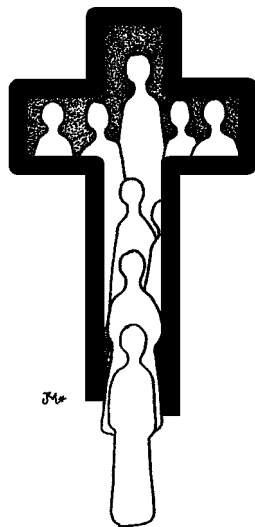


# Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing

## Lent – Pentecost 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. 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.

**Meeting Obstacles/Lent**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent**  
**March 6, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

**Invitation to Prayer**

Leader: Teach us your ways, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth.  
**All: Teach us your ways, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth.**  
Leader: Give us undivided hearts, Lord, to praise your name.  
**All: Teach us your ways, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth.**  
Leader: You, Lord, are merciful and gracious.  
**All: Teach us your ways, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth.**  
Leader: Give your strength to your servants.  
**All: Teach us your ways, O Lord, that we may walk in your truth.**  
*(from Psalm 86)*

**Scripture Reading: Luke 4:1-13**

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry.

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, "I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me." Jesus said to him in reply, "It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.'"

Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and: 'With their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him in reply, "It also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

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

## *Silent Reflection*

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

- 1. What parts of my life do I need to look at in order to serve better as a true Christian leader?*
- 2. What are the stumbling blocks for our parish or cluster as we try to be a united community?*
- 3. What are we trying to cling to that prevents us from working in better harmony with other parishes or nearby organizations?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For wisdom and strength for our Pastoral Council, that when faced with the difficulties, jealousies, and fears that change brings, we may be able to do what is good and true. We pray to the Lord...

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Lord God,  
our Guide on the journey,  
as we walk the path of leadership in this community,  
may we know your presence with us always  
as did our ancestors of faith who walked before us.  
May we have the strength to keep going when the path becomes  
difficult and challenging.  
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

**Transfiguration and the Journey to the Cross**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**March 13, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: You are God's chosen Son, the one transfigured on the mountain.

**All: We praise you, Jesus our Christ.**

Leader: You are God's chosen Son, the one who journeyed to Jerusalem, suffered and died for our sake.

**All: We praise you, Jesus our Christ.**

Leader: You are God's chosen Son who calls us tonight to listen to your Word in Scripture, to glimpse your presence in one another, and to share in the leadership of your church.

**All: We praise you, Jesus our Christ.**

*Scripture Reading: Luke 9:28b-36*

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But he did not know what he was saying.

While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

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. Jesus was transfigured in appearance while at prayer. When has my prayer transfigured me or transfigured the way I look at a particular situation?*
- 2. In Luke's gospel Jesus' transfiguration immediately precedes his journeying to Jerusalem, a path that will lead to his suffering and death. How do I see the connection between these two critical gospel events?*
- 3. How does this gospel passage relate to the work we will do tonight?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For all those who suffer from injustice and the violence of others,  
we pray.

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: God our Father, we seek to listen to your Son Jesus and to follow him as his disciples. May we bring his good news to all we meet. Amen.**



**Fruitful Growth**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**March 20, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Lord God, source of all life and growth, help us to live lives of mercy, compassion and forgiveness as we work together to spread the Good News of your love to others.

**All: Through your guidance may our efforts this evening be fruitful and help our community to move forward in growth.**

*Scripture Reading: Luke 13:1-9*

Some people told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the blood of their sacrifices. Jesus said to them in reply, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were greater sinners than all other Galileans? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did! Or those eighteen people who were killed when the tower at Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than everyone else who lived in Jerusalem? By no means! But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!" And he told them this parable: "There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What are the fruits of this council in the past year?*
2. *What can we do to be a more fruitful council?*
3. *Where is God calling us to consider this scripture reading in our meeting tonight?*

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

### ***Intercessory Prayers***

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

For all people of goodwill, that they continue to repent for wrongdoings and put their faith in the mercy of the Lord, we pray to the Lord.

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

Leader: For those who lead the church and this community, that they be guided by Jesus the savior of the 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 ...

