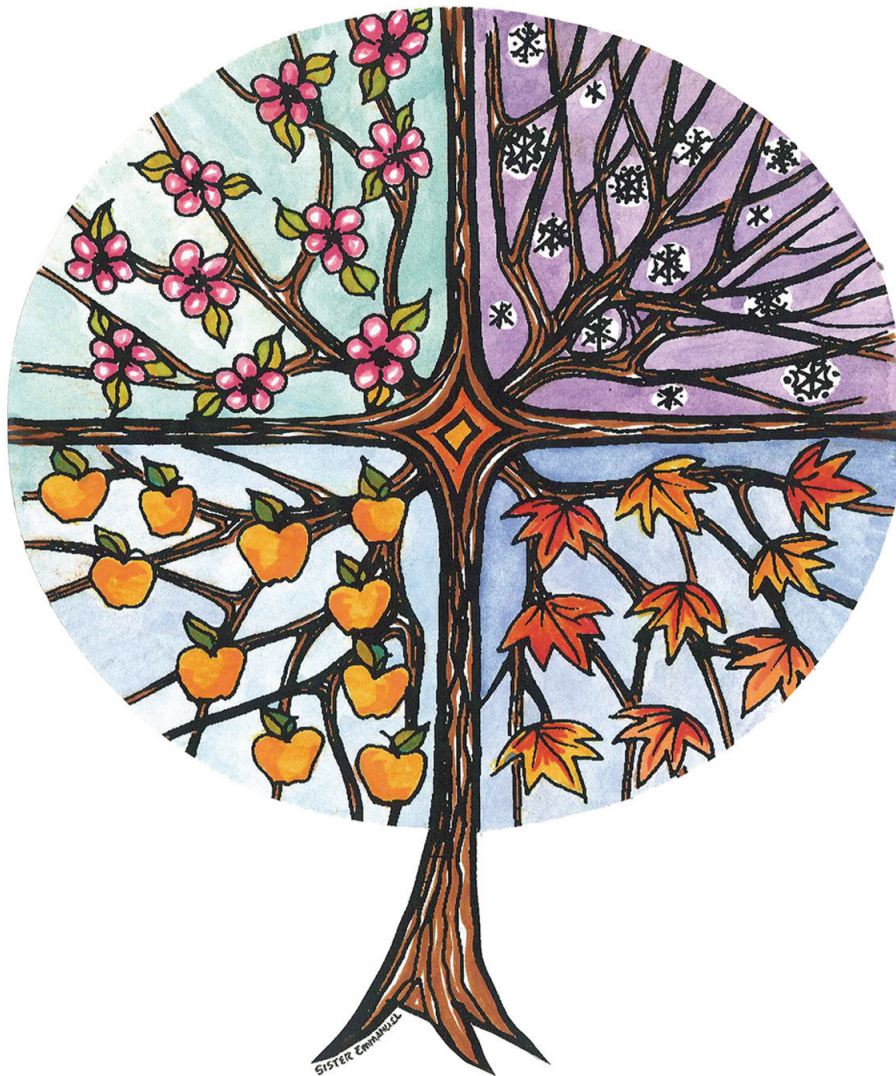


Uniting Our Suffering



**with
the
Cross
of
Christ**

From the Catholic Conference of Kentucky Pro-Life Committee

Notes on Using the Prayer Service

The services in this collection were designed for a variety of settings, and we encourage you to adapt them to your particular needs. The role of the leader can be shared by one or more persons. Some advance preparation such as handouts or candles may be required. Suggested hymns are widely available.

GATHERING HYMN *Holy Is Your Name* (arr. David Haas)

GATHERING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Response: Amen.

Leader:

Almighty God, your ways are not our ways, nor are your thoughts our thoughts. You chose to redeem us not by force of logic; not by earthly power; not by wondrous signs; but by the bloodstained wood of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Your way still seems to many a stumbling block and absurdity. Yet how simple is your good news! Through Jesus Christ we know your love and mercy. Through his pain, we have our redemption.

Dear Father, shine the light of your Holy Spirit into our hearts. Open our eyes to your eternal plan. Humble and trusting, may we surrender to your merciful love.

O God, redeem every human life endangered by sin. Rescue us through the cross and resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Response: Amen.

SCRIPTURE

First Reading: (*Is 49:8-10*) A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD:

In a time of favor I answer you,

on the day of salvation I help you,

To restore the land

and allot the desolate heritages,

Saying to the prisoners: Come out!

To those in darkness: Show yourselves!

Along the ways they shall find pasture,

on every bare height shall their pastures be.

They shall not hunger or thirst,

nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them; 125

For he who pities them leads them

and guides them beside springs of water.

The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Pause for silent reflection.

Second Reading: (1 Cor 1:18–25) A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the learning of the learned I will set aside."

Where is the wise one? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made the wisdom of the world foolish? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith. For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: (Matt 16:23–27) A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: (Reflection on Scripture and this occasion.)

INTERCESSIONS

Leader: In faith and hope, let us place our petitions before the Lord.
The response is: Keep me safe, O God;
in you I take refuge. (*Ps 16:1*)

Response: Keep me safe, O God;
in you I take refuge.

Leader:

That God will end violence and injustice, bringing peace to the world, we pray to the Lord.
(*Response*)

That our national, state, and local officials may preserve and defend life, we pray to the Lord.
(*Response*)

That all Christians may be converted to a greater than human love, we pray to the Lord.
(*Response*)

That all who oppose the cross of Jesus Christ may be converted, we pray to the Lord. (*Response*)

That we may proclaim the gospel of life with meekness and humility, we pray to the Lord.
(*Response*)

That our society may revere chastity, the marriage covenant, and family bonds, we pray to the

Lord. *(Response)*

That all children in the womb and all newly born be cherished and welcomed, we pray to the Lord.
(Response)

That those facing crisis pregnancies find generous support for all their needs, we pray to the Lord.
(Response)

That the weak and defenseless, the sick, the aged, and those threatened by euthanasia find compassionate support, we pray to the Lord. *(Response)*

That those who are depressed and tempted by suicide find help and health, we pray to the Lord.
(Response)

That God may be merciful in judging all who have died, we pray to the Lord. *(Response)*

PRAYER *The Lord's Prayer*

Leader: Almighty and ever-living God, we praise you for glorifying your Son, Jesus Christ. Though innocent, he was condemned. Though divine, he suffered. Though dead and buried, he rose, Lord of both the living and the dead. In him we have the promise of eternal life with you, Father, to whom we now pray.

Response: Our Father, who art in heaven.... Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: God of Life, in your compassion you reach out to us, even before we know we need your aid. When we fall, you lift us. When we sin, you move us to repentance. When we are hurting, you heal our wounds.

All your children on earth walk in the shadow of death. But we have no fear, for you have promised rescue and salvation. Help us to cherish everyone around us as brothers and sisters in Christ. Share with us your gifts of kindness, patience, and compassion. Whatever our sufferings and sacrifices may be today, let us unite them with your Son's holy and eternal offering of himself to you.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Response: Amen.

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