

# Prayers



**A Collection of Prayers  
For the  
National Council of Catholic Women**

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
CATHOLIC  WOMEN

National Council of Catholic Women  
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**The NCCW Spirituality Commission**

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## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This book has been designed to help the members of the National Council of Catholic Women develop their faith and to have ready prayers for many occasions. These prayers are for your personal use and for use when planning prayers for Council events.

1. **Section 1** of the book contains prayers that are for everyday use and are considered **Catholic Companion Prayers of Public Domain**.
2. **Section 2** is dedicated to Council of Catholic Women prayers that have been written or published in recent time by NCCW members: **NCCW Prayers of recent use and publication and Prayers from “We Are Called to Witness”**
3. **Section 3** is a compilation of prayers found in:

**NCCW Prays**, compiled by Donna Mahoney and published in 1991

**Called to Pray**, compiled by Pat Voorhes and published in 1995

**Enhancing Our Spirituality**, compiled by Kay Elliott and published in 2007

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## EXCERPTS FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON PRAYER

Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. (2559)

In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit.

Thus the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. (2565)

In his teaching, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and persevering faith, with filial boldness. He calls them to vigilance and invites them to present their petitions to God in his name. Jesus Christ himself answers prayers addressed to him. (2621)

The prayers of the Virgin Mary, in her Fiat and Magnificat are characterized by the generous offering of her whole being in faith. (2622)



**SECTION I - CATHOLIC COMPANION PRAYERS OF PUBLIC DOMAIN**



**1. ACT OF FAITH**

---

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man, died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

**2. ACT OF HOPE**

---

O my God, relying on your almighty power, infinite mercy and promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

**3. ACT OF LOVE**

---

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and ask pardon of all who I have injured.

**4. ACT OF CONTRITION**

---

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offended you, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

**5. ANIMA CHRISTI**

---

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, heal me.

Blood of Christ, drench me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

Good Jesus, hear me.

In your wounds, shelter me.

From turning away, keep me.

From the evil one, protect me.

At the hour of my death, call me.

Into your presence lead me, to praise you with all saints, forever and ever. Amen.



## NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

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### 6. ANGELUS

---

V. The angel of the Lord declared onto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary . . .

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Let it be done to me according to your word. Hail Mary . . .

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us. Hail Mary . . .

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worth of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: O Lord, through the message of an angel we learned of the Incarnation of Christ, Your Son. Pour Your grace into our hearts, and by His passion and cross bring us to the glory of His Resurrection, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### 7. CHAPLET OF THE DIVINE MERCY

---

*Using Rosary beads, begin with:*

Our Father . . .

Hail Mary . . .

the Apostles Creed.

*On the large bead before each decade say:*

Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

*On the ten small beads of each decade:*

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

*After the last decade, recite the following prayer three times:*

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

### 8. GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER

---

Angel of God, my Guardian dear,

To whom God's love commits me here,

Ever this day be at my side

To light and guard, to rule and guide.

Amen.

### 9. HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER

---

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

---

**10. THE MAGNIFICAT**

---

(Luke 1:46-55)

The soul rejoices in the Lord

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,  
He has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones  
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy,  
the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Amen.



**11. MORNING OFFERING**

---

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart: the salvation of souls, the reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all priests, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.

**12. MEMORARE**

---

Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee O Virgin, O Virgin, my Mother. To Thee I come, before Thee I stand sinful and sorrowful. Despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

**13. PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

---

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

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 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.

**14. PRAYER OF SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**

---

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou

O Prince of heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan

and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

**15. PSALM 23, THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD**

---

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me; He refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walked in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side with your rod and staff that give me courage.

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; You anoint my head with oil;

My cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.

**16. SERENITY PRAYER**

---

Lord God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.



**SECTION 2 - NCCW PRAYERS OF RECENT USE OR PUBLICATION**



**1. A VOLUNTEER’S PRAYER**

---

I thank thee, Lord, as a volunteer, For the chance to serve again this year,  
 To give of myself in some, at times small way to those not blessed as I each day.  
 My thanks for health of mind and soul, To aid me ever toward my goal;  
 For eyes to see the good in all , A hand to extend before a fall.  
 For legs to go where the need is great, Learning to love – forgetting to hate;  
 For ears to hear and heart to care, When someone’s cross is hard to bear;  
 A smile to show my affection true, With energy aplenty the task to do;  
 And all I ask, dear Lord, if I may, Is to serve you better, day by day.

**2. CATHOLIC DAY ON THE HILL PRAYER**

---

We stand before you, Holy Spirit, aware that we gather in your name.  
 Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts.  
 Give us light and strength to know your will, to make it our own and to live it in our lives.  
 Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power, for you are God sharing the glory of the  
 Father and Son.  
 You desire justice for all:  
 Enable us to uphold the rights of others; do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted  
 by fear or favor.  
 Unite us to yourself in the bond of love and keep us faithful to all that is true.  
 May we temper justice with love, so that our decisions may be pleasing to you, and our actions  
 those that reflect faith and service.  
 You live and reign with the Father and Son one God forever and ever. Amen.

*Father Regan Schriver  
 Diocese of Knoxville*

**3. IMMIGRATION PRAYER**

---

Dear Jesus, we pray for Your gentle guidance in welcoming to our country immigrants from  
 around the world who are striving for a better life for themselves and their families. So many of  
 us, Dear Jesus, are descendants of grandparents who came to this country as immigrants and  
 only met signs saying “no immigrants need apply here”. Father in Heaven, may we never  
 become people of faith that would turn people away. Lord Jesus, let us realize that by  
 welcoming new immigrants, we grow in our faith because of their beautiful traditions,  
 devotions and family values. We open our arms and hearts to all who seek a better life as we  
 ourselves do. Thank You for bringing us together to form the body of Christ. Amen.

*Prayer was written by members of the NCCW Spirituality Commission 2014*

**4. LITANY FOR NCCW**

Written by Father James Stembler, NCCW Chair of Spiritual Advisors

Almighty and eternal God, we give you thanks for the call you have given us to help build up the Kingdom as the National Council of Catholic Women. We are grateful for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us over the years to help us in our mission. Along our journey there have been many challenges for us, but these challenges have been a reminder of the importance of focusing on our mission and continuing to put Gospel values first as we respond to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world. We turn to Jesus the Christ to guide us and Our Lady of Good Counsel to be a model for us so that we will continue to fulfill our mission.

Lord, have mercy;  
Christ, have mercy;  
Lord, have mercy;

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father;  
Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary;  
Jesus, our way, our truth and our life;  
Jesus, Savior and Redeemer  
Jesus, healer of souls;  
Jesus, who reconciles us to God and to one another;  
Jesus, who gives us his body and blood in communion;

have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.  
have mercy on us.

Mary, gentle and loving servant;  
Mary, who with courage said 'yes' to God  
Mary, who gives her son to us;  
Mary, model of Christian witness;  
Mary, Queen of Heaven;  
Mary, Queen of Peace;  
Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel;

pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.  
pray for us.

For NCCW to support its members;  
For NCCW to empower its members;  
For NCCW to educate its members;  
For NCCW to grow in spirituality;  
For NCCW to grow in leadership;  
For NCCW to grow in service;  
For NCCW members to form communion;  
For NCCW members to be true to their baptismal promises;  
For NCCW members to unite in prayer and action;  
For NCCW to fulfill its mission;  
For NCCW to be the voice of all Catholic women;  
For NCCW to embrace Gospel values;

give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.  
give us your grace.

Christ, hear us;

Christ, graciously hear us.

(Continued)

**LITANY FOR NCCW (Continued)****Let us pray:**

O God, who have sent the power of the Gospel like leaven into the world, grant that your faithful, whom you have called to live amid the world and its affairs, may be fervent with the Christian spirit and, through the tasks they carry out in this present age, may constantly build up your Kingdom.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

*Opening prayer to "for the Laity", #10 of Masses and Prayers for various needs and occasions, Roman Missal, Catholic Book Publishing Corp., New Jersey, 2011, page 1103*

**5. LITANY FOR THE WOMEN OF COUNCIL**

---

**Side 1** Father, we are your creation: the women of your church. We are powerful, yet gentle ambassadors in a world that seeks to overpower the weak.

**Side 2** Father, we are your creation: the women of your church. We bring to birth the children of the earth. We nurture, we support, we fight for and protect the rights of the unborn, and we cherish the gifts of your creation.

**Side 1** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. We clothe the naked, we comfort the prisoner, and we welcome the stranger among us.

**Side 2** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. We share our gifts, we support each other, we empower each other, we educate each other, and we pray for each other.

**Side 1** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. We work together; we share our time, energy and creativity.

**Side 2** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. We comfort those who are lonely, those who are afraid, and those who mourn the loss of a loved one.

**Side 1** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. We work lovingly and diligently in our parishes, in our deaneries, and in our dioceses to support our bishops, pastors and communities.

**Side 2** Father we are your creation: the women of your church. Together, we become a voice for the voiceless, in this country, and in the wider world.

All Father we are your creation: the women of your church. You have given us Mary, your mother, to be our guide and counselor. We give you thanks and praise for all the blessings you have given us. We dedicate ourselves to building up your kingdom through the work of the members of the National Council of Catholic Women.

*Prepared by Anne Boyer, NCCW Church Commission Chair, 2004-2005*



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## **6. PRAYER FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN**

---

Lord, we thank You for the countless blessings You have bestowed on the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) since its founding in 1920.

We thank You for the many gifted women who have served, and those who continue to answer the call to serve You and Your children through NCCW.

As members of the National Council of Catholic Women, You have called us to be workers in Your vineyard.

We pray for the graces we need to be courageous and committed leaders in the Church.

We pray that NCCW will continue to grow and thrive through the generosity of our members and all who support our Mission.

We ask for Your guidance, Lord to support, empower and educate Catholic women throughout the country so that we may be an active and united voice in our church and in our society.

May we always use the gifts obtained to build up Your Kingdom as we reach out and connect with Catholic women of all ages and ethnic backgrounds to serve You through Gospel oriented programs and services.

Lord, we place our needs in Your hands. We ask all these things through the intercession of Our Mother and Good Counsel, Patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women. Amen.

*Written by Denise Pencola 2009*

---

## **7. PRAYER FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION**

---

Heavenly Father,

Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture.

Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.

Open my heart to hear the Gospel and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.

Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

---

**8. PRAYER TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

---

O, Lord, our society is struggling with the stress and breakdown of our families due to many causes, one of which is violence. Violence can be physical, emotional and verbal. We are all Your children and deserve love and respect. Please help us to take a stand if we suspect someone is in a violent situation and to assist them in finding refuge, counsel, and the help they need to learn Your will for them. We will always couple our actions with humble prayers for Your guidance. We will also strive to aid the victims in the family who witness the violence towards a loved one in order to try to break this cycle of behavior. We beseech You to help us find the courage to do what is needed to walk the path Your Son showed us. In His name, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

*Prayer was written by members of the NCCW Spirituality Commission 2014*

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**9. PRAYER FOR CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION**

---

“Dear God, we ask you to help all those who suffer from abuse. Help them find healing and peace in their life. May Saint Maria Goretti, who was strengthened by Your Grace, join with us in prayer for healing of all victims of abuse, particularly those abused as children or young adults. Grant us Your Love that we might reach out to them in Your Name with hope in time of trial. As Maria prayed for her attacker, grant us the grace to pray for the true conversion of all involved with the abuse that they might seek Your Mercy through prayer and penance. Loving God, pour into our hearts and lives Your healing Spirit that the sacredness of every human person might be respected and protected as the precious image of God. Help us to live in the peace, which Maria Goretti had found in Christ and in the love of His mother Mary. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Prayer was written by members of the NCCW Spirituality Commission*

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**10. PRAYER FOR THE HUNGRY**

---

We live in a hungry world, Lord. Please help us to remember that in our world, where kitchen tables are full and grocery stores abound, many people even in this country go hungry, or have to make a choice between food on the table and other necessities of life. Help us to share what we have with all those in need. We live in a hungry world, Lord. Please help us remember that in our world there are many people who have disposable income, and yet there are many who live from paycheck to paycheck. Help us to work for a more just economy beginning with a living wage for all. We live in a hungry world, Lord. Please help us remember that in a world where the ideals of equality and the dignity of each person should abound, there are many all over the world denied their rights; men and women are held as prisoners for living their faith with conviction. Help us to work for equality, dignity, and ensure religious freedom both here and abroad. We live in a hungry world, Lord. Please help us remember that, as we raise our voices to you in prayer, there are many, even in this country, who do not know you or deny your existence. Help all of us to truly know that our lives and our hearts are restless until they rest in You. Help us to do all we can, with your constant help, to satisfy our very hungry world Lord. Amen.

*Kathy Wilmes, Diocese of Winona, WI. 2014*

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**11. PRAY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

---

Almighty God,

We give you thanks for the great blessings you have bestowed upon the people living in the United States of America. As Americans we are "one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all." We have survived many challenges by those who would deny our God given dignity and rights as human beings and continue to stand as a beacon of hope for the oppressed.

The first amendment to our Constitution ensures that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." We ask you to help us continue to defend our religious freedoms so that all people of faith can continue to worship according to their convictions without fear.

We pray that our flag will continue to wave as the symbol of freedom for all. May you open hearts and minds to your will and give courage to those who take action to defend our religious freedom. Amen

Sheila Hopkins, Spirituality Commission 2014

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**12. SALUTE TO THE CROSS**

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Unto the King, Eternal,  
Immortal and invisible,  
The only God,  
Be honor and glory forever. Amen

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**13. SERVICE TO THE POOR**

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Shake us from our complacency, *God*, as we sit in our comfortable homes far from the pains of hunger. Make us aware of how our abundant surplus could feed and save the lives of so many right in our own neighborhoods and around the world. Direct us in ways, as You commanded us, to feed the poor.

Heavenly Father, we also relish the abundance of clean fresh water; let us envision the lack of it in so many countries around the world. Enable us to work towards ways to alleviate this problem since You asked us to give drink to the thirsty. As we enjoy the warmth of our home, *God*, remind us that many live without shelter from the harsh elements of nature. Open our hearts to provide for these as You asked us to shelter the homeless. Finally, *God*, enable our society to provide a chance for all people to make a better life for themselves and their families. Give them a life of dignity and hope in the future. Amen.

*Prayer was written by members of the NCCW Spirituality Commission 2014*

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**14. SPIRITUAL ADOPTION OF AN UNBORN BABY PRAYER**

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**Protectors of the Unborn**

Please spiritually adopt an unborn baby. Every day over 4,000 babies are killed by abortion. They have so little protection only the hand of God can end this massacre. Prayer is the best weapon to help them – the most effective.

**Say this prayer every day for nine months to save a baby's life!**

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion.

*Prayer of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

***“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.” – Jeremiah 1:5***

Please pray! This baby is counting on you.