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

### ***Closing Prayer***

**All: Lord God, Creator of the universe,  
we give you thanks and praise for the many gifts you have given us.  
Be our protection and our help in whatever we do  
and wherever we go.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Reconciliation and Renewal in Christ**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent**  
**March 27, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: O God of all creation,  
you are constantly at work in our world,  
renewing, refreshing and reconciling all of creation to yourself.  
Enable us, your servants, to assist you in your work.  
Use us as instruments of your vision.  
Bring about healing and peace through our efforts  
until we are One in you forever.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

*Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21*

Brothers and sisters: whoever is in Christ is a new creation:  
the old things have passed away;  
behold, new things have come.  
And all this is from God,  
who has reconciled us to himself through Christ  
and given us the ministry of reconciliation,  
namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,  
not counting their trespasses against them  
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.  
So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us.  
We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.  
For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin,  
so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. During the past month, how has God used you as an ambassador, inviting people to be reconciled with each other and with God through your efforts?
2. What areas in our community (church or larger) do you think need reconciliation? What specific things do you think you/we can do?
3. How can we, as the pastoral council, become a model of reconciliation for our faith community, especially during this holy season of Lent? How do you think this could affect the parish?

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

**Intercessory Prayers**

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
That the church be ever open to the workings of the Holy Spirit, we pray:  
**All: Forgiving Lord, hear our prayer.**

(The leader may add prayers that address subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)

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

**Closing Prayer**

Leader: Let us say the *Prayer of St. Francis* together:

**All: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
Where there is injury, pardon,  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I 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.**

**The Desert/New Life**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**  
**April 3, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:       The desert is the habitat where we are most aware of our need for water.  
On the spiritual journey, the desert is the habitat where we grow aware of  
just how much we need the grace of God.

O God of Infinite Mercies,  
you are the wellspring of our desire.

**All:           Open our hearts that we may receive the Word of Life.**

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:18-21*

Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not;  
see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
In the desert I make a way; in the wasteland, rivers.

Wild beasts honor me, jackals and ostriches,  
for I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland  
for my chosen people to drink,  
the people whom I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise.

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

***Questions for Silent Reflection and Faith Sharing***

*The leader allows some time in silence for the reading to settle in, then slowly,  
thoughtfully, poses the following invitation:*

Leader:       Take a moment to let the Holy Spirit remind you of a time when you were  
in the desert--perhaps it was a time when your life seemed wildly out of  
control... or when happiness was dried up by depression or pain.... or a  
time when you felt completely at a loss...Recall a time when you really  
needed God....

Now recall moving out of that time....  
Do you have a sense of God making a way for you.... renewing your  
spirit....

*After a time in silence, the leader initiates the time for faith sharing:*

Leader: I invite anyone who would like to share what it was like to recall this experience to do so.

*When all who wish to share have had a chance to do so, the leader begins the intercessory prayers.*

***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: Lord God, we thank you for all the times you have made a way to bring new life into our lives when we thought there was no way. Help us to notice the new life emerging in us today, for this we pray to the Lord...

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

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

(When all who choose are finished voicing prayers) That we may have vision to notice when God is working to bring about a new thing in our parish community, we pray to the Lord...

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

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

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

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting: Psalm 42: 1-2, 8-9**

**All: As a deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I enter and see the face of God?**

**Deep calls to deep in the roar of your torrents;  
all your waves and breakers sweep over me.  
By day may the Lord send his mercy,  
And by night may his righteousness be with me,  
I will pray to the God of my life.  
Amen.**

**Humble Service**  
**Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion**  
**April 10, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Open wide the doors and gates.

All: **Lift high the ancient portals. The King of glory enters.**

Leader: Who is the king of glory?

All: **He is God, the mighty Lord. (Psalm 24:9)**

*Scripture Reading: Philippians 2: 6-11*

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *How do we as a council empty ourselves and become servants of God and God's people?*
2. *How can we become greater servants of our community as a whole?*
3. *Who are some of the greatest servants of God that you know?*
4. *Where is God calling us to consider this scripture reading in our meeting tonight?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

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,  
it is through your Son Jesus that we learn  
the meaning of true love and service.  
May we always follow in the footsteps of Christ. Amen.**



**Resurrection/New Life/Hope**  
**Easter Sunday**  
**April 17, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Alleluia, give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name!  
**All: Alleluia, give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name!**  
Leader: Make known God's deeds among the peoples.  
**All: Alleluia, give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name!**  
Leader: Sing to God! Sing praises to God!  
**All: Alleluia, give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name!**  
Leader: Glory in God's holy name.  
**All: Alleluia, give thanks to the Lord, call on God's name!**  
*(from Psalm 105)*

*Scripture Reading: John 20:1-9*

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

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. *Where do we (individually or as a parish) seek and find our Lord?*
2. *How do we share what we find?*
3. *As a pastoral council when or where do we give up easily when things get difficult? What might an act of faith in God's promise of new life look like for us?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
For those in leadership positions in our church, that they may continue to proclaim the good news of the risen Jesus in all they say and do, we pray to the Lord...

