!**

Leader: For all those searching for God and searching for meaning in  
their lives, we pray...

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

*Closing Prayer:*

**All: May our oneness in the Trinity bring peace to us and to our world.  
Alleluia!**

**Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ**  
**June 11, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: Jesus our Savior,  
you humble yourself to come to us in the simple meal of bread and wine  
transformed into your Body and Blood.  
Help us to be ever mindful of the mystery and gift we receive.

**All: Transform us, so that we might truly become your body:  
a people united in faith and love  
who bring your healing and peace to the world.**

***Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17***

Brothers and Sisters:  
The cup of blessing that we bless,  
is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?  
The bread that we break,  
is it not a participation in the body of Christ?  
Because the loaf of bread is one,  
we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *How am I the Body and Blood of Christ to those around me?*
2. *Many grains of wheat are needed for a loaf of bread; many grapes for a cup of wine. How can we help each member of our parish feel that they are truly a part of Christ's body?*
3. *How can we become a blessing for our larger community?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: When we began our meeting we heard, “Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” Let us offer our prayers for all who make up the body of Christ in this world.

That our church, acting as one body, might truly be the presence of Christ in the world, we pray.

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

Leader: That world leaders might open their hearts and minds to the message of unity and peace proclaimed by Christ, we pray.

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

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: Together, let us say the following prayer, based on a prayer by St. Teresa of Avila.

**All: Christ has no body now but ours.  
No hands, no feet, on earth but ours.  
Ours are the eyes through which he looks  
with compassion on this world.  
Ours are the feet with which he walks to do good.  
Ours are the hands, ours are the feet.  
Ours are the eyes, we are his body.  
Christ has no body now but ours.**

Leader: Come, let us be the body of Christ to the world.

**All: Amen.**

**11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**June 18, 2023**  
**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Come, O loving God.

**All: Fill us with your Spirit.**

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:36–9:38 (excerpt from Sunday Gospel)*

At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How do we embrace the responsibility of being laborers in the vineyard?*
2. *How do we help others see the gifts they have to offer?*

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: As laborers in the vineyard, we pray for all people and the needs of the world...

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

Leader: We beseech God to inspire men and women to serve in the community...

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

*Closing Prayer*

**All: As you sent the apostles, so bless us in our desire to bring your Word to others. Amen**



**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**June 25, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: The disciples were told to expect to suffer for their faith. The Good News was hidden and reviled by people who could not understand it. Jesus tells us not to be afraid of persecution, but to know that God will protect and defend us as we stand up for our own faith.

**All: God of all that is hidden and yet to be revealed, we gather together to praise you in our words and in our deeds.  
You have called us not be afraid: of those who could hurt us, of those who hurt the powerless, of those who parade their arrogance with no regard to your Word. Instead you have called us to acknowledge that You are Lord.  
Keep us diligent and eager to do your will, in the name of Jesus our Lord. AMEN!**

*Scripture Reading: Mathew 10:29-33 (excerpt from Sunday Gospel)*

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?  
Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge.  
Even all the hairs of your head are counted.  
So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.  
Everyone who acknowledges me before others  
I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.  
But whoever denies me before others,  
I will deny before my heavenly Father."

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *When have I felt "afraid" to speak out about my faith? Why was I afraid? What would help me find the courage I need?*
2. *How can we as a faith community speak out against those who harm others out of arrogance and greed?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### Intercessory Prayers

Leader: For the fears that hold us back, we pray for confidence in His love...

**All: Lord, soak us in your Love that we may have courage.**

Leader: For those who suffer because of their faith, make your Presence known...

**All: Lord, soak us in your Love that we may have courage.**

Leader: For our parish to stand as a beacon to others as we profess our Faith....

**All: Lord, soak us in your Love that we may have courage.**

Leader: For each of us, that God will use us as instruments of peace wherever we are...

**All: Lord, soak us in your Love that we may have courage.**

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, soak us in your Love that we may have courage.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: May God bless us and keep us.  
May God smile on us.  
May God show us kindness and fill us with peace.  
And may God bless us, Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit.  
May we always love and serve,  
filled with God's grace and peace,  
and ready to share them with all we meet.**

Leader: Let's share with each other a sign of peace in Christ to send us forth...