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**15. THE PRAYER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN**

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Heavenly Father,

We have come together as the National Council of Catholic Women to be your witnesses in this world. Through our programs and our efforts, we strive to be the voice for all Catholic women in our country. We take this responsibility seriously and we pray that all our members will be filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Help us to accomplish the work you have given us to do and may we continue to come together and form a community of faith. Through your grace and power, may your will be done in our lives. Through the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel, may the National Council of Catholic Women continue to evangelize your message effectively so that all people will know of your great love for us. Amen.

*Father James Stembler, Chairman NCCW Spiritual Advisors, September 2014*

**SECTION 3 - PRAYERS FROM NCCW PROGRAM  
“WE ARE CALLED TO WITNESS”**



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**1. PRAYER FROM APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, EVANGELII GAUDIUM,  
“THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL”**

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*To the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful  
On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*

Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,  
welcomed the word of life in the depths of your humble faith:  
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,  
help us to say our own “yes” to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,  
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.  
Filled with Christ's presence,  
you brought joy to John the Baptist,  
making him exult in the womb of his mother.  
Brimming over with joy,  
you sang of the great things done by God.  
Standing at the foot of the cross with unyielding faith,  
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,  
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit  
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.  
Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,  
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life which triumphs over death.  
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,  
that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman.  
Virgin of listening and contemplation,  
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,  
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,  
that she may never be closed in on herself  
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.  
Star of the new evangelization,  
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,  
service, ardent and generous faith,  
justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth,  
illuminating even the fringes of our world.  
Mother of the living Gospel,  
wellspring of happiness of God's little ones, pray for us.  
Amen. Alleluia!

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**2. WELCOMING THE STRANGER: A PRAYER FOR HOSPITALITY**

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Loving God, Your Son Jesus said your kingdom is like a banquet  
a festive gathering for all people of every race and color —  
a table at which the lonely find company,  
the hungry savor rich foods, and fine wine,  
and strangers enjoy warm family ties.  
Jesus calls us to build this kingdom here on earth.  
Teach us, Lord, the ways of hospitality.  
Give us the spirit of joyful welcome and the sensitivity  
to help people on the move feel they belong.  
Grant that our tables at home  
may draw our new neighbors from other lands into a loving community  
and that the Eucharistic tables in our parishes may  
prefigure that banquet in heaven where all are one with You,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

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**3. PRAYER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

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Lord Jesus, Carpenter and King, supreme Sovereign of all men, look with tender mercy upon the multitudes of our day who bear the indignities of injustice everywhere. Raise up leaders in every land dedicated to Your standards of order, equity, and justice. Grant unto us, Lord Jesus, the grace to be worthy members of Your Mystical Body, laboring unceasingly to fulfill our vocation in the social apostolate of Your Church. Sharpen our intellects to pierce the pettiness of prejudice; to perceive the beauty of true human brotherhood. Guide our minds to a meaningful understanding of the problems of the poor, of the oppressed, of the unemployed, of all in need of assistance anywhere. Guide our hearts against the subtle lure of earthly things and undue regard for those who possess them. May we hunger and thirst after justice always. Amen.





**SECTION 4 - PRAYERS FROM NCCW PRAYS**



## CELEBRATORY PRAYERS

### 1. PRAYER SERVICE FOR WOMEN'S CONCERNS

**LEADERS** Let us spend a few moments in silent prayer of thanksgiving for the Church, which has nurtured and formed us.

**LEADER:** Let us now share in the reading of God's invitation to us.

**ALL:** People of God, I welcome you to this gathering. I invite you to participate with openness of heart.

I give you new eyes to see.	I give you new ears to hear.
I give you my understanding.	I give you my peace of heart.
Do not be afraid.	I am always with you.
Let go and trust my spirit.	

**READER:** Revelation 21:1-3

**LEADER:** **Lord God, Creator of all the universe**, we praise and thank You for all the good gifts You have given to us, most especially the gift of our eyes for vision. **We ask You now to give us new eyes** so that we vision a new heaven and a new earth; a world in which all women and men will work together and love. **Help us to see life and relationships in a new way** that allows us to recognize each person in the Body of Christ is needed and necessary. Help us to work together in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding so that Your work will be done more efficiently and effectively. **Teach us to pray together** and to find Your spirit of love in all our undertakings. We recognize that these are new and challenging times in our Church and we ask for guidance and direction in discerning where the Spirit is leading us. **Be with us in our gatherings.** Help us to be open to Your gentle encouragement. **Create in us new eyes** with which to see our place in Your Church. **Help us to open our eyes** to all new possibilities so that we may find new ways to respond to each other in love and commitment. **Help us to put aside old mindsets** and be newly open to whatever You require of us today. **Give us a spirit of trust** and ability to drop our defenses and see the whole picture You are showing us in our Church and our world. **Help us to collaborate with each other** so that Your Reign may be more fully visible in our lives and in the lives of those around us. **May our baptismal commitment to all life be seen** by those whose lives are broken and meaningless. Help them to recognize that it is only in following You in service to one another that we can truly find peace and happiness. **May our lives be those of a priestly people,**  
A people who recognize Your presence in our midst,  
A people who recognize that in serving  
Our sisters and brothers we are serving You.  
We ask You all these favors because You are the giver of light and life, the one who enlightens our vision and gives it strength and brilliance. Amen.

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Prays 1995*

## 2. LOVE—THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY

### Leader offers welcome

**READING:** Psalm 50 (51):1-21; Proverbs 31:10-31

Our Father in heaven, we look to You for help to call families back to a closer walk with You. We pray You will turn the ears of parents to their children and children to their parents. May Your love flow through Your people reaching those who need knowledge of You. Guide and keep us and our loved ones unto Your Holy Self. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**READING:** 1 Corinthians 13

**LEADER:** We will now offer prayers of petition.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For our children, that they will value their God given talents using them to the best of their abilities, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For the courage and determination to live the Ten Commandments every day of our lives, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For family unity that will lead us to happiness and holiness, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For the needy and the homeless that they will find shelter, food and employment, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For all who are suffering from illness and pain that they may be reconciled to God's will, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For our departed mothers, family members and friends that they are enjoying everlasting happiness, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** For peace on earth to women and men of good will, we pray.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

(continued)

**LOVE—THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY (cont.)**

**LEADER:** O God, who is the giver of all goodness, help us to recognize Your face in our midst as we strive, like our Mother Mary, to be faithful and loving servants of Your word. We ask this through Your Son. Amen.

**Heavenly Father we praise and thank You** for Your goodness and mercy, for the blessings You have poured out upon us individually, as families, and as a country.

**We thank you for the pure air**, the clean and beautiful water, for seed time and harvest, and for the beauty of this land and the fullness thereof.

**We thank you**, Lord for the people of (insert parish or town) for their cultural diversity, their love of family, their creative energy, and willingness to work to better our world.

**And we give thanks to You for our mothers** in whose arms we first experience the well-being of family, a place for giving and receiving love. At our mother's knee we learned the fundamental lessons of life: right and wrong, self-discipline, respect for others, and regard for our own self-worth.

**Grant to all the mothers and fathers** of our community, wisdom, direction and strength to carry out the tasks to which You have called them.

**Almighty God**, amidst the good, we are troubled by many things we see happening around us - the pain of broken homes, the premature ending of life of so many unborn children, the rise in abuse of children and adults, and the devastating toll of drug abuse.

**We intercede for those who suffer**, for those needing physical and spiritual healing. Lord, make us conscious, not only of the suffering in this world but of the joy to be found in serving You.

**Thank you, Lord**, for those gathered here in fellowship and vigilant prayer.

We ask you to bless this gathering with Your loving presence.

**In Jesus name we pray. Amen.**

*Arranged by Mary Vestecka, Lincoln (Neb.) DCCW, NCCW Prays 1995*

### 3. SPIRIT OF GOD

**LEADER:** The Lord be with you.

**ALL:** And also with you.

**LEADER:** Let us trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads, on our lips and over our hearts.

**SONG:** Spirit of the Living God

**LEADER:** Almighty and eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You caused us to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit and You pardoned all our sins. Pour out upon us Your Holy Spirit, the Paraclete and His seven spirits.

*(After each gift is invoked a person will light one of the seven candles surrounding the lectern.)*

**LEADER:** The spirit of wisdom

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of understanding

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of right judgment

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of courage

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of knowledge

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of reverence

**ALL:** Amen.

**LEADER:** The spirit of awe in Your presence

**ALL:** Amen.

**ALL:** Strengthen, O God, what You have begun in us. You gave Your apostles the Holy Spirit, ordaining that they and their successors should hand down that gift to the faithful.

Look with favor on us whose foreheads have been anointed with chrism and sited with the sign of the cross. May the Holy Spirit consecrate our hearts as a fitting dwelling for Your glory.

**READING:** John 20: 19-22

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**THE SPIRIT OF GOD (Cont.)**

**LEADER:** Our response to the petitions is: We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** Reborn as children of God in baptism we confess the faith we have received through the Church.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** By the sacrament of confirmation we are more perfectly committed to the Church.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** The Holy Spirit endows us with special strength to spread the faith in word and action as true witnesses of Jesus.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** As members of the Council of Catholic Women we share also in Jesus' prophetic office.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** The Holy Spirit leads and sanctifies the people of God.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** By His gifts the Holy Spirit makes us ready for the work of building up the Church.

**ALL:** We thank You, Lord.

**LEADER:** In baptism and confirmation the sign of the cross was traced on our foreheads. I invite you to turn to your neighbor and trace the cross on her forehead once again saying, "Receive the sign of the cross."

**(Pause)**

**LEADER:** Let us pray.

Lord God, hear our prayer and protect all of us assembled here. We have been marked with the sign of the cross. Let us treasure this sharing and go forth to use Your gifts in the service of Your people.

**ALL:** Amen.

#### 4. A LITURGY OF AFFIRMATION

**LEADER:** Knowledge of one's gifts and abilities brings a fearful, awesome responsibility; but fear should not be the overriding emotion.

**READING:** Isaiah 43: 1-5

**Allow moment for meditation.**

**LEADER:** We will now offer prayers of petition.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer.*

**LEADER:** That we may realize the implications of being created by our God.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer*

**LEADER:** That we may hear God as we are called by name.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer.*

**LEADER:** That we may believe God loves us, that we are precious and loved by God.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer.*

**LEADER:** That our faith may be stronger than our fear.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer.*

**LEADER:** That we may joyfully serve our Church with the gifts we have each been given.

**RESPONSE:** *Lord, hear our grateful prayer.*

**ALL:** Creator God, we thank You for the talents present in this group.

We are grateful for our gifts.

We see the reflection of You and Your goodness in ourselves and in one another.

We humbly ask that we may use our gifts wisely and for Your glory.

We ask this through the Redeemer and Your Spirit. Amen.

*Mary Bennett McKinney, "Sharing Wisdom", Tabor Publishing, Allen, TX*



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## PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### 5. PEACE PRAYER

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Lord, God, Creator of all the peoples of the world,  
You call us to Your peace, to Your love  
We know that peace will come when we all learn to live together as Your family.

Bless us with a creative and healing gift of compassion.

When hunger persists, help us find and eliminate its causes while sharing our blessings.  
When injustice affects our sisters and brothers, let our voices be heard for change.

When differences divide us as nations, families and individuals, help us to use reason and goodwill to build, not to destroy.

Inspire in all of us, especially through our work in the National Council of Catholic Women a respect for all You have created and an awareness of our call to act with justice, love tenderly, serve one another, and to walk humbly with You, our God. Amen.

*Maureen Willenbring, NCCW Prays 1995*





## 6. PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

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**LEADER:** The Lord be with you.

**ALL:** And also with you.

**LEADER:** Prepare our minds and hearts, O Lord, to accept Your Word.

Silence in us any voice that is not Your own.

Enkindle in us a desire to hear only Your voice, and upon hearing, to obey Your will.

**READING:** *Isaiah 58:6-7 (adapted)*

**LEADER:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**ALL:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**LEADER:** A reading on social reconstruction:

“Then only will it be possible to unite all in harmonious striving for the common good, when all sections of society have the intimate conviction that they are members of a single family and children of the same Heavenly Father, and further that they are ‘one body in Christ and everyone members of one another,’ so that ‘if one member suffer anything, all members suffer with it.’ Then the rich and others in power will change their former negligence of their poorer brethren into solicitous and effective regard. They will listen with kindly feeling to their just complaints and will readily forgive them the faults and mistakes they make.”

**LEADER:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**ALL:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**LEADER:** A reading from “*Popularum Progressio*.”

“No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need when others lack necessities. Today no one can be ignorant any longer of the fact that, in whole continents countless men and women are ravished by hunger; countless numbers of children are undernourished.”

**LEADER:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**ALL:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**LEADER:** A reading from “*Mater et Magistra*.”

“First, it is necessary that everyone and especially public authorities strive to effect improvements in rural areas with regard to the principle services needed by all, for example: highway construction, transport services, pure drinking water, housing, medical services, schools of all kind, facilities for religion and recreation, and the equipment and furnishings needed to outfit a home.”

(continued)

**PRAYER FOR JUSTICE** (continued)

**LEADER:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**ALL:** The one who does justice will live in the presence of the Lord.

**LEADER:** A reading adapted from James 2:14:

“What good is it, my sisters and brothers, if someone claims to have faith but does not have good works? Can faith save that person? If a sister or brother has nothing to wear or has no food for the day and one of you says to them, ‘God in peace, keep warm and eat well,’ but you do not give to them the necessities of the body, what good is it?”

What good is it, my sisters and brothers?

**LEADER:** Lord we turn to You in need, hear the prayers we offer up to You. In confidence, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**ALL:** Our Father

**LEADER:** The closing reading is adapted from Jude, verses 24-25:

“There is but one God who can protect us from falling and bring us safely to His glorious presence. To God, the only God, who saves us through Christ Jesus our Lord, be glory, majesty, authority and power, now and for all ages to come.”

**ALL:** Amen.



## 7. CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY MEDIATION

**LEADER:** Let us begin by putting ourselves in God's presence.

The first reading is adapted from I John 3:17-18:

"If someone who has means sees a sister or brother in need and refuses that person compassion, how can the love of God remain in that one? Children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in deed and truth."

*(Allow a moment for meditation.)*

**LEADER:** The second reading is taken from "Guadium et Spes:"

"Every social group must take into account the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family.

At the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the dignity proper to a human being since she stands above all things and her rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all human beings everything necessary for leading life such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family; the right of education and employment; the right to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious."

Loving God, make us aware of Your presence in all of creation. We are examples of Your life and Your beauty. May others know You by gazing upon the actions of our lives. Amen.

*(Allow a moment for meditation.)*

**READING:** Romans 12:9-17

**LEADER:** The fourth reading is taken from "Mater et Magistra:"

"When one is motivated by Christian charity, one cannot but love others, for charity is patient and kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked, seeks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness but rejoices with the truth, bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

**LEADER:** O holy, most high God, sometimes we get so set in our ways, we are satisfied to sit in our security, to do the things we have always done, to act the way we have always acted. O gracious God, You call upon us to act in a different way. You call us to speak out against injustice and to make peace with those who hate us. Turn us toward Your Son. Uproot us from lives of comfort and help us to live lives of service to those in need.