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

Leader: Risen Jesus,  
at this time we meet you at the tomb with its memories of fear and suffering. Grant that we may also come to delight with joy in your risen presence, right here in our midst.

**All: Amen.**

**Faith and Doubt**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**April 24, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Christ our savior, you call us to forgive others.  
**All: My Lord and my God!**  
Leader: Christ our brother, you offer us life in your name.  
**All: My Lord and my God!**  
Leader: Christ our friend, you give us the Holy Spirit.  
**All: My Lord and my God!**

*Scripture Reading: John 20:19-31*

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

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

## *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Have there been times in your own life when you have wavered in faith? What or who encouraged you to believe?*
2. *How can our community embrace those who are struggling to believe in Christ or to follow his path as disciples?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For our young people, that they might find hope and support in our Catholic community, we pray.

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

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...  
(When all those 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,  
we ask you to increase our faith  
and help us to imitate Christ more closely  
so that others will be drawn to a life of faith and discipleship.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**The Courage to Witness**  
**3rd Sunday of Easter**  
**May 1, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

**Invitation to Prayer**

Leader:        Good and gracious God,  
                  your loving actions proclaim you our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.  
                  Help our actions and our words give witness  
                  to the good you have done for us and for all people,  
                  in all places and throughout all time.  
                  Give us the courage and strength we need  
                  to bear the name "Christian"  
                  and to become the example of Christ  
                  in our homes, schools, and workplaces each day.  
                  We ask this through the one who loved us to his death  
                  and brought us to new life.

**All:            Amen.**

***Scripture Reading: Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41***

When the captain and the court officers had brought the apostles in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, "We gave you strict orders, did we not, to stop teaching in that name? Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man's blood upon us."

But Peter and the apostles said in reply, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him."

The Sanhedrin ordered the apostles to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name.

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

***Silent Reflection***

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

1. *How boldly do you proclaim your faith to your colleagues and friends? If you were arrested today, what would be the evidence that you are a Christian?*
2. *What are some of the things that prevent you/us from acting in a way that is clearly a Christian manner?*
3. *How could an outsider know that this pastoral council was about the work of Christ?*
4. *What are some of the ways, other than prayer, in which we can express our faith during our meeting tonight?*

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

***Intercessory Prayers***

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.  
That church leaders and all the baptized follow the example of the apostles and live in a way that defines us clearly as followers of Christ, we pray:

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

(The leader may add prayers that address the subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)

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

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

***Closing Prayer***

**All: God of all forgiveness,  
be merciful on us for the times when our courage has failed us  
and we have acted in a way that is less than Christian.  
Send your Holy Spirit to enliven our faith, strengthen our resolve,  
and increase the fortitude we need to live your Word.  
Grant this through the One in whose name we live. Amen.**

**The Good Shepherd**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**May 8, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*The format of this week's prayer combines silent reflection on the Scripture reading and faith sharing with intercessory prayers. The leader needs to make sure that it is clear to everyone how the flow of the prayer will progress.*

***Invitation to Prayer***

Leader: Lord Jesus,  
we thank you for gathering us together  
to listen to your Word, to listen to and with each other.

**All: Good Shepherd, guide us in our prayer.**

Leader: The flow of our prayer tonight will go like this:  
I will proclaim the gospel reading. There will be a brief period of silence to rest in God's Word. Then I will repeat the reading, one sentence at a time. Each sentence is followed by silence. Out of that silent reflection anyone who wishes to speak a comment or prayer of intercession is invited to do so.  
This pattern--the sentence from Scripture--silence--spoken prayer--is repeated until we complete the passage.

***Scripture Reading: John 10: 27-30***

Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice;

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No one can take them out of my hand.

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,

and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.

The Father and I are one.”

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting:**

**All:           O God of Mercies,  
                  hold us safely in your care.  
                  Tender Shepherd,  
                  may we take our rest beside you, never far from your voice.  
                  Holy Spirit of Eternal Life,  
                  abide in us,  
                  now and forever.  
                  Amen.**



**Hospitality**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**May 15, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader:        God of us all, we can do nothing without you.  
                    Your love sustains us and protects us in all that we do.

