

Sample Prayer Intercessions and Bulletin Announcement about Parish Leaders

General Intercessions

- For the Parish Leader candidates in formation to lead parishes without resident pastors within our Diocese, that they may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in following God's will as they prepare to serve, we pray to the Lord.
- For all the baptized, that we may take the necessary time in prayer and discussion to discern God's will in our lives and more fully use our gifts and talents to serve our parish and greater community, we pray to the Lord.
- For our Parish, that we spend time in prayer and discussion to discover how God may be calling us to deeper conversion and transformation in order to more fully do His will, we pray to the Lord.
- For the parishes in our region, that as the people of God we may overcome any obstacles to unity in Christ and work together to spread the Good News and minister to everyone in our midst, we pray to the Lord.

Bulletin Announcement

What is a Parish Leader? Why do we need them? A Parish Leader is a professional minister appointed by the bishop with the responsibility of leading a parish community that does not have a resident priest. A priest will be assigned as canonical pastor and for sacramental celebrations at the parish. In response to the Pastoral Plan for Evangelization, the Diocese of Youngstown is training 14 individuals (deacons, religious, and laity) who will be available to serve as Parish Leaders. This is one way the diocese is addressing the reality of fewer priests. It is an opportunity for faith filled men and women to use their gifts of leadership and administration, allowing priests to focus on the sacramental and pastoral care of the faithful. For more information, visit www.doy.org or contact Pete Schafer, Director of the Office of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning, at (330) 744-8451 ext. 289.

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Parish Leader Prayer Resources

Sample Scripture Passages and Reflection Questions

Grounded in Discipleship

The mother of Jesus and his brothers came to him but were unable to join him because of the crowd. He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and they wish to see you." He said to them in reply, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act on it." (Luke 8:19-21)

- What is the crowd that keeps me (our parish) from joining Jesus?
- What are the ways that I (our parish) hear the Word of God?
- What are the ways that I (our parish) act on the Word of God?

*"My Mother and Brother [and Sister] are those who hear the Word of God and act on it."
Luke 8:21*

Using our Gifts in Service

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 4:10-11)

- If each baptized person has a gift to share, what is the role of leaders of the parish?
- How can we invite, empower, and support others to use their gifts to serve?

Life as a Community of Believers

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need.

Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes.

They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people.

And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts of the Apostles 4:42-47).

- What does it mean to be a community of believers?
- What aspects of our parish life reflect the early Christian community?
- What are the opportunities for growth and development?

Parish Leader Prayer Resources

Sample Scripture Passages and Reflection Questions

Diversity of Gifts, Unity in Christ

Brothers and sisters,

I urge you therefore, by the mercies of God,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and pleasing and perfect.

For by the grace given to me
I tell everyone among you
not to think of himself more highly
than one ought to think,
but to think soberly,
each according to the measure of faith
that God has apportioned.

For as in one body we have many parts,
and all the parts do not have the same function,
so we, though many, are one body in Christ
and individually parts of one another.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,
let us exercise them:

if prophecy, in proportion to the faith;
if ministry, in ministering;
if one is a teacher, in teaching;
if one exhorts, in exhortation;
if one contributes, in generosity;
if one is over others, with diligence;
if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness
(Romans 12:1-8)

*“For as in one body
we have many parts,
and all the parts do
not have the same
function, so we,
though many, are one
body in Christ and
individually parts of
one another.”
Romans 12:4-5*

- What words or phrases speak to you today?
- What is Christ proclaiming to our parish through this reading?
- How can I use my gifts to serve?
- How can I acknowledge and support the gifts of others?

Parish Leader Statistics

Parish Leaders in other dioceses in the United States

- Although the term for Parish Leader is different in many dioceses, 100 United States dioceses had at least one parish that utilized this alternative form of leadership.
- In 2015, the number of parishes led by a Parish Leader in the United States was 369 out of a total of 3,448 parishes without a resident pastor.
- In the Diocese of Albany, NY, 20% of the parishes have Parish Leaders and in the Diocese of Green Bay, WI, 23% of parishes have Parish Leaders.
- Parish Leaders are being used in all parts of the county, but are most prevalent in the Midwest.
- In the West where the Church is growing, there is still a need for Parish Leaders because of the reality of fewer priests.

The need for Parish Leaders now in the Diocese of Youngstown

- There have been instances in our own diocese where parishes have functioned under this alternative form of parish leadership, including two parishes currently.
- In 1990, there were 156 priests in active ministry in the Diocese of Youngstown. The number is now 83, and over the next 10 years is projected to drop to 66.
- Currently, there are 38 priests who are 65 years old or older in active ministry. Of these 38, 17 are 70 years old or older.
- This is one way the diocese is addressing the reality of fewer priests. We are also continuing to pray for vocations and supporting our 17 seminarians and continue to explore possibilities of inviting foreign or religious order priests to serve in the diocese.

Parish Leader candidates from our diocese

- We currently have 14 people in formation to be Parish Leaders.
 - Of these 14, 6 are deacons, 1 is a religious woman, 4 are laymen, and 3 are lay women.
 - The group represents a wide range of ages and many years of diverse ministry experiences in a variety of parishes, either as volunteers or on staff.
 - Six of the Parish Leader candidates are currently employed in full time parish ministry, including directors of religious education, youth ministry, and pastoral ministry.
 - Other candidates have experience in business ownership, city planning, management, and other areas of leadership in the broader community.
 - All of the candidates exhibit a deep personal faith, love of the Church, a servant heart, and a willingness to serve where and when God calls them.
 - The Parish Leader candidates come from 13 parishes and 5 of the 6 counties in the diocese.
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