**13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 2, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever,  
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.  
For you have said, "My kindness is established forever;"  
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout;  
in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk.  
At your name they rejoice all the day,  
and through your justice they are exalted.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

You are the splendor of their strength,  
and by your favor our horn is exalted.  
For to the LORD belongs our shield,  
and the Holy One of Israel, our king.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

*Ps 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19*

***Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 4:8-11; 14-16***

One day Elisha came to Shunem,  
where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her.  
Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine.  
So she said to her husband, "I know that Elisha is a holy man of God.  
Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof  
and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp,  
so that when he comes to us he can stay there."  
Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.

Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?"  
His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes!  
She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years."  
Elisha said, "Call her."  
When the woman had been called and stood at the door,  
Elisha promised, "This time next year  
you will be fondling a baby son."

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

## *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *What in this passage from 2 Kings stands out to me?*
2. *What does it say about us taking the initiative to see other's needs?*
3. *What does it say about the goodness of the Lord?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Lord, we ask for eyes to see the needs of others and the strength & desire to meet those needs.

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

Leader: We offer you thanks for the many times you have given us our heart's desire...

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer:*

**All: May the goodness of God fill us with joy and energy with which to seek out the needs of others.  
Amen.**

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 9, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

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

***Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:25-30***

At that time Jesus exclaimed:

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned  
you have revealed them to the childlike.

Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

All things have been handed over to me by my Father.

No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except  
the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,  
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for I am meek and humble of heart;  
and you will find rest for yourselves.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *What burden do I wish to bring to the Lord tonight?*
2. *How, as a pastoral council and as a parish community, can we encourage those who are burdened to live in God’s care?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer:*

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

**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 16, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: Loving God,  
You are ever faithful to your people, ever steadfast in your promises.  
Grant us the wisdom we need to do your will here on earth.  
Grant us the love we need to serve the people you place in our paths.  
And grant us the hope and strength we need to continue your work,  
even when we grow discouraged.  
We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who is one with you and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

All: Amen.

***Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11***

Thus says the LORD:  
Just as from the heavens  
the rain and snow come down  
and do not return there  
till they have watered the earth,  
making it fertile and fruitful,  
giving seed to the one who sows  
and bread to the one who eats,  
so shall my word be  
that goes forth from my mouth;  
my word shall not return to me void,  
but shall do my will,  
achieving the end for which I sent it.

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *Time after time in the Scripture we hear that, when God speaks, something happens: creation comes into being, a covenant is created, the Word becomes flesh. What are some examples of this in my own life?*
2. *Sometimes our own words seem to come up short. When we speak or act out of good intention but seem to fail in our purpose; what are some ways we can avoid becoming discouraged?*
3. *How is God trying to “water” our community and make us “fertile and fruitful”? How might we respond?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: With trust and hope, let us turn to our loving God with our prayers and concerns.  
That your church may seek new ways to bring your Word to the hearts of men and women across the globe, we pray.

**All: Lord, let your will be done.**

Leader: That the world might prove to be fruitful ground for the seeds of your justice and mercy, we pray.

**All: Lord, let your will be done.**

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:

**All: Lord, let your will be done.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: All-powerful God,  
you speak, and your will is done.  
Open our hearts to hear and receive your holy Word.  
Enliven and encourage us in times of darkness and doubt.  
Help us to achieve the purpose for which you have created us.  
We ask this as we ask all things,  
through your living Word, Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

Leader: Let us go in peace and the protection of God.

**All: Amen.**



**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 23, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer:*

**All: Spirit of Love, enlighten us so that we live in your love and light. Let us be constantly aware of your presence and your seed-bearing grace in all our actions. Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Romans 8:26-27*

Brothers and sisters:  
the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness;  
for we do not know how to pray as we ought  
but the Spirit intercedes with inexpressible groanings.  
And the one who searches hearts  
knows what is the intention of the Spirit,  
according to God's will.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Question for Faith Sharing*

1. *What concerns do we have for which we don't know how to pray?*
2. *How can we invite the Holy Spirit to intervene on our behalf?*

**Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

*Intercessory Prayers*

For whom do we wish to pray knowing the Holy Spirit will intercede...

(Take time to mention situations and people)

*Closing Prayer*

**All: At the close of this day, we beg the Spirit to give us peace. May the peace that is in our hearts bring peace to this community. Amen.**

**17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 30, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: Brothers and sisters,  
We know that all things work for good for those who love God.  
We come here tonight, not for our own purposes,  
but to do the work that God has gathered us together to do.  
Let us pray-

All: **Your kingdom come; your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

***Scripture Reading: Matthew 13:44-52***

Jesus said to his disciples:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away.

“Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

“Do you understand all these things?”

They answered, “Yes.”

And he replied,

“Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.”

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *Each of us invests precious time and energy to participate in the work of this pastoral council. What do I hope will come of my investment?*
2. *Considering whatever changes our parish has gone through recently, what vision do we have for our future that will be worth the price we've paid?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: O Merciful God, you created us in your image.  
May we be faithful to you in all we do and bring glory to your holy name.

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

Leader: Precious Jesus, you instructed us in the way of the kingdom of God.  
Give us understanding hearts.

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

Leader: Comforter Most Holy, you enfold us in the Spirit of God.  
Bless your servants.

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

### *Closing Prayer*

Women: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Men: Enkindle in us the fire of your divine love.

Women: Send forth your spirit and we shall be recreated.

Men: And you shall renew the face of the earth.

**Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord**  
**August 6, 2017**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice;  
let the many islands be glad.  
Clouds and darkness are round about him,  
justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.  
R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

The mountains melt like wax before the LORD,  
before the LORD of all the earth.  
The heavens proclaim his justice,  
and all peoples see his glory.  
R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.**

Because you, O LORD, are the Most High over all the earth,  
exalted far above all gods.  
R. **The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.** in our service.

*Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9*

**All: Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 1:16-19*

Beloved:  
We did not follow cleverly devised myths  
when we made known to you  
the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty.  
For he received honor and glory from God the Father  
when that unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory,  
"This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased."  
We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven  
while we were with him on the holy mountain.  
Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable.  
You will do well to be attentive to it,  
as to a lamp shining in a dark place,  
until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

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

## *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *As leaders in our community, how do we promote the majesty of God in our midst?*
2. *As we reflect on our agenda tonight, how does this knowledge of God as King and Lord help inform our decisions?*

## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Lord, You are our King. Hear our prayers this day:

(After a few moments of silence, begin sharing your prayers)

**All: Lord, Come in power and love.**

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

**All: Lord, Come in power and love.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Bless us this night with the grace to see your Majesty and love in our lives. Amen.**

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**August 13, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All:** Gracious God, open our ears though the noise of chaos to hear your call. May the Holy Spirit be our guide to hear what is right and good and help us to see you in all things big and small.

*Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a*

At the mountain of God, Horeb,  
Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter.  
Then the LORD said to him,  
"Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD;  
the LORD will be passing by."  
A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains  
and crushing rocks before the LORD—  
but the LORD was not in the wind.  
After the wind there was an earthquake—  
but the LORD was not in the earthquake.  
After the earthquake there was fire—  
but the LORD was not in the fire.  
After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.  
When he heard this,  
Elijah hid his face in his cloak  
and went and stood at the entrance of the cave.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How do we learn to cut out the loud distractions and hear the small voice of God?*
2. *How well do we listen to each other as council members? How could we improve?*
3. *Where is the small voice of God tonight as we discuss the concerns of the parish?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For all who serve others in any capacity, that they do so humbly and with listening ears. We pray to the Lord.

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Tender God, creator of all that is good, we thank you for all that you give us. Help us, as we go forth from this gathering, to cultivate a listening ear to hear You, even in the midst of all the turmoil and distractions of the world. Amen.**

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**August 20, 2023**  
**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Let us quiet our hearts and focus our minds on being together in God's name...

**All: Ever living God, you gather us together in this meeting to carry the Gospel of Christ to all people. Bless the members of this group. Let Your Spirit enlighten our minds and guide all of our actions. May we be renewed in faith and united in love. Help us work toward the fulfillment of the work of your church, to your greater honor and glory, forever and ever. AMEN.**

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 15:21-28*

At that time, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon." But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her. Jesus' disciples came and asked him, "Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us." He said in reply, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said in reply, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." Then Jesus said to her in reply, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Jesus identified the strengths of the woman. How do we identify and build on others' strengths?*
2. *Jesus challenged the woman and the woman challenged Jesus. How do we challenge or let ourselves be challenged so we may grow?*



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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Men: Take the divisions in our world and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

Women: Take any divisions in our parish and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