**All:            Be with us as we come together and use our God-given gifts  
                    to discern the many issues put before us.**

*Scripture Reading: John 13:31-33a, 34-35*

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

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

*Silent Reflection*

*Questions for Faith Sharing*

- a) *How does this community show its love to strangers and its compassion toward the poor or marginalized?*
- b) *What can our council do to make our community more welcoming?*

## Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

That we continue to reach out to those who are on the fringes of society and of our church by showing our loving kindness at all times, 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: Good and gracious God,  
we ask your blessing upon our efforts to reach out to others.  
Help us to live up to our baptismal call  
to spread the love of Christ to all those we encounter. Amen.**

**Peace and Reconciliation**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**May 22, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.  
**All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.**  
Leader: Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.  
**All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.**  
Leader: I am going away and I will come back to you.  
**All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.**  
Leader: If you loved me you would rejoice.  
**All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.**  
*(from John 14)*

*Scripture Reading: John 14:23-29*

Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

"You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

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

## *Silent Reflection*

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

1. *What causes the hearts of our parishioners to be troubled or afraid?*
2. *How do the ministries of our parish guide the troubled or afraid to the peace of Jesus?*
3. *Where is there a need for more peace in our relationships within the community?*
4. *How can the council be a model of Jesus' peace?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

We pray for those in our families, communities and our world who feel far from peace, may their suffering be eased, may they come to know new light and new hope, we pray to the Lord ...

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

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

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

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

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Risen Jesus,  
you offer us precious peace through your life-giving Spirit. May we as  
a parish community open our hearts to embrace that gift. May we  
become ever more peaceful people as we speak to, listen to, and serve  
one another.  
Amen.**

**That All May be One**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**May 29, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

Leader: We gather in Jesus' name

**All: and join our prayer to his.**

*Scripture Reading: John 17:20-26*

Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying:  
“Holy Father, I pray not only for them,  
but also for those who will believe in me through their word,  
so that they may all be one,  
as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
that they also may be in us,  
that the world may believe that you sent me.  
And I have given them the glory you gave me,  
so that they may be one, as we are one,  
I in them and you in me,  
that they may be brought to perfection as one,  
that the world may know that you sent me,  
and that you loved them even as you loved me.  
Father, they are your gift to me.  
I wish that where I am they also may be with me,  
that they may see my glory that you gave me,  
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.  
Righteous Father, the world also does not know you,  
but I know you, and they know that you sent me.  
I made known to them your name and I will make it known,  
that the love with which you loved me  
may be in them and I in them.”

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

## *Silent Reflection*

### *Questions for Faith Sharing*

1. *Jesus prays that his future disciples may have the gift of unity. What are the signs of unity in our community?*
2. *Where are we divided? Where do we need to grow so that our love for one another can help others to believe that God loves them, too?*

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

### *Intercessory Prayers*

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

For an end to polarization in our church so that we may more effectively bring the good news of Jesus to others, we pray:

**All: That we may all be one.**

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: That we may all be one.**

### *Closing Prayer*

**All: Gracious God,  
Jesus calls us your gift to him.  
May your love be in us and be reflected  
in the way we live our lives.  
Amen.**

**Renew Us with Your Spirit**  
**Pentecost**  
**June 5, 2022**

**Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting**

*Invitation to Prayer*

- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when our hearts are heavy and our spirits full of sorrow.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when we are tired from our labors and are in need of rest.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when we become trapped by our successes or see all our efforts fail.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when we become isolated from each other and fail to acknowledge each as brother or sister in you.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us to pursue peace in time of war.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when we take your gifts for granted and plunder the earth for our own gain.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.  
Leader: Renew us when we lose the sense that we are your beloved ones, joint heirs with Christ.
- All:** O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

*Scripture Reading: Romans 8:15-17*

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,  
but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!"  
The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,  
and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we  
suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

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

*Silent Reflection*

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

1. *When have you most felt like a child of God? How has this influenced your life—your relationship with others, your chosen path, your activities?*
2. *How is God calling you to renewal in the Spirit? How do you experience the Spirit leading you or inspiring you at this time? How is God calling our parish family to renewal?*
3. *In our meeting tonight, how can we bear witness to the belief that we are the children of God, serving the children of God in our parish and community?*

**Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting**

***Intercessory Prayers***

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

That the church warmly welcome all whom God calls as adopted sons and daughters, we pray:

**All: Spirit of God, renew our hearts.**

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

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

Let us pray in the words our brother Jesus has given us:

Our Father...

***Closing Prayer***

Leader: God of all power,  
send down your Spirit and renew us with the gifts we need to live as your daughters and sons. Help us to seek you and to live with wisdom, understanding and right counsel. Teach us to love as Jesus did, with courage and strength through all difficulties of life. And help us always to worship you with true piety, standing in awe and wonder at the marvelous deeds you have done.

**All: Amen.**