**ALL:** Amen.

**READING:** Matthew 25:34-46 (adapted)

(continued)

**CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY MEDITATION (cont.)**

**(Sections to be ready by the leader and alternate sides of the assembly.)**

**LEADER:** 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 comforted Me, naked and you clothed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you came to visit Me.

**RIGHT:** Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and welcome You or naked and clothe You? When did we see You ill or in prison and visit You?

**LEADER:** Then He will say to those on the left: Depart from Me you accursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, thirsty and you gave Me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave Me no clothing, ill and in prison and you did not care for Me.

**LEFT:** Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or naked or a stranger or ill or in prison and not minister to Your needs?

**LEADER:** He will answer them: Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least sisters and brothers of mine, you did to Me. Likewise, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for Me,

**(Allow time for meditation)**

**LEADER:** Merciful God, we are to serve You by serving our sisters and brothers, by being messengers of Your mercy. Help us to bring this message of concern to those in need, in the spirit of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Make us increasingly mindful of all who are in need. In humble service, may we seek to help the poor and deprived; those who are despairing and feel themselves beyond help. Make us mindful of our poverty and our need of You. We ask You this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord and healer. Amen.

**8. SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS FOR PEACE ON EARTH**

<b>Stewards of God's Word</b>	<b>Signs of Peace</b>	<b>God's Peace</b>
Revelation 5:11-14	Zechariah 8:16	Isaiah 60:1-3
Revelation 7:1-8	Isaiah 32:15-18	Isaiah 60:18-22
Psalms 84:1-12	Luke 7:48-50	Matthew 5:14-16
Ecclesiastes 42:15-26	Deuteronomy 13:1-3	Luke 2:8-14
Leviticus 25:11,12	Malachi 2:5	John 9
Leviticus 25:18-22	Luke 1:59-66	John 12:35,36
Psalms 67	Joel 2:28,29	John 12:44-50
<b>Peace, Healing and Health</b>	<b>Peacemaking and Justice</b>	<b>The Promise of Peace</b>
Psalms 103:2-6	Psalms 41:1-3	Genesis 8:6-12
Isaiah 40:30,31	Psalms 112:4-9	Genesis 9:8-17
Matthew 8:28-34	Proverbs 14:21	Psalms 29:11
Matthew 11:2-6	Proverbs 19:17	Psalms 72:3-7
Matthew 12:10-13	Proverbs 29:14	Isaiah 40:9-11
Mark 5:25-34	Luke 12:15b	Isaiah 55:12
III John 1:2	Luke 19:1-10	Ezekiel 37:26
Mark 16:1-7	James 6:17-19	Jeremiah 33:6
		Zechariah 9:9,10
<b>Peacemaking: Concern for the Hungry and Poor</b>	<b>Peacemaking and Economic Justice</b>	<b>Peacemaking and Evangelism</b>
Leviticus 19:9,10	Leviticus 19:13-16	Psalms 40:6-10
Psalms 12:5,6	Psalms 98:7-9	Isaiah 52:7
Psalms 9:18	Psalms 9:7-9	Acts 10:34-36
Psalms 58:6-12	I Timothy 1:5	Acts 6:1-4
Isaiah 25:4	Hebrews 13:3	II Peter 2:5
Isaiah 29:18-20	James 2:1-5	Luke 1:76-79
Matthew 25:31-46	Amos 5:21-24	Luke 4:18,19
Luke 13:12-14	Joshua 23:14-16	Ephesians 6:13-16
Luke 16:20-31	Isaiah 59	II Corinthians 13:11-13
Psalms 72	Proverbs 21:3	Romans 15:7-13
I John 3:17,18	Proverbs 10:17	Acts 9:31
John 2:13-25	Proverbs 24:11,12	I Thessalonians 5:23-28
	Proverbs 21:3	Psalms 23
		Psalms 25

*From "Marriage Encounter" Magazine*

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## PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RECONCILIATION

### 9. PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF AMERICA

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Holy Mary, Blessed Mother and patroness of America.

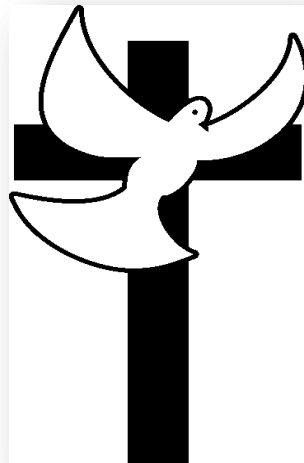
We have prayed to you for generations for the conversion of Russia.

Thanks to you and our heavenly Father that is beginning to become a reality.

Dear Mother, I cannot help but think we have overlooked the need to pray for the conversion of America.

You and your Son must look down on us with a sad and heavy heart when you see all the family breakups, the misuse of your sacred gifts of life and sex, the lack of respect for your holy name and that of Jesus, the misuse of drugs, the political corruption, and all the other evils in America today.

So, dear Mother, with this in mind, please present our prayers to your Son. Ask Him to grant the turning around of our ways and the conversion of those who are not already walking in the way of the Lord. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



## 10. JANUARY PRAYER SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK – RESPECT LIFE

**LEADER:** Let us all place ourselves in the presence of God.

**ALL:** O God, You who know all things, we greet You at the beginning of this new day. We praise You for Your goodness for You continue to shed Your life and light upon us. We trust that You will guide us through so that we may do whatever You call us to do.

We do know that we are called, as always, to protect life and respect life, and we are especially aware of that mission during this time set aside to commemorate life. We also are aware that respect for life includes all of creation. Help us to widen our vision to care for the unborn, the elderly, the handicapped and all of creation that we have misused and taken for granted.

We join our prayer to all people of goodwill by participating in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As we participate in our communities and gather with other Christians in prayer, help us to find the unity that Your life gives. May we spread this unity to people of all faiths and nationalities so that we may see all as sisters and brothers whom You also love.

During these days, may we always be filled with Your hope and Your love so that we may proclaim an alternative message to that which we read in the newspapers and hear in the media. May Your life glow within us so we can reach out to others in faith and hope and bring them Your peace.

We ask you to help us bring a lasting solution to the injustice and the tension, which dominates peoples' lives. In You, we place our trust. We ask You all these things because You are our Life giver and our God. Amen.

**(Allow moment for meditation.)**

**READING:** Ephesians 4:1-6, 15-16

**LEADER:** We come before You, Lord, united in the one baptism, which gives faith and hope. Hear the petitions from these, Your faithful women, which we place before You in love and trust. Our response is: God of love, send us Your peace.

**(Open floor to assembly for spontaneous petitions.)**

**LEADER:** God of love, we fully trust that You hear our prayer and that, in Your graciousness, You will respond to Your people. Let our hearts not despair but may they be filled with Your hope and strength and peace. We ask this through Jesus, Your Son, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

**SONG:** *Let There Be Peace on Earth*

*Arranged by Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1990*

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## 11. GOOD COUNSEL SUNDAY

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The following intercessions are suggested for Mass in honor of Our Lady of Good Counsel and may be used alone or integrated into the parish petitions.

- LEADER:** The response to the prayer of the faithful is: Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** Let us pray to our God who has created us to be a people of peace, justice and love.
- For the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women**, that we may continue to be grounded in our tradition as we face the challenges of the future, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** For the Church, that we may recognize the power of women and men working together in equality, mutuality and justice, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** For all women that they may recognize the dignity and blessedness of their gift of life, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** For oppressed and poor women, that they may find strength, affirmation and support in our council and in our Church, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** For all of us, that we may recognize that together we are the Body of Christ and that we may see each person as valued, loved and gifted in God's eyes, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** For all the deceased and especially for those who have promoted the ministry of Jesus through the work of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women, we pray.
- RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.
- LEADER:** O God, Who is the giver of all goodness, help us to recognize Your face in our midst as we strive, like our Mother Mary, to be faithful and loving servants of Your Word. We ask this through Jesus, Your son. Amen.

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1990*



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## 12. COUNCIL CHRISTMAS PRAYER

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**Lord God, Creator of all the universe**, bless us as we come together during this holy and busy season. Be with us in our sharing today.

**Be with us**, too as we wait in lines, fight the traffic, wait for food to cook and bread to rise. Be with us, Lord as we anticipate the crowds, prepare for our families, sing the carols, wrap the gifts, and await the coming of the Child who changed the history of humanity.

**Help us** to recognize what is important at this time and throughout the year. Help us to be forgiving, to be compassionate, to be understanding and to be loving to all people. Help us to recognize our own hardness of heart and our own hardened mindsets. Help us to reach out to those who find the holidays difficult; especially the lonely, the depressed, the imprisoned, the sick or the addicted.

**Let us see Your light** in the lives of others at this gathering so that we may learn from one another. Show us how to recognize the dignity and the beauty and the giftedness of each person in this room, especially today as we await Your coming into our midst.

This year, **we ask that the world be given the gift of peace**, a firm and lasting peace that can be bought only with a commitment to justice by all the countries of the world. Protect those whose lives are in danger because of threats to peace.

**Help us** to see that we are mothers to all the world's children, whether they be American children, Arab children or Hispanic children. As mothers, we pledge ourselves to work for peace and to seek alternatives to war.

**Make us mindful** that the greatest gift we can give at Christmas is the gift of our love and our time. Enable us to give that gift with a generosity of heart and a joyfulness of spirit, for it is in these virtues that others will recognize Your presence in our lives.

**We ask You these things believing in Your promise to be with us always and especially during this season of Advent. Bless us each in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.** Amen.

*(Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1991)*



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## MEETING AND CONVENTION AIDS

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### 13. OPENING PRAYER SERVICE FOR COUNCIL GATHERINGS

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**SONG:** *Gather Us In*

**LEADER:** Loving God, we, the women of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women are filled with gratitude and joy as we come together in Your name. We see You all around us here. Most especially, we see You in the women we have come to know and love. Help us to recognize that this very place on which we stand is holy ground and that the lives of all the people here are also holy ground.

**ALL:** **We thank You,** Lord, for all the powerful gifts that You have bestowed upon our council; but most especially for the gracious gift of empowering our membership to share in service, spirituality and leadership through mutual support and education of one another.

**Be with us,** Lord, in this gathering as we look back over our long and faithful history and as we strive to remain true to our tradition while looking ahead to prepare for future challenges. Help us to spend our time together in a productive manner so that we come to know and do Your work.

**Help us** to recognize that each of us is created in Your image that we may effectively do Your work in our world. Help us to follow the footsteps of Jesus in our ministries of caring, sharing and loving all peoples. Help us especially in our service to the poorest of the poor, the widows, the unborn, the little ones, those discriminated against and forgotten.

**Teach us** to look to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and our Mother, who was a woman of both action and meditation, a woman strong but gentle, on whom God's favor rested.

**Guide us** to see that You have gifted all people in their own particular way, that we may help others to develop their gifts and talents without fear and mistrust of one another. Help us to encourage others to use their gifts so that the Reign of God may be truly evidenced in our world.

**Show us** how to share in the power of Your love, the greatest of all gifts which breaks down barriers between women and men of different races, different creeds, and different lifestyles. Help us to see that loving each other is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

**Direct us** to share that love by refusing to harden our hearts against any other human being; by refusing to oppress, define, limit or detract from the personality of any other human being. Father, help us to affirm, encourage, and enable all those whose lives touch ours. Let us strive to see all women and men as our sisters and brothers who are gifted by God and part of the Body of Christ.

**Be with us** as we strive to protect each other, the unborn, the downtrodden and the elderly. Help us in our efforts to protect the ecology and to work for peace and justice in each member of the Body of Christ.

**Heal the hearts** of those who are broken and send your compassionate love to those whose pain only You can console.

**Open our eyes** to recognize that all life is holy ground and be with us as we seek to be life givers in all our environments.

**LEADER:** May God the Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit be with us here and now and in all the days of our lives.

**ALL:** Amen.

*Donny Tiernan Mahoney*

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**14. CLOSING PRAYER SERVICE FOR COUNCIL GATHERINGS**

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**LEADER:** We come together here as women united in faith and love; as women who remember the past, live in the present and challenge the future. Let us now turn to our gracious Creator with confidence and faith that our requests will be heard as we challenge that future.

The response to the prayer of the faithful is: *Graciously hear us, O God*

**LEADER:** That we will go forth from this gathering with an openness of heart and a desire to let our lives be changed, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we may show compassion and love to those who are broken and pained by life especially those victims of today's physical and mental disorders, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we may respect life at all stages of development and work to bring dignity for all people, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we may learn to respect one another, women and men, laity and clergy, and to work together as equals without jealousy or competition, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we will show respect for all of creation, land and water, flora and fauna, and all the peoples of the world, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we will recognize our own sinfulness in the destruction of God's creation and that we will work individually and communally to restore the earth, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we will remember the women who went before us to make our organization strong and faithful, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

**LEADER:** That we will work together productively and passionately to see that our council reflects an image of women of the gospel caring for all creation, we pray to the Lord.

**RESPONSE:** Gracious God, hear us.

(continued)

**CLOSING PRAYER SERVICE FOR COUNCIL GATHERINGS (cont.)**

**LEADER:** Creator God, who has given us all good gifts, we ask You now to give us a new awareness of what it means to follow You. May we do the work You have called us to do. May it all be done in an atmosphere of dignity, respect and love for one another, for You and for all creation. We ask You this through our brother, Jesus, who shows us your way. Amen.

**ALL:** My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior for God has looked with favor on this lowly spirit. From this day, all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is God's name.

God has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. God has shown strength and has scattered the proud in their conceit. God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly.

God has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away empty.

God has come to the help of Israel and remembered the promise of mercy; the promise made to our forbearers, to Abraham, Sarah and their children forever. Amen.

***"Magnificat" (inclusive)***

**LEADER:** Let us go forth from our time here together in an atmosphere of peace, unity and love and may the blessings of God, our Creator remain with us always.

**ALL:** Amen.

*Arranged by Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1990*



**15. INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS CONDUCTED DURING MASS**

*(Outgoing and incoming officers enter in procession and are seated in first row. After Communion the moderator or episcopal liaison calls all outgoing officers forward and offers words of congratulation and thanks for their service to the DCCW. All outgoing officers but the president return to their pew. The president then calls the newly elected officers to the altar by name.)*

**OUTGOING PRESIDENT:**

The word mission means “to be sent.” Jesus’ mission on earth was to bring the Good News of salvation and today, 2,000 years later, the Church Universal continues that work. We, as Church, are part of that mission. We form one people--bishops, priests, religious, and laity. We are bound together in a communion of faith; called to a commitment of love with Jesus as our center and the Holy Spirit as our source of life and power. Today we pray that the Holy Spirit may empower and guide each of us as we leave here to continue the mission of God’s work in our home, our Church and our community.

The women we are about to present to you will lead the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan Council of Catholic Women for the next two years. Each of us has different gifts and different ministries. These women have been recognized for their gifts of leadership and responsibility and have been chosen by you to serve as officers of the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

***(Turn to new officers)***

Do you accept this new responsibility of service to the Lord?