Men: Take divisions in our families and relationships, and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

Women: Take stresses & pressures that keep us from being our best selves and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

Men: Take the pain or sufferings or illness of anyone in need and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

Women: Take the sins of our church, and of each of us, and  
**All: heal us, O God.**

### *Closing Prayer:*

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

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

**All: Amen.**

**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**August 27, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All: I will give thanks to your name,  
Because of your kindness and your truth:  
When I called, you answered me:  
You built up strength within me.**

*Responsorial Psalm 138*

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 16:13 - 20*

Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi and he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”  
Simon Peter said in reply, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus said to him in reply, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah.  
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.  
And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,  
And the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.  
I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.  
Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on  
earth shall be loosed in heaven.”  
Then he strictly ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *When was the last time we found ourselves making this confession, “You are the Christ- the Son of the Living God” with utter conviction?*
2. *How do we nourish this transformative confession of faith in our community?*
3. *How does knowing this in our hearts affect the way we approach the concerns of the Parish Council?*

## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### ***Intercessory Prayers***

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

**All: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!**

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

**All: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!**

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

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

**All: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!**

### ***Closing Prayer:***

**All: We give thanks to you for your kindness and compassion.  
We trust that you hear our prayers and guide our actions. Amen.**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**September 3, 2023**  
**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: We begin this new academic year with hearts that seek to please God and follow His path for us as a people of faith.

**All: Keep our hearts open to new opportunities as we discern your will.**

***Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-2***

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

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

***Silent reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *What connection is there between offering our bodies as part of our spiritual worship and discerning the will of God?*
2. *What resources do I use to better discern God's will in my daily life?*
3. *How can we as a pastoral council discern God's will for our parish community?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

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

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

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**September 10, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader:        Holy God,  
                  out of love, you created us and our world.  
                  In love and mercy, you redeemed us in Jesus, Loving Word made flesh.  
                  With patience and love, you remain with us  
                  and sanctify us through your Holy Spirit.  
                  Help us to be your people,  
                  people whose lives are lived in loving service to all.  
                  We ask this, as we ask all things, through your Son, Jesus Christ.

**All:            Amen.**

***Scripture Reading: Romans 13:8-10***

Brothers and Sisters: Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this saying, namely "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *Christ calls us to actively love each other. Are there times when a loving action has brought me closer to another?*
2. *Are there times when such an action has been extended to a person I found difficult? What happened?*
3. *How can we, as a Pastoral Council, lead our people to love one another with concrete actions—not just pious words?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: As people of love, let us present God with the prayers and concerns of our hearts.

For our church, that we might set aside petty divisions and become a people that truly loves and serves each other and our world, we pray...  
**All: God of love, hear our prayer.**

Leader: For the peoples of the world, that we may put love into action by providing decent housing, adequate health care, and solid education for all, we pray...

**All: God of love, hear our prayer.**

(Leader may add or invite prayers that address the concerns dealt with in this meeting.)

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 of love, hear our prayer.**

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: May love be in your eyes so that you see Christ in all you meet.

**All: May love be on your lips, so that you speak gently and kindly.**

Leader: May love be in your ears, so that you may listen to others with patience.

**All: May love be in your hands, so that you may work steadfastly for others.**

Leader: May love be in your feet, so that you may go wherever you are needed.

**All: And may love be in your mind and heart, so that you may know Love and be Love for the world. Amen.**

**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**September 17, 2023**

**Prayer At the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Let us become aware of the life that is ours through the suffering of Jesus in loving us to death, death on the cross. (Pause for a moment of silence.)

*Scripture Reading: Sirach 27:30 – 28:7*

Wrath and anger are hateful things,  
yet the sinner hugs them tight.  
The vengeful will suffer the Lord's vengeance,  
for he remembers their sins in detail.  
Forgive your neighbor's injustice;  
then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.  
Could anyone nourish anger against another  
and expect healing from the Lord?  
Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself,  
and seek pardon for his own sins?  
If one who is but flesh cherishes wrath,  
who will forgive his sins?  
Remember your last days, set enmity aside;  
remember death and decay, and cease from sin!  
Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor;  
remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Question for Faith Sharing*

1. *How do Sirach's words and Jesus' command to forgive "not seven times but seventy-seven times" speak to us today?*
2. *How are we as a faith community called to work for reconciliation and healing in our community?*



## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayer*

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

That we might imitate Christ our Savior and learn to forgive as he forgave,  
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:

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

### *Closing Prayer:*

**All: Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*-Collect Prayer for September 13, 2020*

**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**September 24, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Let us pray...O Gracious God,  
Women: You are more generous than we could ever imagine.  
Men: Your goodness is deeper than our human hearts can fathom.  
Women: Help us move beyond the confines of our limits.  
Men: Prepare us to receive your holy Word.  
**All: Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 20:1-16a*

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

Going out about nine o'clock, the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.'  
So they went off.

