



## Parish Pastoral Council Summer Prayer Service / Group Reflection

*(This reflection / year review is intended for groups breaking for the Summer but can be easily adapted for groups that continue to meet.)*

### **Call to Worship:**

**Leader:** Dear Father, we gather before you one final time before our break to thank you for carrying us through a year of planning and to reflect on our journey together. We praise you Lord, for the many blessings you have showered down on us this past year. We pray for your wisdom and insight as we share our joys and sorrows, our successes and challenges. Make your presence known to us throughout our meeting so that we may continue to praise you in our words, decisions, and actions.

**All: Amen**

### **Song:**

*There will be two readings tonight. After each of the readings there will be a time of silent reflection and shared reflection.*

**Reading #1:** (Philippians 1:3-6, 8-11)

A reading from the letter of Paul

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

**All: Thanks be to God.**

- **Reflection**

1. God has indeed begun good works in you! Spend a few silent moments considering all your fellow PPC members. Consider what gifts you have discovered in them (that perhaps you did not see when you first began meeting). What do you thank God for when you think of them?

*After several minutes of silence, go around the room methodically, affirming each PPC member. Each member should be given 2 or 3 minutes for others to articulate the gifts they see in that person and why they thank God for him/her. After each member is affirmed by the group, the group responds together:*

**“Thank you Lord for the gift of *\*(name)\** and for all s/he has brought to this parish and this council. May God continue to lead him/her in discipleship, blessing and protecting him/her until we gather again in service of God’s mission.”**

**Reading #2:** (Matthew 13: 1-9)

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty fold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

- **Reflection:**

*This has undoubtedly been a year of planting seeds which fell on all sorts of ground. Spend a few moments sharing your responses to the following questions:*

1. Where have seeds produced much fruit? What successes do you celebrate?
2. What efforts during this past year became more challenging than expected, or did not meet your expectations? Where did seeds fall on the path or rocky ground?

*(Note: This is not the time to blame or replay painful events, but to prayerfully reflect on the challenges that accompany any major initiative and to pray for God’s blessing on the parish and the council.)*

After the group has had a few moments to respond, all reply:

**Dear Lord, we offer you all our efforts- our successes, our challenges and our attempts- those times we felt the spirit move through us and those times when we lost sight of our mission, or failed to achieve the goals as we see them. Forgive us for those times we forgot to keep you at the center of our plans and projects, for those moments when we blamed each other and turned to fear instead of the love you offer.**

**Help us remember that the seeds we sow often take time, patience and the nourishment of your grace. Remind us of your love; remind us that we are one, that you have brought us all here together, at this time in this place, to serve the mission of this parish as only we can. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

## **Intercessory Prayers of Hope**

**Leader:** In confidence, we now offer God our hopes and our prayers for our journey as a parish and as a pastoral council.

**Leader:** For our parish, that God may tend the seeds that have been planted all year, nourishing them as we all grow in our relationships with God and with each other. Let us pray to the Lord...

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

**Leader:** Please offer any other prayers and hopes for the future so that we may pray for them together...

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

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

**Leader:** Holy Creator, in each one of us you have planted a seed of your passionate love. Make us to see clearly the gifts you have planted within each of us. May we recognize the source of our passions. Tend the spirit within us and open us to receive the nourishment of your grace, that our work may bear good fruit and many will come to know the blessings of God.

**All:** Amen.

If business must be completed at the meeting, the closing prayer may be saved until the meeting is adjourned.

### **Closing prayer:**

**O God, we thank you for our time together to pause and reflect on the mission for which we are called. Send down your Spirit and renew our hearts and minds. Renew us as we break for the summer in need of refreshment. Renew our parish, that we may envision a future of vitality and growth. May this time apart grow hearts grateful for each other and the work of God, that we may return together refreshed, open to each other and always to the movement of grace in our lives. Amen.**

Meeting concludes with a sign of peace...