**NEW OFFICERS:**

I do.

**OUTGOING PRESIDENT:**

Do you accept this new responsibility of service to the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan Council of Catholic Women?

**NEW OFFICERS:**

I do.

*Outgoing president then introduces new officers by name and title and the bishop/presiding priest shakes the hand of each woman presented.*

**16. COMMISSION PRAYER**

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Loving God, Creator of all good gifts, we come before You with grateful hearts and willing hands.

Help us in our work for the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and especially in the commission work to which You have called us.

Direct us in the productive use of our talents for the commission so that, in some way, the work we do will be reflective of the gospel mandates of peace, justice and love.

Keep us always mindful of the needs of others and especially of those who are poor, oppressed, or down trodden in this world.

In all our endeavors, make us more aware that we are Your family and that together, in Your Spirit, we can make Your Reign more visible to those around us.

Be with us, bless us and guide us in Your ways. Amen

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1991*

**17. NCCW BIRTHDAY PRAYER**

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Loving God, we, the National Council of Catholic Women, are filled with gratitude and joy as we celebrate our Birthday.

We thank You for all the gifts that You have bestowed on our Council, but most especially for the gift of empowering our membership to share in service, spirituality and leadership by means of mutual support and education of one another.

Be with us this year as we look back over our long and faithful history and, while striving to remain faithful to our tradition, prepare for future challenges.

Be with us as we support one another and reach out to the unborn, the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the elderly. Help us in our efforts to protect the ecology and to work for peace and justice for all children, women and men.

Empower us to recognize that all life is Holy Ground, and be with us as we seek to be life givers in all of our activities.

We ask You these things in the name of Jesus, our Brother and Redeemer. Amen.

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1990*

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## 18. A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE CHURCH

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Good and gracious God, through all times and generations, You have been present with us, leading and guiding Your Church and providing us with faithful women and men to serve Your Church. We are full of trust and confidence that you will continue to send us these leaders as we approach the second millennium of following Your Son.

Through baptism, You invite each of us to share in Your life as a daughter or son and to participate by giving service to others.

Be with each of us daily as we choose to show Your presence within our Church.

Give us each of us the generosity and the courage to respond with selflessness to Your love.

Provide in our times, good and faithful leaders to serve in religious life, in priesthood and in lay leadership.

Keep these people always close to You, full of compassion and strength to do Your will and to show Your loving face to the world.

Open the hearts and minds of women and men so that they may be willing to accept the challenge of building up Your Reign here and now.

Help us to recognize the new ways in which You may be calling Your faithful people to minister.

Renew our mindsets and our willingness to participate so that many will be brought to new life in You.

We ask You these things, full of assurance that You are always with us and providing for our needs.

Help us respond with gratuitous love.

We ask You these things through Your Son, our Brother, Jesus who shows us the way.

Amen.

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1991*

**19. PRAYER FOR AN ILL MEMBER**

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Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 we thank You for bringing us together in Your name.  
 We ask Your blessings on all of our endeavors  
 as we strive to know Your will and do Your work.  
 We ask You especially today to extend Your special care  
 to our friend and co-worker, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 who is ill and needs Your love.  
 Help her and all who suffer from sickness of mind or body  
 to look to You for strength and perseverance.  
 Be with her in her trials and carry her through  
 whatever it is that she must face.

Help each of us, too so that we may reach out to \_\_\_\_\_,  
 in Your love and compassion.  
 May we be there with our time and our listening ear  
 so that \_\_\_\_\_ may see You in our care for her.  
 Help us to recognize that this is our vocation as Christians.  
 This is how we become Your hands and Your body on this earth.  
 May all we do reflect the passion  
 of Your never ending love for all of humanity.  
 We ask you these things  
 for You are the Life giver - the one who gives us hope and joy.  
 Amen.

*Donna Tiernan Mahoney, NCCW Church Communities Chair, 1991*



**SECTION 5 - PRAYERS FROM CALLED TO PRAY**



## 1. BEGINNINGS

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- ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- LEADER:** Our God calls us all to new beginnings. As leaders of our councils, we have also a special responsibility to help others to find new life within themselves. As we listen quietly to some music, let us consider how we may renew our spiritual lives and those of the people around us.
- READER:** A reading from the book of Isaiah: 62:1-5  
The Word of the Lord.
- ALL:** Thanks be to God.
- LEADER:** Let us ask God for the wisdom and courage to renew our lives, so that we may become like “a beautiful crown for the Lord.”  
  
You call us each by a new name, Lord. Make us open to you, so that we may hear you when you speak to us.
- ALL:** Open our hearts and minds, O Lord.
- LEADER:** We are to put away our old selves and become new women. Give us the courage to step out of our comfortable routines and to dare to be different.
- ALL:** Make us courageous, O Lord.
- LEADER:** We must change gently and slowly if the changes are to become a real part of our lives. Make us wise and patient so that we may grow into our new selves.
- ALL:** Give us wisdom and patience, O Lord.
- LEADER:** You have called us to your service as leaders of your daughters in the Church. Make us gentle but strong, so that we may lead our sisters to a new life in you.
- ALL:** Give us Mary’s strength and gentleness, O Lord.
- LEADER:** As we discuss the business which we have before us, keep us always mindful, Lord, that our first goal is to serve you through our sisters. Fill us with your grace and bless us always.
- ALL:** Amen.
- LEADER:** May God be with each one of us as we return to our homes.
- ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mary Pollington, Salt Lake City DCCW

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## 2. ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE

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### INTRODUCTION:

**LEADER:** Our prayer service combines three Advent institutions: The Jesse Tree, the Advent Wreath, and the "O Antiphons." The "O Antiphons" were originally designed for use before and after the Magnificat during Vespers from December 17th to 23rd. Using a series of messianic titles, drawn largely from Isaiah, they call upon the Lord Jesus to come into our lives and save us. In the following service we use the seven antiphons as expressed in the familiar Advent Hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," Verse 1, Refrain, Verse 2

**LEADER:** This reading speaks of God, the source of all wisdom.

**READING:** Sirach 1:1-10

**LEADER:** An adaptation of Solomon's prayer for wisdom.

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING:** Wisdom 9:1-4

**ALL:** God of our ancestors, Lord of mercy, who by your Word have made all things, and in your wisdom have given us the rule of creatures that come from you, and have asked us to govern the world in holiness and justice, grant us wisdom, and do not reject us from the number of your children. Amen.

**LEADER:** God has acted in human history over and over again. We hear an account of God's beginning to work through Moses and the people of Israel.

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING:** Exodus 3:1-3, 3:4-8, 11-14

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 3, Refrain; Verse 4, Refrain

**MOVEMENT:** The Jesse Tree is brought in. Paper "leaves" are now distributed. Write on it one way in which you are preparing for the Lord's coming. Each participant then takes his or her turn attaching the leaf to the Jesse tree. Each receives an unlit candle.

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 5, Refrain

**3RD READING:** Closed...chains...prison...confinement...darkness...There are many ways in which we choose to ignore that your life has come into the world. Be with us, Lord, as we examine our ways and attempt to break free from those, which hinder us from seeing your presence.

**MOVEMENT:** Silent Reflection

**ALL:** Lord, we acknowledge that you can open locked hearts, break the chains which hold us from one another, free us from the prisons of our own making, and bring light to our darkness. You are the Lord. We ask that we be able to truly recognize you as Emmanuel God-with-us. Amen.

## ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE (cont.)

**LEADER:** All nations shall be united in God.

**4TH READING:** Isaiah 2:1-5

**ALL:** O Emmanuel, our kind lawgiver; the expected of nations and our Savior, come and save us, O Lord our God.

**5TH READING:** John 1:1-5

**ALL:** O rising dawn, radiance of light eternal and sun of Justice: come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

**6TH READING:** John 1:6-10

**MOVEMENT:** Each participant lights his or her candle from the Advent Wreath.

**7TH READING:** Matthew 5:14-16

**8TH READING:** We have been reminded today that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that we are called to give witness to this Light.

*Arranged by Virginia Montozzi, Pittsburgh DCCW*



### 3. BEARERS OF THE WORD

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**INVITATORY** Stand

**LEADER:** O God, this day and always, come to our assistance.

**ALL:** O Lord, make haste to help us.

**LEADER:** Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen

**SONG:** "Peace is Flowing Like a River", Carey Landry verses 1 & 2

**THE WORD** (sit)

**RIGHT:** Grace and peace be with you.

**LEFT:** The blessing and power of the Spirit of God be with us.

**RIGHT:** How good it is to share our stories

**LEFT:** of women who have come before us.

#### **PHOEBE**

**READER 1:** Romans 16:1-2

**LEADER:** Loving God, You call us to the edges of the earth to teach and minister in the church. Whatever our field of service, give us the courage and strength to serve you and your church. May we give of ourselves completely without stopping to count the cost.

**SONG:** "Peace is Flowing Like a River" verse 3

#### **PRISCILLA**

**READER 2:** Acts 18:1-3, 18-19; Romans 16:3-5

#### **BEARERS OF THE WORD (cont.)**

**LEADER:** We thank you, O God, for linking our lives in so many ways. We are partners in the mystery of redemption and reconciliation. We are partners in the ministry of service to your church. Bless our efforts, strengthen our partnership, and deepen our love for your church.

**SONG:** "Peace is Flowing Like a River" verse 4

#### **WOMAN AT THE WELL**

**READER 3:** John 4:1-10, 27-28, 39

**LEADER:** Compassionate God, Wellspring of Wisdom, we your faith-filled daughters, struggle to serve you. Thank you for the example of your Son and the women that have gone before us. Spirit of Life, be with us in this space and time as we affirm and shape changes in our understanding of your way. You say: The harvest is ready. Whom shall I send? Send us.

**SONG:** "Peace is Flowing Like a River" verse 5 twice

#### 4. CALLED

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**LEADER:** We are called to be wise, courageous, loving leaders of the Church. As in so many areas of our lives, our model in this is Mary, the Mother of God. Let us pray to her that she will guide us in our efforts.

**ALL:** God of heavenly wisdom, you have given us Mary, Mother of Jesus, to be our guide and counselor. Grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life and so enjoy her Council, patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women, intercede for us, that we may be wise, courageous and loving leaders of the Church. Help us, dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your son. May the Holy Spirit fill us with reverence for God's creation, and compassion for all God's children. May our labors of love on earth enhance the reign of God and may God's gifts of faith and living hope prepare us for the fullness of the world to come. Amen.

**LEADER:** We are called to work for the Kingdom of God through four means: scripture, prayer, ecumenism and evangelization. Let us listen to the Word of God as it directs us in these areas.

**READER:** Timothy 3:15-17

**LEADER:** Let us pray. We come to know you, Lord, through your holy word. Help us to listen and read attentively, so that your message to us through scripture may touch our lives, and through us the lives of those around us. Amen.

**READER:** Matthew 6:6-8

**LEADER:** Let us pray: Your word is near, O Lord our God, your grace is near. You wait for us until we are open to you. Come to us then with mildness and power. Do not let us be deaf to you, but make us receptive and open to Jesus Christ your Son.

**READER:** John 10:16, 17-21

**LEADER:** Let us pray: There are many divisions, Lord, in your world today. We are kept apart by barriers of race, of color, of sex and of religion. We pray that through our ecumenical works and prayers these barriers may be worn away, so that one day all people will stand united in your love. Amen.

**READER:** Luke 15:8-10

**LEADER:** Let us pray: We pray, Lord, that we may be the means of spreading your truth to those we meet. Give us courage and wisdom as we work to unite all in the love of Christ. Let us finish by praying together the prayer of St. Francis, that we may work together to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

**ALL:** Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; 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 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.

*Pat Voorhes*

## 5. CHRISTIANS IN ACTION

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**LEADER:** God calls all people into service to others. Let us be Christians in Action. As we pause and reflect on our own lives, how do we respond to this statement?

**ALL:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LEADER:** “The essence of the Christian ministry is personal service. Jesus sets forth the principle that one's readiness to serve is the standard by which his greatness as a minister is to be evaluated. The earliest ministry of the Church was that of the twelve Apostles and then Paul. The Prophets, the Evangelists, and the Teachers who followed built up the life in the early Church and applied these teachings to the ethical and moral life of all people. The New Testament portrays the Church as the Spirit-filled body of Christ, whose life is sustained and enriched by each member's use of his particular gifts. In this sense every member of the church may be considered a true minister of Christ. Christians in Action!”

**READING:** ROMANS 12:4-8

**LEADER:** Psalm 119, Adapted from Psalms Now

**LEFT:** O God, I want so very much to please You, to walk in your ways and to carry out Your purposes. There is nothing as important to me as being in the center of Your will and living within Your design for my life.

**RIGHT:** While others may find their fulfillment in the acquisition of wealth or the accumulation of things, in doing something better than everyone else, or in the plaudits of their peers, my foremost desire is to be the object of Your love and to be Your child and servant forever.

**LEFT:** Not only have You fashioned me with Your hands, O Lord, and created me for Your purposes. You have stamped Your image upon my heart. Therefore my deepest longings are met only in You and in the dedication of my life to the accomplishment of Your objectives.

**RIGHT:** How can I live a life that is pleasing to You, O Lord? My instincts are earthbound. The ephemeral delights of this life tantalize and tempt me. My insatiable longings and desperate attempts to please You are thwarted by the innumerable enemies **of my soul.**

**LEFT:** I fail so often to do what I really want to do, to attain what I strive for; to grasp what I reach for; and I fall back in shame and am flattened in despair.

**RIGHT:** You do forgive me when I fail, O Lord, and You put me upon my feet again. You have promised to strengthen me and to sustain me in my daily conflicts. Now I pray for the wisdom to discern Your will and the grace to carry it out in the difficult days before me.

**LEFT:** You have shown me how much You love me, Lord; now show me how to love You. Your standards for me are clear: I am to translate Your love into terms that others can comprehend, to demonstrate it before those that know and see me.

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**CHRISTIANS IN ACTION (cont.)**

**RIGHT:** I can serve You only as I commit my life to service on behalf of my brothers and sisters. I can offer sacrifices to You only by way of the altar of my neighbor's need. This is Your law, Your standard, Your design and will for my life. This is the way in which I will be pleasing to You.

**LEFT:** I do love You, O God, and Your will for me is the delight of my heart. I have a sincere love for many people who cross my path, and I rejoice in the privilege of serving them. And yet, O Lord, there are so many people whom I do not love.

**RIGHT:** The demons of bigotry and apathy and jealousy and selfishness plague my soul and numb my sensitivities and stay my hand from reaching out to help my fellowman. I sin against You when I sin against them, and I need to be restored and renewed by Your loving touch.

**LEFT:** How I praise You, O Lord, because You love me even when I fail to respond in loving obedience! Whereas I cannot comprehend You, You do understand me, and You continue to hold me within Your loving embrace.

**RIGHT:** While I fall short of my sincere intentions to abide within Your will for me, Your promises are eternally secure, and You tenderly and patiently rekindle the fires within me. Empower me to do that which I cannot do by myself.