And he went out again around noon, and around three o'clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o'clock, the landowner found others standing around, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.'  
He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.'

When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat.'

He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you? Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money? Are you envious because I am generous?'

Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

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

## *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *What about this gospel story moved me?*
2. *God's generosity is outrageous by our standards of fairness. Do I sense I am being called to enlarge my heart and spirit in some particular way?*
3. *In what ways do I sense our community can broaden our perspective or expand our horizons to better exemplify the gospel message of God's amazingly generous nature?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Almighty God, you put in us a spark of your divine love.  
Help us to live our lives inspired by your love.

**All: Lord, grant us your mercy.**

Leader: Christ Jesus, throughout your ministry you taught us the way to love.  
In an outrageous act of love, in your Passion, Death and Resurrection, you freed us from sin so we could love again. Help us live lives of gratitude.

**All: Lord, grant us your mercy.**

Leader: Holy God, you pour out your Spirit upon us  
and we are strengthened in love.  
Help us to live lives of generosity.

**All: Lord, grant us your mercy.**

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, grant us your mercy.**

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: O God, come to our assistance.

**All: Lord, make haste to help us.**

**26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 1, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All: Gracious God, give us ears to hear your call to us. Sharpen our senses to recognize you in the circumstances of our daily life and to follow where you lead us.**

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 21:28-32*

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people:  
“What is your opinion?  
A man had two sons. He came to the first and said,  
‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’  
He said in reply, ‘I will not,’  
But afterwards changed his mind and went.  
The man came to the other son and gave the same order.  
He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go.  
Which of the two did his father’s will?”  
They answered, “The first.”

Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you,  
tax collectors and prostitutes  
are entering the kingdom of God before you.  
When John came to you in the way of righteousness,  
you did not believe him;  
but tax collectors and prostitutes did.  
Yet even when you saw that,  
you did not later change your minds and believe him.”

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *When have I said no and then thought better of it and said YES?*
2. *What does this gospel challenge us to do differently in our parish?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Lord, protect and guide your people as we strive to bring peace and justice to our communities...

**All: Lord, hear us.**

Leader: Lord, strengthen those who struggle to follow your call...

**All: Lord, hear us.**

Leader: Lord, give us courage to listen and see your way for us...

**All: Lord, hear us.**

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 us.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: May we hear the Shepherd's voice and follow it boldly. Amen.**

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 8, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to prayer*

**All: Lord God, giver of peace and healer of souls, may your peace be upon us as we gather this night.**

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:6-9*

Brothers and sisters:

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.

Finally, brothers and sisters,  
whatever is true, whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just, whatever is pure,  
whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious,  
if there is any excellence  
and if there is anything worthy of praise,  
think about these things.

Keep on doing what you have learned and received  
and heard and seen in me.

Then the God of peace will be with you.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How well does our parish or cluster pray together?*
2. *What virtues does the Council have? What virtues does it lack?*
3. *What issues in the parish or cluster need peaceful resolutions?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For all who serve others in any capacity, that they do so humbly and with loving kindness, we pray to the Lord.

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Good and gracious God, in you we seek peace and joy. Be with us as we journey through life and encounter chaos and sadness. May we always know your love among us in the person of Jesus Christ, your only Son. Amen.**

**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 15, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around...

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 25:6-10a*

On this mountain the Lord of hosts  
will provide for all peoples  
a feast of rich food and choice wines,  
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.

On this mountain he will destroy  
the veil that veils all peoples,  
the web that is woven over all nations;  
he will destroy death forever.

The Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face;  
the reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth;  
for the Lord has spoken.

