



# *Prayer - Planning - Possibilities*

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## Liturgical Guide



From the Office for Divine Worship

The following proposed rites are meant to assist parish communities at times of major transitions such as partnering/merging parishes.

The book *Holy People, Holy Place, Rites for the Church's House* by Thomas G. Simons, Liturgy Training Publications was used for some of the information provided.

These are meant to be a guide.  
Each community knows what is appropriate to its needs.

Please contact the Office for Divine Worship at 814-824-1271  
if you need assistance.

## Table of Contents

<b>Liturgy of the Word in a Church that will No Longer be Having Sunday Mass.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Liturgy for Bringing Communities Together.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Suggestions for Scripture and Music.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Universal Prayer Suggestions .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Ritual of Transition.....</b>	<b>7</b>

## LITURGY OF THE WORD IN A CHURCH THAT WILL NO LONGER BE HAVING SUNDAY MASS

### Hymn

### Greeting

Presider: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
R./ Amen.

Grace and peace of God our Father  
and the Lord, Jesus Christ be with all of you.  
R./ And with your spirit.

### Introduction (suggestion)

Presider: My brothers and sisters,  
we gather today in this space that has formed you  
and in which you have celebrated the mysteries of our faith.  
We begin the Liturgy remembering that we are on a journey,  
a pilgrimage that leads us one day to the banquet table of heaven.

Let us give thanks for the \_\_\_years  
\_\_\_\_\_ Parish has served the community.

As we gather today to pray,  
we remember that the Church is one, both human and divine.  
We will be considered a merged parish.  
But no parish or church truly stands alone.

We look to the future with hope.  
We pray to grow in holiness and in our ability to evangelize  
and minister to those around us.  
We pray in thanksgiving for the reminder  
that we are the Body of Christ  
made stronger by the many around us.

### Opening Prayer

Presider: God our Father,  
source of unity and love,  
from age to age you have gathered our people  
to serve you and to proclaim the Gospel of your love.  
We thank you for the many gifts you have bestowed on this parish  
and praise you for all you have allowed us to accomplish  
in your name.

Make your faithful people one in heart and mind  
so that your Church may live in harmony,  
be steadfast in faith, and secure in unity.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God forever and ever. R./ Amen.

**First Reading** (Suggestions for readings and psalms found on p. 5)

**Responsorial Psalm**

**(Second Reading)**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel**

**Homily**

**Ritual of Transition** (If you choose to use this, suggestions found on p. 7)

**Universal Prayer** (Suggestions found on p. 6)

Presider: Uniting all our prayers together  
we pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Closing Prayer**

Presider: Lord,  
Throughout these past years  
the Church has been realized in the life of this parish.  
Although the service of this parish has come to an end,  
we pray that you keep us ever mindful  
that wherever two or three are gathered in your name  
your holy presence will be known.  
May all people rejoice in the perfect unity of your Church.  
and move together as one  
to eternal life in your kingdom.  
Make us able and willing to do what you ask.  
Hear us as we raise our minds and hearts to you  
through Christ our Lord.  
R./ Amen

**Hymn**

# LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (For parishes that are partnering or merging)

## Hymn

## Greeting

Presider: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
R./ Amen.

Grace and peace of God our Father  
and the Lord, Jesus Christ be with all of you.  
R./ And with your spirit.

## Introduction

Presider: Tonight [today] we gather  
to finalize all your discussions and deliberations.  
Each of your parishes have a wonderful  
and distinguished history in the Diocese of Erie  
and have indicated that you can continue  
to be vibrant and productive communities of faith.  
Each will continue to do God's work  
and to spread his message of salvation.  
  
Let us first pause to thank Almighty God  
for his abiding presence and his unfailing grace.

## Opening Prayer

Lord God,  
from age to age,  
you have provided workers for your vineyard  
so that your kingdom may grow more abundantly.  
Give us a unity of purpose,  
that we may walk together  
with you and with one another.  
Send your blessing upon our leaders and our parishes,  
that what we have begun in the Spirit  
may be brought to completion by your power.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.  
R./ Amen.

**First Reading** (Suggestions for readings and psalms found on p. 5)

**Responsorial Psalm**

**(Second Reading)**

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel**

**Homily**

**Universal Prayer** (Suggestions found on p. 6)

Presider: Uniting all our prayers together  
we pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Closing Prayer**

Gracious God,  
hear and answer our prayers.  
Send your Spirit to guide these communities.  
Unite us in harmony and guide us on the path of peace.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Presider: The Lord be with you.  
R./ And with your spirit.