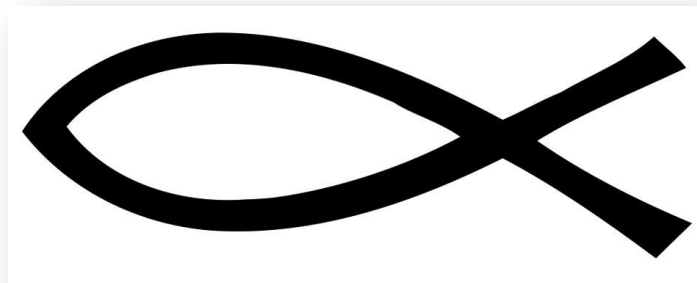
**ALL:** I love You, O God, and I gladly accept Your will and purpose for my life. Now bless me and guide me and grant me the grace to walk within that will and purpose and have the joy of knowing that I am pleasing to You.

**SONG:** "We Are Many Parts", Marty Haugen, GIA, Chicago, IL

<sup>1</sup>Condensed from The Laymen's Bible Encyclopedia, 1964, The Southwestern Company, Nashville, Tennessee, pg. 525

<sup>2</sup>Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO 1973  
arranged by Gerry Braden, Austin, Texas DCCW

<sup>3</sup>*National Council of Catholic Women, Called to Pray, 1995*





## 6. DAY OF PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

- LEADER:** Let us rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a feast day in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Good Counsel. On this solemn day, the angels rejoice and give praise to the Son of God.
- ALL:** Lord God, you are the source of all life. We first give you thanks for the Church which has nurtured and formed us. We praise and thank you for all the good gifts you have given us.
- You have given us the Mother of your beloved Son to be our Mother, and you have been pleased to give honor to her beautiful picture by a wonderful sign. Grant that, by always adhering to her counsels, we may be able to live after your own heart.
- LEADER:** Let us celebrate with great devotion this day in memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary; may she pray with us and for us to the Lord, Jesus Christ.
- ALL:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.
- LEADER:** Loving God, bless us with the vision to see beyond today, beyond tomorrow, beyond even the years to come so that we might increase our love for all life.
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.
- LEADER:** We ask you now to give us new eyes so that we may vision a new heaven and a new earth; a world in which all women and men will work together in a spirit of cooperation and love:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.
- LEADER:** Help us to see life and relationships in a new way. Allow us to recognize that each person in the body of Christ is needed and necessary:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.
- LEADER:** Help us to work together in a spirit of mutual trust and understanding so that your work will be done more efficiently and effectively:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.
- LEADER:** Teach us to pray together and to find your spirit of love in all our undertakings:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.
- LEADER:** We recognize that these are new and challenging times in our Church and we ask for guidance and direction in discerning where the Spirit is leading us:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.
- LEADER:** Be with us in our gatherings. Help us to be open to your gentle encouragement:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us
- LEADER:** Create in us new eyes with which to see our place in your Church. Help us to open our eyes to all new possibilities so that we may find new ways to respond to each other in love and commitment:
- RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**DAY OF PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL (cont.)**

**LEADER:** Help us to put aside old opinions and be newly open to whatever you require of us today:

**RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

**LEADER:** Give us a spirit of trust and an ability to see the whole picture which you are showing us in our Church and in our world: Response

**RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

**LEADER:** Help us to collaborate with each other so that your reign may be more fully visible in our lives:

**RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

**LEADER:** May our baptismal commitment to all life be seen by those who have decided their lives are broken and meaningless. Help them to recognize that it is only in following you in service to one another that we find peace and happiness:

**RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

**LEADER:** May we recognize your presence in our midst and recognize that in serving our sisters and brothers we are serving you:

**RESPONSE:** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us

**LEADER:** We ask you all these favors because you are the giver of light and life, the One who enlightens our vision and gives it strength and brilliance.

**ALL:** Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, help us, O Lord. May we on whom she has lavished unceasing favors, perceive what we ought to do and have strength to perform it. May the holy intercession of your glorious mother.

**LEADER:** Let us proceed now in the light and life of our loving God as we bless ourselves in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**ALL:** Amen

*Called to Pray, 1995*

*arranged by Roberta Nuhfer, Diocese of Orlando from "New Eyes,"*

*NCCW PRAYS, Donna Tiernan Mahoney, Palm Beach DCCW*

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**DAY OF PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL (cont.)**

**INTENTION:** The dignity and respect for human life.

**LEADER:** God come to our assistance.

**ALL:** Lord make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**SONG:** Marian Hymn of your choice.

**PSALMODY:**

**ALL:** Blessed are you, O Mary, for the world's salvation came forth from you, now in glory, you rejoice forever with the Lord. Intercede for us with your Son.

**PSALM 36, 5-10**

**LEFT:** Your love, Yahweh, reaches to heaven; your faithfulness to the skies.

**RIGHT:** Your justice is like a mountain your judgments like the deep.

**LEFT:** To all creation you give protection Your people find refuge in the shelter of your wings.

**RIGHT:** They feast on the riches of your house; they drink from the stream of your delight.

**LEFT:** You are the source of life, and in your light we see light.

**RIGHT:** Continue your love to those who know you, doing justice to the upright of heart.

**ALL:** We share the fruit of life through you, O daughter blessed by the Lord.

**PSALM PRAYER**

**LEADER:** Lord God, you are the source of all life. We pray to you now, through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, for human life, the life of all people the world over. In your mercy and love, sanctify and support our efforts to make respect and dignity the cornerstone in the lives of all your people in this world.

**PSALM 133 (adapted)**

**LEFT:** How good it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live in unity.

**RIGHT:** It is like the precious oil running down from our head, down to the collars of our robes.

**LEFT:** It is like the dew on Mount Herman falling on the hills of Zion.

**RIGHT:** For there Yahweh has promised a blessing, life that never ends.

**CANTICLE:** Ephesians 1:3-10 (read antiphonally)

(continued)

**DAY OF PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL (cont.)**

**PSALM PRAYER**

**LEADER:** Loving God, bless us with the vision to see beyond today, beyond tomorrow, beyond even the years to come so that we might increase our love for all human life. Increase our insight into the problems which affect the young, the unborn and the aged so that we might seek solutions. Our Lady of Good Counsel, teach us a holy respect and dignity for all God's children.

**READING:** Deuteronomy 30:15-20

**RESPONSE:** We share the fruit of life through you, O daughter blessed by the Lord.

**LEADER:** It is you, O Lord, you are the only one.

**ALL:** You made the heavens, the highest heavens and all their hosts, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that is in them,

**LEADER:** To all of them you give life,

**ALL:** and the heavenly hosts bow down before you. Glory to the Father...

**CANTICLE OF MARY: Magnificat of Acceptance**

**ALL:** Let us celebrate with great devotion this day in memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary; may she intercede for us with her Son, Jesus.

**LEFT:** My soul trembles in the presence of the loving Creator and my spirit prepares itself to walk hand in hand with the God who saves Israel because I have been **accepted by God as a simple helpmate.**

**RIGHT:** Yes, forever in the life of humankind people will sing of this loving encounter; through remembering this moment, the faithful will know all things are possible in God.

**LEFT:** Holy is the place within me where God lives.

**RIGHT:** God's tender fingers reach out from age to age to touch the softened inner spaces of those who open their souls in hope.

**LEFT:** I have experienced the creative power of God's embracing arms and I know the cleansing fire of unconditional love. I am free from all earthly authority and know my bonding to the Author of all earthly things.

**RIGHT:** I am filled with the news of good things; my favor with God, faithful trust in the gentle shadow of the Most High, the mystery of my son, Jesus, the gift of companionship with my beloved kinswoman, Elizabeth, who believes as I believe.

**LEFT:** The place in my heart that I had filled with thoughts of fear and inadequacy has been emptied and I am quiet within.

**RIGHT:** God comes to save Israel, our holy family, remembering that we are the ones who remember; according to the kinship we have known, remembering that we are the ones who remember and that where God and people trust each other there is home.

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**DAY OF PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL (cont.)**

**INTERCESSIONS**

**LEADER:** Let us praise God, who wished that Mary, our Lord's mother, be celebrated by each generation. Now in need we ask: and the response is

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**LEADER:** You made Mary the mother of mercy, may all who are faced with decisions that threaten human life feel her motherly help and decide to respect life.

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**LEADER:** You wished Mary to be the mother of the family in the home of Jesus and Joseph, may all mothers of families foster love and holiness through her intercession:

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**LEADER:** You gave Mary strength at the foot of the Cross and filled her with joy at the resurrection of your Son, lighten the hardships of those who are burdened and deepen their sense of hope:

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**LEADER:** You made Mary open to your word and faithful as your servant, through her intercession make us conscious of our responsibility not only to protect but to enhance the lives and spirits of those whom you commit to our care:

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us. You crowned Mary Queen of heaven. May we open our minds and hearts to better understand and support the rights and destinies of all human life of this world:

**RESPONSE** Our Lady of Good Counsel, intercede for us.

**LEADER:** Let us pray:

**ALL:** OUR FATHER. .

**LEADER:** In every age, O Holy One, we face changing roles and challenges which affect not only ourselves but the fabric of society through the world. We are assuming new roles, new responsibilities in every level of society. We need, more than ever, to be conscious of the unique role we have as, in many cases, determinants of public morality. Through the grace of your Spirit, may we recognize the power for good which we possess and use it to bring about a better world for people everywhere. Bless us with Mary's courage, simplicity and faith so we may work for the day when all human life will be valued with the respect and dignity you have bestowed on it. We ask all these things through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen

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used with permission.  
Arranged by Pat Voorhes, NCCW, Called To Pray, 1995.

## 7. GATHERING PRAYER

**OPENING SONG:** "We Gather Together," Kremser, Netherlands Folk Song

**LEADER:** We gather together to cultivate the Word of God in our hearts. Some people's ears are foreign to God's words. Some have not heard or understood that Jesus is the seed of God's love. There are others who understand God's love, and wish now to come closer. This is our mission, to encourage all to realize the presence of God in their hearts. Let us always remember, "Some will till, some will sow, and some will harvest, yet all people will shine in the radiance of God's love."

**READING:** Matthew 5:3-11

**ALL:** Father, you created us out of your great love. Out of that same love you sent Your son to rescue us from sin and bring us into eternal life. It was out of this love also, that you sent your Spirit upon the earth, forming us into a church, a holy people set apart for your purposes. We thank and praise you, Father, that you have given us this great mystery for our sanctification.

Jesus, we want to commit our lives to you as your people, ransomed from the world. We want to work and pray together participating in your holy sacraments and obeying your words, that we may bear your light to this world. May we always reverence and adore you, Holy Savior.

Blessed Holy Spirit, our light and our hope, enkindle within us a love for the church, the temple you have formed to the praise of the Father. Be with us. Guide us. Protect us. Renew us in your holiness. May we always give praise and glory to you, to the Son, and to the Father, both now and eternally in heaven.

**READING:** Matthew 25: 35 Matthew 28:19-20

**ALL:** Fill us with your love that we may live the whole day in joy and praise.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, Give us the spirit of poverty & humility.

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, teach us to share the tears of our sisters and brother.

**ALL:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, give us a heart as lowly and humble as yours:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, give our souls a thirst for justice and love:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, open our hearts with love for our brothers and sisters:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, enlighten our eyes with your splendor:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, make us channels of peace and joy:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**LEADER:** Lord Jesus, make us strong in suffering for the kingdom:

**RESPONSE:** Show us your mercy, Lord our God.

**CLOSING SONG:** Hail Holy Queen

## 8. INSTALLATION CEREMONY BASED ON THE LIVES OF WOMEN SAINTS

**LEADER:** Newly elected officers of the name of diocese (Diocesan) Council of Catholic Women, the women of your organization have bestowed great honor, esteem and responsibility on you today.

They have shown profound admiration of the ability you have to use your God-given gifts and talents. More than that, they have given you, as a body united in Christ, their hopes, their dreams and their aspirations for the life and future of this organization for which they have worked so hard. In you, they deposit their trust knowing that you will guide this organization into a challenging future which has deep roots in the hard work done by many in the past. The task before you requires great faith, humility, strength, knowledge, and an abundance of gracious love.

Our symbol for this installation ceremony is the rose which reflects strength, beauty, and love. At this growing time of year, we are most aware of the new life all around us. We recognize that new life derives its creative ability from the soil which has been worked by our mothers and fathers before us. We are reminded of the fruitfulness of their lives; that the earth and all those on it are connected by the strength of God's creative love for us and by our mutual love and care for one another.

As we begin a new council year, let us all, members and officers alike, be aware of the strength and power of love. Let us pray to be guided by this love as symbolized, by the rose. (Allow moment for meditation)

As a diocesan organization, we place ourselves under the patronage of Mary, our Mother and the Mother of Jesus. In addition, each of our officers is given a special woman in our tradition as her patroness.

**LEADER:** May I present to you our treasurer:

As treasurer, you hold a trustworthy and important position. You will receive all monies and dispense all funds according to the rules of (name organization). Just as the stem of this rose balances it and gives perfect order to the leaves, so too, will your office demand preciseness and integrity. To you we give the patroness, St. Teresa of Avila, who was a model of integrity and was trusted by the leaders of the Church in her time.

**LEADER:** May I present to you our corresponding secretary:

As corresponding secretary you will represent (name organization) in all the letters and notices you send and receive. You will need the gifts of graciousness and tact, efficiency and promptness. Your correspondence should depict affability and warmth. Just as the rose reflects beautiful memories of the sender, so too, shall your correspondence show your organization in the best possible light. To you we give the patroness, Phoebe, a deaconess in the early Church whose communication of Jesus aided the Church of Cenrae in its belief.

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

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**INSTALLATION CEREMONY (cont.)**

**LEADER:** May I present to you our recording secretary:

As recording secretary, you will keep minutes of all the meetings of (name organization). You will need to be a keen observer at our meetings in order to submit a complete report of all the actions taken. You are to record and store the business of (name organization) just as the rose stores pollen to be released as needed. To you we give the patroness, St Paula, who was a companion to St. Jerome and helped him in interpreting and translating the Bible.

**LEADER:** May I present to you our second vice-president:

As second vice-president, you will be called upon when necessary, to fill in for the vice-president. You will also assume many and varied projects to add to the effectiveness and creativity of our organization. Your job will require the ability to be a team player. You will be like new sprouting buds of the rose, always ready to blossom and give life, joy and fragrance to your organization. To you we give the patroness, Priscilla, Church leader, teacher, and woman totally involved in team ministry for the sake of the gospel.

**LEADER:** May I present to you our vice-president:

As vice-president you will assist the president in any way possible and will always be ready, willing and able to stand in for her when necessary. You will also be a support person for our president, one on whom she can always call for advice and direction, just as the stem of the rose is the support system for its nourishment. To you we give the patroness, Ruth of the Old Testament, for her loyalty and fidelity to Naomi was a constant source of strength.