On that day it will be said:  
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!  
This is the LORD for whom we looked;  
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"  
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Question for Faith Sharing*

1. *Which part of this portrayal of God's intentions for us, and all people, speaks most powerfully to me right now?*
2. *How do we as a parish support those experiencing grief or loss? Is there more we could do?*



## **Prayer at the End of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: For all those who are suffering and in tears tonight:

**All: God of mercy, 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: God of mercy, hear our prayer.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: May the grace of the night's stillness be mine.  
May the grace of the moon's guidance be mine.  
May the grace of heaven's vastness be mine  
to renew my soul in sleep  
until the morning angels awaken me.  
Amen.**

**29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 22, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: We are the chosen ones of God – chosen to receive the gift of life,  
chosen to receive the gift of faith,  
chosen in our baptism to be disciples of Jesus  
in the midst of all the complexities and challenges of today's world.

*Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5b*

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ; grace to you and peace.

We give thanks to God always for all of you, remembering you in our prayers,  
unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love and endurance in  
hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father, knowing, brothers and  
sisters loved by God, how you were chosen. For our gospel did not come to you  
in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with much conviction.

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How do we share the gift of God's love with others?*
2. *How do we help others know and share their gifts? Whose gifts have we overlooked in our community?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: O God, you share your life with us through the talents you give us.  
Make us responsible stewards of these gifts, we pray...

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

Leader: Jesus, you knew the vulnerability of your disciples.  
Guide and protect your Church, all who minister to your people  
and all who suffer from addictions of any kind, we pray...

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

Leader: One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is courage. May this gift strengthen us  
to live God's will with determination and conviction, we pray...

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

Leader: Your Spirit dwells in us, forming us in love. Help us to remember that  
you are at work in us, bringing love to a broken world, we pray...

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Lord Christ, you have no body on earth but ours,  
no hands but ours, no feet but ours.  
Ours are the eyes through which your compassion  
must look out on the world.  
Ours are the feet by which you may still go about doing good.  
Ours are the hands with which you bless people now.  
Bless our minds and bodies, that we may be blessing to others. Amen**

St. Theresa of Avila

**30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 29, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Gracious and loving God, we often test you with our slowness and our refusal to do what you ask of us. Have mercy on us, and touch our hearts so that we might always do your will. We ask this as we ask all things, through your Son Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:34-40*

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *What are some of the ways I show my love for God? What are some ways I have seen others show such love?*
2. *How is this parish or cluster being called to show love for our neighbors?*
3. *How can we help our fellow parishioners live out these commands in the next year?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Let us bring our meeting to a close by thanking God for this time together and asking for God's help for ourselves and all who are in need.

For our church, that we might love our God, with one heart, soul, and mind...and that we might love our neighbors as ourselves, we pray.

**All: Gracious God, teach us to love.**

Leader: For all nations, that we might place ourselves in loving service to each other in order to bring about the justice and peace of the kingdom of God, we pray.

**All: Gracious God, teach us to love.**

(Leader may add or invite prayers that address the concerns dealt with in this meeting.)

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: Gracious God, teach us to love.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Loving and compassionate God,  
Touch our hearts that we might love you without reserve,  
our souls that we might remain fervent in our faith,  
and our minds that we might seek to know you.  
Teach us to love and serve our neighbors  
and to be grateful for the gift of being your sons and daughters.  
Guide us and protect us always...  
We ask this in the name of the Father, the Son  
and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Solemnity of All Saints**  
**November 1, 2023**  
**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: Blessed are the mourners in our midst,  
All: **for they will be comforted.**

Leader: Blessed are the merciful in our midst,  
All: **for they will be shown mercy.**

Leader: Blessed are the peacemakers in our midst,  
All: **for they are children of God.**

***Scripture Reading: 1 John 3:1-3***

Beloved:  
See what love the Father has bestowed on us  
that we may be called the children of God.  
Yet so we are.  
The reason the world does not know us  
is that it did not know him.  
Beloved, we are God's children now;  
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.  
We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,  
for we shall see him as he is.  
Those who have this hope based on him make themselves pure,  
as he is pure.

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

***Silent Reflection***

***Questions for Faith Sharing***

1. *What does it mean to me to be reminded that I am a child of God **now**?*
2. *How can we help each other, our family and friends, and the rest of our parish community strive to become the people God calls us to be?*

## 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, our neighborhoods, and our homes, 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, we pray...

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

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: Let us pray in the words of Thomas Merton...

