



Synod - Holy Hour Prayer Service

Prayerful preparation

If you are going to host a parish synodal meeting, you may wish to have a prayer service. This document features a suggested format, though clergy are free to organise as they see fit.

Suggested format

- 6:00pm** - Exposition with suitable hymn
- 6:05pm** - First cycle of Scripture/reflection/hymn*
- 6:15pm** - Second cycle of Scripture/reflection/hymn*
- 6:25pm** - Third cycle of Scripture/reflection/hymn*
- 6:35pm** - Fourth cycle of Scripture/reflection/hymn*
- 6:45pm** - Ten minutes of quiet prayer
- 6:55 pm** - Benediction & Reposition

*See overleaf

Holy Hour Prayer Service scripture/reflection/hymns (see above)

FIRST CYCLE

A reading from the book of Exodus.

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. For the whole earth is mine, and you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, of the Second Vatican Council

God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness. He therefore chose the race of Israel as a people unto Himself. With it He set up a covenant. Step by step He taught and prepared this people, making known in its history both Himself and the decree of His will [...] All these things, however, were done by way of preparation and as a figure of that new and perfect covenant, which was to be ratified in Christ [...]

Christ instituted this new covenant, [...] calling together a people made up of Jew and gentile, making them one, not according to the flesh but in the Spirit. This was to be the new People of God [...]: "A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people . . . in times past not a people at all, but now the people of God".

Suggested Hymn: The Church's One Foundation

SECOND CYCLE

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, of the Second Vatican Council

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, allotting his gifts to everyone as He wills, He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for a good purpose". These gifts, whether they be the more outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation. [...]

Judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Suggested Hymn: One Bread, One Body

THIRD CYCLE

A reading from the first letter of St John

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. [...] As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.
The Word of the Lord.

A reading from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, of the Second Vatican Council

The holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office. [...] The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole peoples' supernatural discernment in matters of faith when "from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful" they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth. It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God. Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life.

Suggested Hymn: We Hold a Treasure

FOURTH CYCLE

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark

Again, Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." Then Jesus said, "Listen, anyone who has ears."

The Gospel of the Lord.

An excerpt from the homily of Pope Francis for the opening of the Synodal path

Let us ask ourselves frankly during this synodal process: Are we good at listening? How good is the "hearing" of our heart? Do we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even though they have had difficulties in life, and to be part of the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged? Participating in a Synod means placing ourselves on the same path as the Word made flesh. It means [...] listening to his word along with the words of others. It means discovering with amazement that the Holy Spirit always surprises us, to suggest fresh paths and new ways of speaking. It is a slow and perhaps tiring exercise, this learning to listen to one another – bishops, priests, religious and laity, all the baptized – and to avoid artificial and shallow and pre-packaged responses. The Spirit asks us to listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every Church, people and nation. And to listen to the world, to the challenges and changes that it sets before us. Let us not soundproof our hearts; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties. So often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another.

Suggested Hymn: Make Me a Channel of Your Peace