**LEADER:** May I present to you our president:

As president, you are ultimately responsible for the leadership of this organization. You will delegate responsibilities, lead your board of directors, and represent (name organization) with grace and dignity. You will represent (name organization) at all (arch)diocesan functions and will be available for all (members or affiliations) when called upon. You will be an ambassador of love and good will just as the rose is symbolic of the love and good will that exist in the world of natural order. To you we give the patroness, Queen Esther of the Old Testament, whose grace, discretion and diplomacy enabled her people to live long and fruitful lives.

**Pause**

**LEADER:** Each of you has heard her duties. Now we, as your membership, ask if you are ready to make a commitment to carry them out.

**Wait for response**

**LEADER:** As an organization, we thank you and we offer our congratulations and support. You are hereby duly installed. Go forth in the love and peace of our brother, Jesus, to carry out the work you have committed to do. God bless you all.

*Arranged by Donna Tiernan Mahoney, Palm Beach, NCCW, Called to Pray, 1995.*



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**9. LENTEN JOURNEY OF LOVE**

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*A cross is constructed of wood or formed with votive candles. A votive candle is lighted each of the weeks of Lent; if there are six weeks, those closest to the center are last.*

**LEADER I:** The first week of Lent is a time when we have the great opportunity to love in a way that is unique. It gives us the chance to walk with Christ in a Journey of Love. It is a time when the events in the public life of Jesus Christ are spread before us - to meditate - to ponder over - and then to imitate the virtues presented.

**LEADER II:** This first week in our Journey of Love, let us show the HAND OF LOVE.

**Light the first votive**

By writing a letter to a friend or relative, let them know that you care. Let it be someone you have not communicated with for a long time. Tell them how much you miss them, how much you appreciate them and how much you love them.

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, let our hands be more like yours. May all those we touch feel our gentle concern. As your hand touched people, you brought them closer to your heart and made them believe. They knew you truly cared. Glory be to the Father. . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

**LEADER I:** The second week of Lent is a time when we concentrate on Lent as a positive sign and season. The public life of Our Lord is set before us. He went out preaching to all men - manifesting God's great love and concern for mankind. Now is the time for us to reaffirm our faith, that life does not end with death and that the Cross is the sign of eternal love.

**LEADER II:** This second week in our Journey of Love, let us show the VOICE OF LOVE.

**Light second votive**

Telephone two or three people each day for a brief chat. Especially include those who are alone - just say - "How are you?" "Thank you" or "I'm sorry." Tell a lonely person, "I'm thinking of you." You will probably make their day.

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, your voice spoke only words of kindness, words of forgiveness, words of love - help us all to be more like you in our daily work and conversation. Have us remember that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Glory Be to the Father . . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

**LEADER I:** The third week of Lent is a time of intense prayer. Let us stop and take a good look at ourselves so far. It is time for us to be more devout in our prayers and also devote more time to religious exercises. It is the time for us to review and study the important matters of our faith. God's love for us is demonstrated in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is beyond all human reasoning to understand this great magic of faith and gift to us.

(continued)

**LENTEN JOURNEY OF LOVE (cont.)**

**LEADER II:** This third week, in our Journey of Love, let us display the DEED OF LOVE.

**Light the third votive**

Take a small gift or token, something you have made or bought to friends or shut-ins to show how much they mean to you. Even a smile or some small errand can qualify. Express your feelings through these small remembrances that have your love as a wrapping.

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, you displayed many deeds of love in your life here on earth. Helping the sick, the aged, the poor, the disabled – people of all ages and importance was your special mission during your public life. Help us to be more charitable and thoughtful in our actions – so that we too may accomplish deeds of love. Glory be to the Father . . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

**LEADER I:** The fourth week of Lent is a time of penance. It is a time to set aside life's distractions, examine our lives and prepare ourselves for the last stages of Christ's mortal life. We are reminded that God chose to save the world. What greater love could there be, the sacrifice of Jesus for the redemption of humankind.

**LEADER II:** This fourth week in our Journey of Love, let us express the HEART OF LOVE.

**Light fourth votive**

Make a list of ten people for whom you will pray daily. Include your enemies as well as your friends. Forgive them if they have wronged you. Ask God's forgiveness if you have been unkind to them. Pray for a better understanding as you take an inward look at yourself.

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, you loved all people especially those who talked against you, those who denied you, including those who strayed from the flock. You forgave the thief on the cross in his hour of need. Help us to be more forgiving in this world of strife. Glory be to the Father . . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

**LEADER I:** The fifth week of Lent. Lent is a time for us to imprint in our minds all the many ways our Lord included us in His sacrifices and abundant blessings. From the time He was a helpless little Babe in Bethlehem until His death on the cross – the world and its people were always on His mind. No greater love hath any man!

**LEADER II:** This fifth week in our Journey of Love, let us show the MIND OF LOVE.

**Light fifth votive**

Take time out this week to pray for yourself. Keep in mind that only through the intercession of His Blessed Mother and the Holy Saints can we grow in Christ. Plan to attend Mass more frequently and make a visit to the church just to meditate. Make certain you are in the right penitential spirit.

(continued)

**NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS**

**LENTEN JOURNEY OF LOVE (cont.)**

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, we have tried to follow all the many ways of love suggested during the weeks of Lent. Our minds are consumed with the idea of growing in you. Imitating those who imitated You, we hope to become more Christ-like. Glory be to the Father . . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

**LEADER I:** The sixth week of Lent is a time of renewal. It is the time to toss out bad habits and take stock of our spiritual accomplishments. Have we completed the goals for this penitential season? Remember Lent is a time for professing the good news: God Loves Us. This love story does not end with the death of Jesus, for the Cross tells us life has no end. If we believe, we will live forever.

**LEADER II:** This sixth week in our Journey of Love, let us learn to celebrate the VICTORY OF LOVE.

**Light sixth votive**

In reading the Passion of our Lord, may it help us to meditate daily on the sufferings of Jesus, His sacrifice for humanity and the institution of the Eucharist. Then on Easter we can rejoice in the fact that our lives will be eternal. Jesus has won that victory for us and we will share in that happiness.

**LEADER I:** Dear Jesus, you have won the victory of life eternal for Us, and we thank you humbly for being able to share in that happiness. We pray that we may appreciate the greatness of your love and in turn strengthen our love for you proving ourselves worthy of your great sacrifice. Glory be to the Father . . .

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning . . .

*Sharon Slezak, Catholic Woman, Jan/Feb 1985, adapted by Theresa M. Cochnar  
NCCW, Called to Pray, 1995*



## 10. LIGHT SHINES ON

**SONG:** We are the Light of the World

**READING:** John 1:1-15

**LEADER:** How do you feel when you are alone in the dark?

Look at the light of the candle. How do you feel about this light?

Consider for a moment that John calls Jesus “light” the light that shines in our darkness. Close your eyes and think of Jesus in this way.

John also says the darkness has never put out Jesus’ light. How do you feel knowing that Jesus is always with you, always “light” in your darkness?

**LEADER:** The liturgical season of Advent comes at the darkest time of the year. But our faith assures us that Jesus is the light of the world, a light that darkness has not overcome. This is our joy and our consolation, and this is the message of Christmas. This is the message we are called to share with our family and friends.

**LEADER:** Jesus, light of the world, help us to believe in the gift of your presence.

**ALL:** Give us the light of faith.

**LEADER:** Jesus, light of the world, help us to trust in the gift of your presence.

**ALL:** Give us the light of trust.

**LEADER:** Jesus, light of the world, help us to love you, present in one another.

**ALL:** Give us the light of love.

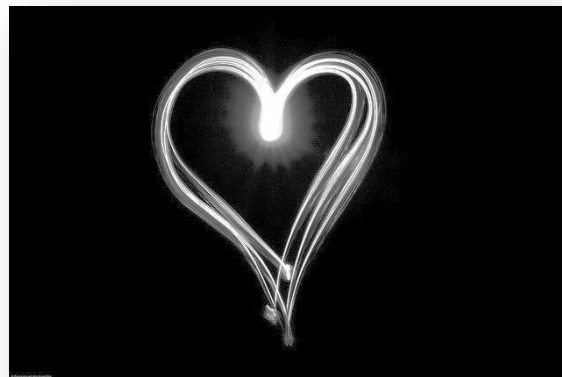
**MOVEMENT:** Each person shall come forward, one at a time, for the following blessing.

**LEADER:** May Jesus, the light of the world, dispel your darkness. May He light your way during Advent.

**MOVEMENT:** After each individual blessing, this phrase should be repeated

**ALL:** May you always live in the light.

*Virginia Montazzi, Pittsburgh DCCW*



## 11. LITANY IN HONOR OF WOMEN, BEARERS OF GOOD NEWS

**LEADER:** We have experienced the Risen Christ as did the first disciples, and we, too, cannot help but share what we have heard and seen. Let us now ask God for the support we need to fulfill our mission as bearers of the Good News as we take our inspiration from the lives and ministry of some of the great women disciples of Jesus.

**READER:** Please respond: *Empower us, Lord!*

Like Mary, Mother of Jesus, may our “Yes” to God shine forth in every dimension of our lives, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Prisca, co-worker of Paul, may we use our gifts and energies to build Christ’s Church, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Agnes, virgin and martyr, may our love of God be more important to us than Life itself, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Brigid, abbess and scholar, may our wise sharing of His truths lead many people to God, we pray:

**READER:** Like Clare of Assisi, may we detach ourselves from material concerns to serve God single heartedly, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Catherine of Sienna, may we give enlightened leadership for the growth of the Church and God’s Kingdom, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Joan of Arc, may we speak and act with courage against the evils in our world, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Teresa of Avila, may our spiritual life flow from a deep and intimate union with God in prayer, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Elizabeth Ann Seton, may we live out our commitment to Christ through the works of charity and service, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Frances Xavier Cabrini, may we welcome the stranger with Christ’s caring love until there are no more strangers, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

(continued)

**LITANY IN HONOR OF WOMEN, BEARERS OF GOOD NEWS (cont.)**

**READER:** Like Mother Teresa of Calcutta, may we respond with love to the image of Christ in the sick and suffering, the lonely and abandoned, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like Thea Bowman, may we see all people of every race and nation as children of the one Father, and love and affirm them as our sisters and brothers, we pray:

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**READER:** Like the great women whom we have known personally – our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, godmothers – may we live out our firm belief in the Lord’s promises until they are fulfilled, we pray

**ALL:** Empower us, Lord!

**LEADER:** Father, your Son’s Resurrection calls all people to a new and glorious life in You. Grant that we may bring this Good News to everyone through lives of joyful witness and impassioned service. We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.



## 12. LIVING FAITH

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**OPENING SONG:** "ABBA FATHER", Carey Landry

**READING:** ECCLESIASTES 3

**LEADER:** Loving God, we offer these petitions, prayers, requests and thanksgivings for all people.

**RIGHT:** We give thanks to CHRIST JESUS, our LORD, who has given us strength for our work

**LEFT:** If our sisters have died with Him, they shall also live with HIM, for GOD has revealed His Grace for the salvation of all mankind

**RIGHT:** The LORD is my helper, I will not be afraid, let us then, always offer praise to GOD and not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please GOD.

**LEFT:** May the GOD of peace provide you with every good thing you need in order to do his will, and may HE, through JESUS CHRIST do in us what pleases HIM.

**RIGHT:** Happy is the person who remains faithful under trials because when she succeeds in passing such a test she will receive as her reward the life which GOD has promised to those who love HIM.

**LEFT:** Remember this my dear sisters! Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to anger.

**RIGHT:** Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to God's Word; instead put it into practice.

**LEFT:** For whoever does not simply listen-but puts it into practice that person will be blessed by GOD in what she does.

**ALL:** LORD GOD, we give you thanks for the blessing of our gathering. We put our faith in you this day. Give us your SPIRIT, that we may trust you completely. Help us to walk with you always with our eyes toward the victory you promised us in the cross.

Bless us, LORD; and those we love. Give us a living faith in the power of your Spirit and help us to celebrate your gift of forgiveness that leads us from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from all fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our heart, let peace fill our world and let peace fill our universe. Renew us, LORD, in the image of your SON. AMEN.

**LEADER:** Please stand and join hands. The Lord has told us where one or two are gathered in my name there I am in their midst.

**ALL:** OUR FATHER . . .

**LEADER:** For a final blessing, please join hands with just one person and repeat after me "With the touch of my hands I share with you God's love in me."

**CLOSING SONG:** "Peace is Flowing Like a River", Carey Landry

### 13. PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, ENGLISH AND SPANISH

God of Heavenly wisdom you have given us Mary, Mother of Jesus, to be our guide and counselor. Grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life and so enjoy her blessed presence in the life to come.

O Mother of Good Counsel, Patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women intercede for us that we may be wise, courageous and loving leaders of the Church. Help us, dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your son. May the Holy Spirit fill us with reverence for God's creation and compassion for all God's children. May our labor of love on earth enhance the reign of God and may God's gifts of faith and living hope prepare us for the fullness of the world to come. Amen.

#### ORACION A NUESTRA SENORA DE EL BUEN CONSEJO

Dios de sabiduria divina, nos diste a Maria Madre de Jesus como nuestra guia y consejera oncedenos que siempre sigamos su ayuda maternal en esta vida para poder disfrutar su sagrada presencia en la vida eternal.

O Madre de el Buen Consejo, patrona de el Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Catolicas, ruega por nosotras para que seamos prudentes, valientes y amorosas lideres de nuestra iglesia Ayudanos, querida Madre, para comprender a tu hijo, Jesus. Que el Espiritu Santo nos llene de reverncia por la creacion de Dios y con compassion para todas sus criaturas. Que neustras obras de amor en la tiera enriquezan el reino de Dios y que sus dones de fe y esperanza nos preparen para plenitude en la vida eternal. Amen.

*Spanish translation by Gloria Sanchez, Santa Clara CCW, Dallas Texas*





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## 14. PRAYER SERVICE FOR WOMEN'S CONCERNS

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- LEADER:** O God, come to my assistance.
- ALL:** O Lord make haste to help us.
- LEADER:** Our help is in the name of the Lord.
- ALL:** Who has made heaven and earth.
- LEADER:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
- ALL:** As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.
- SONG:** "God, Our God of Distant Ages" Omer Westendorf
- LEADER:** Lord, give us ears to hear your voice being spoken through this gathering today. Help us discern our role as women who have been called to take an active role as decision makers in our church and in our society. Strengthen us with our own Holy Spirit for this task. We ask this in your name. Amen.
- LEADER:** We listen now to a reading from the Old Testament, the book of Deborah, which was one of the oldest surviving fragments of Hebrew poetry, and for us, as women connects poignantly with the ongoing theme of salvation history.
- READER:** **Judges chapter 4:4-6; 8 & 9:5-7**
- LEADER:** Deborah – the only woman we know ever to be judge of Israel in the days before monarchy when the land was ruled by judges.
- ALL:** On Deborah's head is the royal purple of leadership, on her shoulders rests the blue mantle of wisdom and peace.
- LEADER:** Who stands as sister to Deborah today?
- ALL:** One wise enough to hope, dream, show her colors.
- LEADER:** God's personal instrument is Deborah. The distant highlands of promise are rolling right through her.
- ALL:** Justice and peace merge in tranquil violets and cerulean blues-hues that are the future of her people, at least in Deborah's day.
- LEADER:** Who stands as Deborah's sister today?
- ALL:** One wise enough to hope, dream, show her colors.
- LEADER:** On her head is the royal purple of leadership, born of a passion for people who are also God's.
- ALL:** One wise enough to hope, dream, show her colors.