**All: My Lord God...**  
**I do not really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.**  
**But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you and I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.**  
**And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road.**  
**You are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.**

**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**November 12, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: I am the resurrection and the life.

**All: All those who believe in me will receive life everlasting.**

*Scripture Reading: 1 Thes 4:13-18*

We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,  
about those who have fallen asleep,  
so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope.  
For if we believe that Jesus died and rose,  
so too will God, through Jesus,  
bring with him those who have fallen asleep.  
Indeed, we tell you this, on the word of the Lord,  
that we who are alive,  
who are left until the coming of the Lord,  
will surely not precede those who have fallen asleep.  
For the Lord himself, with a word of command,  
with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God,  
will come down from heaven,  
and the dead in Christ will rise first.  
Then we who are alive, who are left,  
will be caught up together with them in the clouds  
to meet the Lord in the air.  
Thus we shall always be with the Lord.  
Therefore, console one another with these words..

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Question for Faith Sharing*

1. *What memories would we like to share of those who have died and witnessed to faith and hope during their life?*



## **Prayer At the Conclusion of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayer*

Leader: In the form of a litany let us name deceased love ones...  
after each name pray, **We give thanks!**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Comforting God, you are present with us and we live in you.  
Strengthen us to bring hope into the lives of those we serve  
as leaders of this community. Amen.**

**33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**November 19, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

**All:           Remain with us as we praise you in all of creation.  
Strengthen us to be co-creators in building our world.  
Grace us with abundant fruitfulness. Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: Psalm 128 (Setting by Nan C. Merrill)*

**All:           Blessed are you who reverence the Beloved,  
who walk in Love's way!**

Men:           You radiate an inner joy and peace wherever you go;  
compassion draws you to the gates of those in need.

Women:       Families and friends gather upon your doorstep;  
children run to greet you with open arms.  
Yes, blessed are you who reverence the Beloved!

**All:           Strangers feel at home in your presence;  
the oppressed are comforted by your support.  
Blessed indeed are you who reverence the Beloved!  
Peace be with you!**

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How are we reaching out to the poor and the needy in our community? Are we missing anyone?*
  
2. *How can we create new ways of being a community of joy?*

## **Prayer at the Close of the Meeting**

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: As we gather the fruit of our evening, in deep trust let us bring our prayers to our God...

May compassion always draw us to the gates of those in need, we pray:

**All: God, the Beloved, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Please offer any 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: God, the Beloved, hear our prayer.**

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with us.

Let us share a sign of peace with one another.

**Our Lord Jesus Christ the King**  
**November 26, 2023**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord Jesus, we praise you,  
**All: Lord have mercy.**  
Leader: Christ Jesus, we give thanks for your love,  
**All: Christ have mercy.**  
Leader: Lord Jesus, we rejoice in your life within us,  
**All: Lord have mercy.**

*Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:31-40 (Excerpt from Sunday Gospel)*

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will assemble before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him and say, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?” And the king will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *How do I try to fulfill your responsibility to some of those in need, beyond my immediate family or friends?*
2. *What is my favorite charity and how did I choose it? How do I support it?*
3. *How do we help our parish grow in understanding stewardship?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: Help us to simplify our lives, to know how to distinguish want from need, we pray...

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

Leader: You are ever present to us in our need, let us not be indifferent to the sufferings of others, we pray,...

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

Leader: Spirit of God, help us to realize the life to which we are called. Guide us to find appropriate ways to advocate on behalf of the powerless, we pray...

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

Leader: Heal our communities and homes of violence. Give us the compassion to forgive all who have injured us in any way, we pray...

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

Leader: Jesus, you did not call your disciples servants but friends. Help us to build your Kingdom by mutual respect and collaboration, we pray...

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

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: We praise you, Lord and God, for you are a Shepherd King, who calls us to show your love to those who suffer: the poor, the sick, the lonely, the grieving and those without resources to improve their lives...And so we pray...

**All: Make us instruments of your  
peace: where there is hatred, let us  
sow love; where there is injury,  
pardon;  
where there is discord,  
union; where there is doubt,  
faith; where there is despair,  
hope; where there is  
darkness, light and where  
there is sadness, joy.  
O divine master, grant that we may not so much  
seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to  
understand; to be loved as to  
love;  
for it is in giving that we receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

*(Prayer of St. Francis)*