Presider: May the God of all consolation bless you in every way  
and grant you peace all the days of your life.  
R./ Amen.

May he free you from all anxiety  
and strengthen your hearts in his love.  
R./ Amen.

May he enrich you with his gifts of faith, hope and love,  
so that what you do in this life  
will bring you to the happiness of everlasting life.  
R./ Amen.

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, +  
and the Holy Spirit.  
R./ Amen.

Presider/Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
R./ Thanks be to God.

**Hymn**

## **Suggestions for Scripture:**

Genesis 12:1-3 (*Abram goes to a new territory in faith*)

Ruth 1:1-16 (*Courage and faithfulness*)

Proverbs 3:1-12 (*Leaving home*)

Isaiah 40:1-11 (*Words of hope and comfort*)

Isaiah 43:1-7 (*Do not be afraid.*)

Isaiah 66:1-2 (*Don't worry about the building*)

Psalms 16 (*Confidence in God*)

Psalms 23 (*Compassion*)

Psalms 46 (*God is with us.*)

Psalms 103 (*Merciful and loving God*)

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (*Reconciled through Christ*)

Romans 8:38-39 (*Uncertainty*)

Hebrews 11:1-7 (*Faith*)

Luke 17:15-16 (*Thanksgiving*)

Luke 9:57-62 (*Do not look back*)

John 15:1-11 (*Vine and branches*)

## **Suggestions for music:**

City of God

Companions on the Journey

For the Beauty of the Earth

Glory and Praise to Our God

Healer of Our Every Ill

In Christ There is No East or West

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

O God, Beyond all Praising

One Spirit, One Church

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens

Sing a Joyful Song

Sing a New Church

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

We Are Many Parts

We Gather Together

We Walk by Faith

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

For the Church throughout the world, including our diocesan Church, and for our parish communities, we pray...

That we will continue to recognize Christ in the stranger at our door, in the poor, the sick, and the marginalized, we pray...

That the celebration of the Eucharist continues to be the source and summit of our parish life, we pray...

For the new opportunities that this partnership/merger will bring and for the gifts we will share for God's glory, we pray...

For the people of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as they come together as \_\_\_\_\_. May they be a living sign of the presence of God to all whom they meet, we pray...

For patience and understanding as we grow together as a family of faith, we pray...

For the ability to rejoice in the blessings we have received through our former parishes and the courage to move onward with hope, we pray...

For parishes throughout the world, and most especially our diocesan neighbors, facing significant changes, that the love and solidarity of all Catholics may overcome all fear and sadness, we pray...

For all who have gone before us in faith, especially the deceased members of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. May we always remember them, their faith and their good works, we pray...

## **RITUAL OF TRANSITION: For Secondary Churches that will not be having Sunday Masses**

Community representative:

Let us remember the times we have gathered for the sacred Liturgy:  
the Triduum kept each year, the Sundays on which we worshiped faithfully,  
the first communion celebrations, the feast days of saints and martyrs,  
the marriages witnessed here; the funerals held here in hope.

God our refuge, our home is in you.

You are greater than any church building that can be built by human hands,  
yet in this place we have met your divine presence.

This church building has been a place of blessing for us.

Protect us on our way.

Lead us to a new assembly of your faithful people.

Through Christ our Lord. R./ Amen.

Delegate one or more members (for example, the president of the pastoral council, the eldest member of the parish or the youngest) to carry an object (or objects) that will be used in the new place (such as a sacred vessel, an icon or the book of the Gospels.) If there are relics that have been removed from the altar, these may also be carried out. The presider presents the delegated persons with the objects they will carry, and says:

Presider:

The life of this community will continue in another place.

(Name of new parish), receive this (name of items)  
that will be used in our new home.

Take it as a sign that our journey of faith will continue there.

The final blessing may be taken from among the solemn blessings found in the Missal #12, 13 or 14.

During the singing of the final hymn, all may be invited to come forward and kiss the altar or offer a profound bow as a final gesture of leave-taking.

All process out of the building.

Community representative, outside:

Let us now take a few moments,  
within the silence of our own hearts,  
to thank God for our worship here  
and to say "farewell" to this sacred space  
as we have known it.

An adaptation of the rite could be to allow people to say the names or tell the stories of those who were baptized, reconciled, married, or buried from this place. The feasibility of this will depend on the size and nature of the assembly. The presider must carefully and sensitively coordinate the flow of these remembrances and gracefully bring them to closure so that the service is not unduly prolonged. The presider might add the invocation "And so we say, 'Blessed be God for ever.'" After each remembrance, long or short, He would respond, "Blessed be God for ever."