(continued)

**PRAYER SERVICE FOR WOMEN’S CONCERNS (cont.)**

**LEADER:** With uncommon sense and its sister-wisdom, she draws on her own intelligence report. She will judge rightly.

**ALL:** On Deborah’s head is the royal purple of leadership, on her shoulders rests the blue mantle of wisdom and peace.

**LEADER:** Who stands as Deborah's sister today?

**ALL:** We shall stand – We shall stand.

**LEADER:** O God, our songs of liberation are old songs, ones sung to us by our sisters and brothers who have lived many years before us. They are love songs of a grateful people. We thank you for our sister Deborah, Judge of Israel, and for all of your people who have been and still are working for peace and justice. Instill in us a desire to be your people, to fight against all injustice in our world, especially that of domestic violence. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

*Adapted from Sisters and Prophets, Mary Lou Sleevi, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Ind. Used with permission of publisher; all rights reserved.  
Arranged by Sr. Peg Lane, R.C. Palm Beach CCW*



## 15. SUMMER'S SONG

- LEADER:** God of life and creation, we, the women of the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan Council of Catholic Women are joyful and expectant in Your presence and in the presence of one another. We come here on this summer day in the season that gives us light and warmth to reflect Your beauty. May our days in this holy space give us enlightenment that we may come to know and do Your will. Help us to recognize You in one another so that our time here may remind us that the kingdom of God begins here and now. Help us work to make it more visible. We ask You this through Jesus, our Brother and Redeemer. Amen.
- ALL:** We are grateful to be in Your presence, God of like and creation. We thank you for the gracious gifts you have given each of us (in/on) this (council/board) and for the ability to participate in the empowerment of our Catholic women.
- LEFT:** May the time we spend here and the input we give reflect lives which are prayerful and peaceful. Be with us at this meeting so that it may mirror Your life within us. May our decisions be mindful of the poorest of the poor and the weakest of the weak. May we always be mindful of walking in another person's shoes. Let neither pride nor arrogance inhibit us from reaching out and including those whose lives are broken and searching. May our hearts always be ready to reach out in forgiveness and compassion.
- RIGHT:** Teach us to look to the strong yet gentle women of our tradition: to Mary, your mother and ours; to Mary Magdalene whom You loved; to Priscilla and Phoebe, ministers in Your Church at Rome; to Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, venerable women and doctors of our Church. May our contribution in this day and age in some way mirror the faith and strength of these good and prayerful women whom You called in times past. Help us to recognize that we are called in this century to serve You as they did in theirs. Help us to guide and direct our Church in holiness and in truth that Your wisdom may be known.
- LEFT:** Help us learn ways to live in peace and justice. Help us to recognize that peace will only be a reality when justice surges like water across the lands of the earth. Heal the hearts and lives of those who feel the pain of injustice.
- RIGHT:** Open our eyes and hearts while we are present in this holy space so that we will see all things anew. May Your love, peace and justice flow forth like water from our gathering assuring us of Your presence in our midst.
- READER:** "Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in a lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing that is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by love. And nothing is as virtuous from our friend's or enemy's standpoint as it is from our own; therefore we must be saved by the final form of love, which is forgiveness."<sup>1</sup>
- LEADER:** "May God guard you through each night and day And ever watch over you . May God smile on everything you do. God be with you . . . God love you."<sup>2</sup>

*1 Reinhold Niebuhr*

*2 An Irish Blessing*

*NCCW Prays, NCCW*

*3 NCCW Called To Pray 1995*

## 16. THANKFULNESS

**LEADER:** Let us spend a few moments in silent prayer of thanksgiving for the church which has nurtured and formed us.

For this day, for this gathering, for these prayers, for the deliberations we must do today, we ask Your guidance, O Lord, and grant that we always may follow through with your commands. We ask these prayers in the name of the Father, and of his Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**READING:** Deuteronomy 30:11-20

**LEADER:** Let us stand and alternately read Psalm 24.

**LEFT:** Let us never forget that this world and everything in it belongs to God. But not all of this world's citizens recognize or give allegiance to their Creator.

**RIGHT:** Who are they who truly love and serve God? It is they who discover and live within His purposes for their lives. It is they whose hearts and hands are dedicated to His will for them. It is they who turn away from self-centered concerns to live for others about them.

**LEFT:** They can count on God's perpetual blessings. They nevermore need to be concerned about their personal salvation.

**RIGHT:** They have been delivered from such anxiety to focus their efforts on communicating God's eternal love to their fellowmen.<sup>1</sup>

**ALL:** Let us look up and live! God is present in all his glory and majesty. Let us let go and celebrate! Our loving Lord is here with us and will manifest Himself through us. We are His vehicles and vessels. We represent him in all His saving power. We are His beloved and empowered servants in this world that He created.

**LEADER:** We shall now offer these special petitions from our deaneries. Let us respond: Gracious God, hear us.

**MOVEMENT:** Through the Church Communities Chairman or President of each deanery or division within a Diocese, have a special intention sent to the Leader to print here; the president of the deanery will read the petition, with the response following each.

**ALL:** Oh God, help us to willingly accept the plans You have for us . . . to see You in those we meet on a daily basis. And like our own Blessed Mother Mary, help us to say, Yes, Lord, show us how to be Your faithful and loving workers. We ask these things through Jesus, Your Son

**SONG:** "SERVANT SONG," Rory Cooney, New Dawn Music

## 17. MARY, THE LISTENING HEART

**LEADER:** God come to our assistance

**ALL:** Lord make haste to help us.

**LEADER:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

**ALL:** Amen.

**OPENING SONG:** "Mother Dearest, Mother Fairest" or another Marian Hymn Psalmody

**LEADER:** O Mother, how pure you are, you are untouched by sin:

**ALL:** Yours was the privilege to carry God within you.

### Psalm 143

**LEADER:** Lord listen to my prayer; turn your ear to my appeal. You are faithful you are just; give answer.

**ALL:** Do not call your servant to judgment for no one is just in your sight.

**LEADER:** The enemy pursues my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead, long forgotten

**ALL:** Therefore my spirit fails; my heart is numb within me.

**LEADER:** I remember the days that are past; I ponder all your works. I muse on what your hand has wrought and to you I stretch out my hands.

**ALL:** Like a parched land my soul thirsts for you.

**LEADER:** Lord make haste and answer; for my spirit fails within me.

**ALL:** Do not hide your face lest I become like those in the grave.

**LEADER:** In the morning let me know your love for I put my trust in you.

**ALL:** Make me know the way I should walk; to you I lift up my soul.

**LEADER:** Rescue me, Lord from my enemies; I have fled to you for refuge. Teach me to do your will for you, O Lord are my God.

**ALL:** Let your spirit guide me in ways that are level and smooth.

**LEADER:** For your name's sake, Lord, save my life;

**ALL:** In your justice save my soul from distress.

**LEADER:** The angel said to the shepherds: I proclaim to you a great joy;

**ALL:** Today the Saviour of the world is born for you.

**CANTICLE:**

**LEADER:** Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her; exult with her, all you who were mourning over her!

(continued)

## NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

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### MARY, THE LISTENING HEART (cont.)

**ALL:** Oh, that you may suck fully of the milk of her comfort, that you may nurse with delight at her abundant breasts!

**LEADER:** For this says the Lord: Lo, I will spread posterity over her like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent.

**ALL:** As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms, and fondled in her lap; as a mother comforts her Son, so will I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.

**LEADER:** When you see this your heart shall rejoice, and your bodies flourish like the grass.

**LEADER:** Virgin Mary how great your cause for joy;

**ALL:** God found you worthy to bear Christ our Saviour

**PSALM:** Psalm 147 (read antiphonally)

**READING:** Titus 2:11-12

**CANTICLE:** Luke 1:68-79 (read antiphonally)

**LEADER:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

**ALL:** As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

### INTERCESSIONS

**LEADER:** The Word of God existed before the creation of the universe yet was born among us in time. We praise and worship him as we cry out in joy:

**ALL:** Let the earth ring out with joy for you have come.

**LEADER:** You are the eternal Word of God who flooded the world with joy at your birth with joy by the continuous gift of your life.

**LEADER:** You saved us and by your birth revealed to us the covenant faithfulness of the Lord

**ALL:** Help us to be faithful to the promises of your baptism.

**LEADER:** You are the Creator of heaven and earth who sent messengers to announce peace to all.

**ALL:** Let our lives be filled with your peace.

**LEADER:** You are the true vine that brings forth the fruit of life

**ALL:** Make us branches of the vine, bearing much fruit.

**ALL:** Our Father . . .

**LEADER:** O God of all ages, we are filled with the new light by the coming of your Word among us. May the light of faith still shine in our words and actions. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**ALL:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from evil and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

## 18. VALIANT WOMEN

**OPENING SONG:** "Gentle Woman," Carey Landry

**LEADER:** Heavenly Father, we come humbly before you with praise and thanksgiving for this beautiful time of year, when we see your handiwork in all of creation. Lord God, the wonder of creation and the beauty that surrounds us are yours and your gift to us. May we use this time rejoicing in your Love, and spend it by serving you in the needs of others. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**READER:** Luke 1:39-45

**ALL:** Canticle of Mary, Luke 1:46-55

**READER:** 1 John 4:15-16

**ALL:** Thanks be to God.

**PRAYER:** The Valiant Woman

Make us, O God, valiant women, Women of principle, Women of prudence, Women of prayer, Womanly women. Mold our lives like unto that of the valiant women, Lives of calm, lives of peace, lives of sacrifice, lives of service. Make our services the service of love.

Keep them from anything that would be small when viewed in the light of eternity. Instill into our lives the spirit of holy joy, the joy that sanctifies, the joy that gives, the joy of sorrow, the joy that imparts to others the sweetness born of self-control. Make us prudent women, Women of silence, sensible, practical, broad and charitable in our outlook on life and in our treatment of others.

Make us women of faith. A faith that is not shortsighted. A faith that sees God in all happenings of daily life. Help us be women of principle for women of principle are always the same. Above all, make us intensely devoted to You. Amen.

**LEADER:** That during this year, each of us will be drawn closer to Jesus, Together we pray:

**ALL:** Lord, hear our prayer

**LEADER:** For peace and understanding among all people, for the day when war will be no more, and all will be truly free, Together we pray: Response

That the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our thoughts and actions, and be a source of strength as we work and deliberate during this meeting, Together we pray: Response

For the unity of all Christian believers, and the enlightenment of all unbelievers, Together we pray: Response

**(Pause for spontaneous requests) Together we pray: Response**

**ALL:** Heavenly Father, hear our prayers as we put this meeting's efforts into your care, we ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**SONG:** "Hail Holy Queen" Anonymous

## 19. WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

**LEADER:** Can we share a moment, please, woman to woman, friend to friend? There are things I need to ask for: strength to make it through tomorrow, time to make it through today, healing of memories from the past, courage to deal with life's discrimination, forgiveness for those who patronize me, gentleness, just because I need it, compassion because so many others need it. Be with me now and when I need you most. Amen.

**READING:** Corinthians 12:4-11

A PSALM FOR HELPING OURSELVES

**LEFT:** Help me, O God, help myself when I feel so utterly helpless. When I am deprived of human help and human consolation.

**RIGHT:** Help me help others help themselves in whatever ways are helpful wherever your grace is present; and the occasion justifies.

**LEFT:** If you intervene with miracles, I will wait until they happen inspire me and miracles may start to come from me.

**RIGHT:** If I give the hungry bread, they will be hungry again tomorrow but if I give them a field and seed, they will grow their own supplies.

**LEFT:** Exercise power over me and I will passively follow. Empower me and I will lead others to come with me to you.

**RIGHT:** Replace a tree with another tree and the forest lives forever. Replace a smile with another smile and the joy goes on and on.

**LEFT:** Give love and you will have love around and within you forever. We truly love others only when we have learned to love ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

**ALL:** Help us, O God, to help ourselves, and help us help others to help themselves. Praise to you, God our helper.

**LEADER:** God, You made me in your image and likeness; You created me a woman/man; You brought me to a life of grace and gifted me with your Spirit. Help me to walk in the footsteps of your holy women and men and help me to design my lifestyle in the spirit of their deep faith in you. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Miriam Therese Winter, WOMANWISDOM, Crossroad Publishing Co. used with permission  
Arranged by Virginia Montozzi, Pittsburgh DCCW



## 20. WHY DO YOU WEEP?

### NCCW Prayer Service for Women’s Concerns and Eliminating Domestic Violence

**PRESIDER:** Let us recall that we are in God’s holy presence. In the name of the Father . . .

To our God who shares divinity with us. To our God who shares humanity with us. To our God who unsettles and inspires us. Let us give praise and thanks in song.

**SONG:** “Blest are They,” by David Haas, GIA Publications

**VOICE:** All who pass by, look and see; Is there any sorrow like my sorrow? (Lamentations 1:12)

**READING:** Luke 23:27-28

**VOICE:** Daughters, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. (Luke 23,28)

**ALL:** Weep for the abused and battered. Weep for the oppressed and broken. Weep for the women who have been used. Then weep some more for all the rest.

**VOICE:** Daughters, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. (Luke 23,28)

**READING:** John 20:11-15

**VOICE:** Woman, why do you weep?

**ALL:** Weep for women suffering pain. Weep for those who are sexually abused, minimized, ridiculed, threatened. Weep for those who abuse. Then weep some more for all the rest.

**VOICE:** Woman, why do you weep?

**READING:** Jeremiah 31:15

**VOICE:** Rachel, why do you weep?

**ALL:** *For women violated, excluded, harassed, ignored. For women raped, exploited, discriminated against. For women patronized, passed over, invisible, undervalued. For women who cannot speak for themselves. For all the rest.*

**READING:** Ephesians 2:14-16

(continued)

**WHY DO YOU WEEP? (cont.)**

**VOICE:** O, God, our world at times is divided and hostile. Some people consider themselves dominant over others based on gender, race, color or status. Through your son's cross, our world can be reconciled; the walls of hostility can be broken. Hear our prayers:

We pray for those who have experienced the pain and suffering of violence, that they may feel your healing touch and be at peace in your loving embrace.

We pray for those who victimize and abuse others, that they may see the errors of their sins and seek repentance.

We pray for all women, especially those who experience the pain and rejection of oppression, that they may soon be free of their discomfort. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, may we understand and support those that may come to us for help.

(insert name of saint here), on this your feast day, come to our aid, intercede for all women, especially those who cannot speak for themselves.

