



**A Community Responsive to Others**  
*(Christian Service)*

**Opening Prayer**

*It is suggested that a prayer space be arranged for the meeting. This could consist of a cloth of the appropriate liturgical season, a candle, a Bible and symbols of service, charity and justice.*

**Leader:** Gracious God, You call us to a new day. Just as Jesus called the people of Israel to a new covenant, you call us to a conversion of life.

**All:** May we embrace your wisdom: "Harden not your hearts." (*Ps. 95:8*)  
Renew our hearts, O God, in the spirit of the Gospel for the service of the world and one another.  
We pray to be a truly humble people, a people who are willing to be transformed into the leaven needed to bring justice to our broken world.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Scripture Reading: (Matthew 25: 31-46)**

**Faith Sharing Question**

*All are asked to reflect on the following question with a partner. The leader then brings the group together and asks individuals to share with the entire group a thought which they were discussing.*

***How do you believe you are called to care for some segment of human need? How are you called and challenged to grow in love of neighbor?***

**Closing Prayer: Prayer for Social Justice by Pope Pius XII**

Almighty and eternal God,  
may your grace enkindle in all persons  
a love of the many unfortunate people  
whom poverty and misery reduce  
to a condition of life unworthy of human beings.  
Arouse in the hearts of those who call you God  
a hunger and thirst for social justice  
and for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth.  
Grant, O Lord, peace in our days,  
peace to souls, peace to our community  
and peace among nations. Amen.

*This process is meant as a planning and brainstorming tool for Parish Pastoral Councils and parish members. If using this process to brainstorm objectives for a pastoral plan, it is suggested that you especially invite those members who are active leaders in the religious education life of the parish. Also, it is important to record substantial points of the conversation and/or insights by using newsprint or other means.*

## Reflecting on Church Teaching

*Several individuals are asked to read the following statements for the group. After reading the quotes, discuss the reflection question in terms of the parish as a whole, making reference to the pastoral goals if possible.*

“Because we have been sent into the world as a “people of life,” our proclamation must also become a genuine celebration of the Gospel of life...For this to happen, we need first of all to foster, in ourselves and in others, a contemplative outlook. Such an outlook arises from faith in the God of life, who has created each individual as a ‘wonder’ (cf. Ps 139:14). It is the outlook of those who see life in its deeper meaning, who grasp its utter gratuitousness, its beauty and its invitation to freedom and responsibility”

*(USCCB, On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life, 83)*

“Our parish communities are measured by how they serve “the least of these” in our parish and beyond its boundaries - the hungry, the homeless, the sick, those in prison, the stranger (Mt 25:31). Our local families of faith are called to “hunger and thirst for justice” and to be “peacemakers” in our own communities (Mt 5:6,9). A parish cannot really proclaim the gospel if its message is not reflected in its own community life.”

*(USCCB, Communities of Salt and Light, 3)*

“Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account...Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt oneself from the great duties imposed by justice”

*(John XXIII, Peace on Earth, 60-62)*

### Reflection Questions

***Recall someone you have known in your life who has had the ability to see each person as a ‘wonder’ created by God. What shaped this ability in the person? What are the characteristics that you noticed in this person?***

***In what ways is there a conscious effort in the parish to address both the works of charity and the works of justice?***

### Brainstorming Objectives

*At this point, the facilitator reads the goal which has been established around Worship. The goal should also be clearly posted in the room somewhere so that all can reflect on it.*

*The focus now is for all members to brainstorm ideas to accomplish the stated goal.*

*This begins by all individuals stating ideas that they have to accomplish the goals. These can be very specific.*

*All of these ideas are recorded on newsprint as people say them.*

*To get the conversation going, you may wish to have individuals talk with a partner first for a few minutes and then come together as a large group.*



## **Finding the Common Threads**

*Take a moment to read the following passages. Then based upon your conversation, answer the following focus questions and make a record of any consensus beginning to emerge among the group regarding future actions.*

“Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets, so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.” (Habakkuk 2:2-3)

“It is not therefore a matter of inventing a ‘new program’. The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to the circumstances of each community. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture. What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization – a work involving all of us.”

(Novo Millennio)

“Christ has no body now on earth but yours; yours are the only hands with which we can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go around the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body on earth but yours.” (attributed to St. Teresa of Avila)

### **Focus Questions**

*Of all the ideas that have been mentioned here, choose three that would enable us to foster and nurture more vibrant efforts at charity and justice for all parishioners and accomplish our goal for the future. (This question is asked of all participants)*

*Are there specific ideas that are emerging as a clear consensus among the group? Which of the ideas are emerging as a consensus?*

*Which part of these common ideas can be brought to life? What resources will the parish need to achieve these goals? Who are the individuals and groups within our parish, our cluster and/or within the Diocese that need to be involved in making these goals a reality?*