**LEADER:** Holy God, Christ has shown us that he knew women were important and should be loved and respected as God's daughters. Help us to remember that Christ's love was so strong that he was willing to die for our lack of love. May we be raised up as new creatures in Christ, freed of the lessons of prejudice and hatred that have been so carefully taught to us. Loving God, fill us with your Holy Spirit and help us to work to bring about the Reign of God. We ask all these things through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, one God, with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.



## 21. WOMEN IN THE CHURCH, MODELS FOR TODAY

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**LEADER:** Let us stand as we begin our service singing:

**SONG:** "Morning Has Broken," Eleanor Farjeon

**LEADER:** In the Gospel reading that we will shortly hear we find that Jesus indeed did accept the women of his time. These public followers of Jesus were Galilean women who helped sustain him out of their means. Later, they accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem and became witnesses to his death. How fortunate we women are to have such a roving, compassionate and supportive Lord as our model.

**READING:** Luke 8:1-3

**MOVEMENT:** Quiet Reflection

**LEADER:** Loving God, we the women of \_\_\_\_\_ are filled with gratitude and joy as we come together in your name. We know that you are with us here—especially when we look around at each of us here and see your various faces. We are the reflections of your holy love.

**ALL:** We thank you Lord for allowing us to be sent by you to help carry out your mission. You have bestowed powerful gifts upon all our councils and empowered us to share in service, spirituality and leadership through mutual support and education of one another.

As always Lord be with us in this gathering so that we may be prepared for our future challenges. Help us to become wise. Give us the stamina, health and the open-mindedness that we need for this gathering so that our time spent here will be productive and enlightening. We are your daughters sent out on a mission and we come to do Your will.

**LEADER:** Let us pray the prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel.

**ALL:** God of heavenly wisdom . . .

**LEADER:** Let us begin our gathering by extending to one another the sign of peace.

*Barbara Garavalia, Diocese of San Antonio*

## 22. WOMEN, ON THE WINGS OF CHANGE

**LEADER:** Like Mary, in our Gospel today, we are often asked by God to put aside our own plans and to begin serving in new and unexpected ways. Let us pray for the grace to respond with love and trust when we receive God’s invitation to new directions in our discipleship.

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** In her later years, Sarah, wife of Abraham, accepted God’s invitation to begin a new life with her husband in another land, and, thus, became mother of the Hebrew nation. Lord, make us aware that You can do marvelous things with our cooperation at every stage of life, we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** Clare, daughter of a noble family of Assisi, heard Christ call her through the preaching of St. Francis and put aside her former life to live in vowed poverty. Lord, give us the courage to be countercultural – to reject the materialism of the world to focus on You and to witness to Your values, we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** When her husband died, leaving her with five children, Elizabeth Ann Seton, founder of the Sisters of Charity, soon discovered that God was leading her to new roles and responsibilities in the building of His Kingdom. Lord, help us to accept changes in our circumstances as opportunities to grow in holiness and in service to You and to Your people, we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** After 20 years spent teaching the daughters of middle class families, Sr. Teresa Boyaxhiu was overpowered by Christ’s call to leave the work she loved in order to minister to the neediest of God’s children. Lord, as you inspired Mother Teresa of Calcutta, motivate us to make great sacrifices to help those who cannot help themselves, we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** At the height of her career as an educator and liturgist, Sr. Thea Bowman learned that she had bone cancer. Because she responded with such great love and faith, she became one of the great evangelizers of this century. Lord, empower each of us and our Council to respond to the challenges of our lives and times in a way which will bring the Gospel message to all people, we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

(continued)

**WOMEN, ON THE WINGS OF CHANGE (cont.)**

**LEADER:** We are reminded of the many people, now with the Lord, whose lives and efforts brought the Council of Catholic Women into being in this diocese and sustained it over the years. We ask the Lord to bless them, and all our departed, and to continue to inspire us by their example, as we pray:

**ALL** Lord, open our hearts to the call of Your Spirit!

**LEADER:** Loving God, You sent Your Son to change the world through His life and redeeming sacrifice. Help us to be open to the personal growth and change to which He calls us and empower us to work together with Him in love for the renewal of the world. We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Kathleen Levendusky, Paterson DCCW





**SECTION 6 - PRAYERS FROM ENHANCING OUR SPIRITUALITY**





## 1. ROSARY MEDITATION DEDICATED TO PRIESTS

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### THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

#### 1. The Annunciation

As we reflect on Mary's faithfulness to God through her "Yes!" let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests continued faithfulness in serving God in accord to His divine will.

#### 2. The Visitation

As we reflect on Mary's visit with her cousin Elizabeth, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to continually reflect Christ's presence to us.

#### 3. The Birth of Jesus

As we reflect on the wonders of our Savior's birth in Bethlehem, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to continue to bring Christ's blessings and graces to us through the gifts of the Sacraments.

#### 4. The Presentation

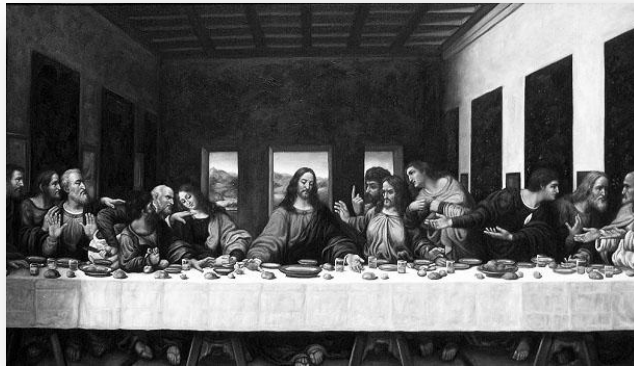
As we recall Simeon's readiness to depart this world after being filled with complete joy and peace upon seeing Jesus in the Temple, let us pray for this peace and joy to fill the hearts of our Holy Father and all his faithful priests.

#### 5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

As we reflect on Jesus' teaching in the Temple, let us pray for the words of our Holy Father and all priests to always be those of Christ proclaiming the truths of the Good News.



## ROSARY MEDITATION DEDICATED TO PRIESTS (cont.)



## THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

**1. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan**

As we reflect on the events of Jesus' baptism when the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended from the clouds and God's voice was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," we pray for our Holy Father and all priests as they act in the person of Christ. May they be filled with all the blessings of the Holy Spirit as they seek to serve Him in faith.

**2. The Wedding Feast at Cana**

As we reflect on Christ's first miracle through the nudging of His mother, Mary, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to preserve their chosen vocation of proclaiming the Word and celebrating the Holy Eucharist preparing god's faithful people for the eternal wedding feast.

**3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom**

As we reflect on the Kingdom of God – a Kingdom so vast and precious that Jesus chose to tell of it in many parables, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests who seek to build up the Kingdom and help us to prepare for that day when we, too, will reach the Kingdom of God in all its glory.

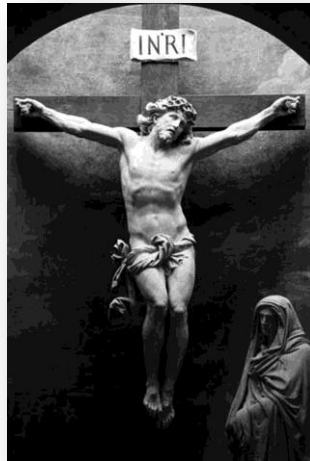
**4. The Transfiguration**

As we reflect on the Transfiguration when Jesus' radiant light shone forth for Peter, James, and John to see, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to always see Christ's light shining forth from all who are baptized into Christ's life, death, and resurrection. May they always be Christ's light to all who encounter them.

**5. The Institution of the Eucharist**

As we reflect on the Bread of Life discourse in John's gospel and the events of the Last Supper when Jesus gave us the gift of himself in the most Holy Eucharist, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to always see and witness to values different from those of the world.

## ROSARY MEDITATION DEDICATED TO PRIESTS (cont.)



## THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. **The Agony in the Garden**

As we reflect on that moment when Jesus may have felt the most alone, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to be strengthened by the Father's love, especially for those times when they, too, feel all alone. May we always show our gratitude towards them for their faithful service.

2. **The Scourging at the Pillars**

As we reflect on the mistreatment and wounds of Christ, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to persevere through all their struggles and tough times and may we take time to express to them our praise and gratitude for all they do in the service of our Lord and Savior.

3. **The Crowning With Thorns**

As we reflect on the pain Christ must have endured on His journey to Calvary, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to be united to Christ's self-sacrifice, and may we seek to lighten their burdens.

4. **The Carrying of the Cross**

As we reflect on the weight of the cross on Jesus' shoulders, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to seek to ease their burdens and be healed and strengthened with the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis, and may we, like Simon, do our part to ease that heavy load.

5. **The Crucifixion of Our Lord and Savior**

As we reflect on Christ's crucifixion and His willingness to lay down His life for His sheep, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to continually shepherd the Christian community in the unity and peace of Christ, and may we be willing to give of ourselves in service of others.

ROSARY MEDITATION DEDICATED TO PRIESTS (cont.)



**THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES**

**1. The Resurrection**

As we reflect on the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to rejoice in their call to holiness in and through their priestly vocation. May we always be supportive and positive towards them.

**2. The Ascension**

As we reflect on our Lord's Ascension back to the Father, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to always be aware of their utter dependence on Christ who has gifted them in so many ways.

**3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit**

As we reflect on that Feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended and was poured out over all the believers, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to remember that every person has something to give. May we realize we need each other in order to live the gospel and build up His kingdom.

**4. The Assumption**

As we reflect on Mary's glorious Assumption into heaven, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to help us to open up new levels of conversion and seek the spiritual gifts which will help us live according to God's divine will so that when this world comes to an end, we, too, will be raised up on the last day.

**5. The Coronation**

As we reflect on the crowning of Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth, let us pray for our Holy Father and all priests to remain faithful and true to their priestly vocation and always remember the promises they made to God on their day of ordination, so that when they enter through the gates of heaven they will be greeted with 'Well done my faithful servant.'" And may we always look to Mary to lead us closer to Christ.

*Submitted by Greensburg DCCW, Denise Pencola*

## 2. OPENING PRAYER FOR THE CCW MEETING

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LEADER: We gather as women of faith.  
ALL: In the sure knowledge that we are loved.  
LEADER: We gather as women of common purpose and conviction,  
ALL: As we strive to imitate Mary in her devotion to Christ.  
LEADER: We gather as women of compassion and service,  
ALL: For all God's children are our children.  
LEADER: We gather as women of vision,  
ALL: With our eyes on the future, our best foot forward, and enthusiasm for change.  
LEADER: We gather as women of prayer,  
ALL: United in thanksgiving, gratitude, and awe that WE have been chosen!  
READER: A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

(1 Cor. 16:13, 14)

LEADER: Listen to the words of Pope Saint John Paul II, and pause for a few moments for personal reflection: *"Love can overcome great obstacles, and God's love can totally transform the world."*  
(meeting with Catholic Charities, San Antonio 1987)

***"Love is the gift of self. It means emptying oneself to reach out to others. In a certain sense, it means forgetting oneself for the good of others."***

*(True Human Love Reflects the Divine" 1993)*

*Prepared by Jane Carter*

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### 3. PRAYER SERVICE AT A BOARD MEETING OR RETREAT

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#### Opening Song: Your Choice

#### Opening Prayer

**LEADER:** Loving God, we the women of \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women are grateful that you have called us to serve you. We ask you this day to open our hearts, to open our minds, and to make us receptive to one another in an atmosphere of Christian love.

Give us a powerful realization of how each of us needs her sisters here and how each of us needs the communal wisdom that can be found in this room. Help us to share our wisdom with one another as we grow in an understanding of what you are calling us to do in these challenging days facing our Church and the world.

Guide us in our decisions so that they may be relevant to what is happening in our Church and our world. Help us to recognize the gentle shift that is taking place in the Church calling us as women to minister in new and wider directions. Help us to say “Yes” to your call to this vocation of the laity.

Keep us ever hopeful, ever watchful, and always faithful to the gospel of peace, justice, and love.

**ALL:** We praise you, we thank you, we ask for your forgiveness and for the forgiveness of one another. Send your Spirit to be with our membership and us. We ask you these favors in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son and our Redeemer. Amen.

#### Scripture Reading

**READER:** A reading from the prophet Isaiah (66:10-13)

Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her;  
Exult, exult with her, all you who were mourning over her!  
Oh, that you may suck fully of the milk of her comfort,  
That you may nurse with delight at her abundant breasts! For thus says the Lord:  
Lo, I will spread prosperity over her like a river,  
And the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent.  
As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms,  
And fondled in her lap;  
As a mother comforts her son, so will I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.

**The Word of the Lord.**

(continued)

## NCCW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

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### PRAYER SERVICE AT A BOARD MEETING OR RETREAT (cont.)

**LEADER:** That is what Yahweh asks of you: only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, to walk humbly with your God.

For everything there is a season a time to plant, a time to heal, a time to love, a time to begin again, and a time for peace.

**ALL:** O God, come to our assistance. O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

**LEADER:** There is a time for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die.

**ALL:** For new insights to be born in us these days, for the death to old conflicts in us, we give praise.

**LEADER:** Loving and merciful Father, you comfort us when we ask; you bestow your mercy and love even when we don't ask for it. We thank you and we praise you for your compassion, which is without end.

**ALL:** Amen.

*Submitted by the Province of St. Louis*

## 4. PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

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Grant us your assistance as we seek  
to live out our vocation in life.  
We pray especially for those  
who have answered your call as priests,  
brothers, sisters, deacons and lay ministers.  
Keep them faithful in following your Son and  
dedicated in serving their brothers and sisters.  
Grant that many more men and  
women will be open to the challenge of  
dedicating their lives in the ministry  
of building your Kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

## 5. A PRAYER SERVICE FOR LENT

- LEADER:** God of mercy and compassion, you who have called us your Sons and daughters, we gather here together in your name. With your wisdom and truth, teach us and lead us in your Spirit. Heal the wounds that separate us from one another and from your love, and bind us together as one family in Christ Jesus, your Son. Amen.
- READING:** Mark 2:1-12
- LEADER:** In faith that you hear the cries of your people, we bring you our prayers, O Lord. Please respond. . *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of illness and disease
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of addiction and self-destruction
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of hatred and violence
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of selfishness and arrogance
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of oppression and greed .
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of poverty and injustice
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of loneliness and despair
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of pride and power
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the wounds of doubt and fear
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** From the times we’ve hurt one another
- ALL** *“Heal us, O Lord.”*
- LEADER:** Let us pray together ...
- ALL:** O Lord, all you ask of me is a simple “yes,” a simple act of trust, so that your choices for me can bear fruit in my life. I do not want you to pass me by. I do not want to be so busy with my way of living, my plans and projects, my teaching, my relatives, friends and acquaintances, that I do not even notice that you are with me, closer to me than anyone else. I do not want to be blind to the loving gestures that come from your hands, nor deaf to the caring words that come from your mouth. I want to see you as you walk with me and hear you as you speak to me this Lenten season. Amen.

*Submitted by the Palm Beach Diocese*