



Catholic Schools Partnership

Prayer Resource
for Boards of
Management/Governors



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP
PRAYER RESOURCE FOR BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT/GOVERNORS

Catholic Schools Partnership

**Prayer Resource for Boards
of Management/Governors**

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Introduction

At the heart of its endeavour, Catholic education is an invitation to flourish by experiencing the world through the spectrum of faith. This means fostering habits and practices that encourage a personal relationship with Jesus, thereby continuing His ministry in the world. This mandate is at the centre of the work of boards of management/governors as they seek to ensure that schools are serving those in their care.

The impulse to assemble a prayer resource for use by boards came from a desire to support their members at the start of meetings as they focus on the centrality of the faith journey that is integral to the well-being of the whole school community. As the agendas of such meetings have lengthened exponentially with the burden of business that school management brings to a board for consideration, it is the hope of the Catholic Schools Partnership that the material in these pages will stir a re-engagement with the founding faith mission of the schools they safeguard.

As the physical presence of the founding diocese, religious orders and congregations has largely disappeared from classrooms and corridors, chairpersons and principals have now become the torchbearers of our faith tradition, and must proclaim the vision themselves. The challenge for many of us can be too little confidence – or too much self-consciousness – in articulating the language of faith.

These short pieces of scripture and prayer represent an invitation to board members to take time out from wherever they have come from in the intricacy of their own lives, so that the Gospel values of the Word can become fresh and refreshing again as they start to consider their order of business. We have provided a choice of three prayers for each month, from August to June, with a selection of additional prayers for

circumstances that might arise in the course of the life of a board. As every school has its own particular context, these resources are designed to be adapted and used flexibly, in whole or in part, as required. They can be led by the chairperson, the principal, or shared among other board members – whatever suits those present. They can also be adapted for use at regional educational meetings.

The compilation of this resource, an initiative of the Catholic Schools Partnership, funded by the Catholic Education Service, is the product of a collaborative engagement with Ann O'Donoghue IBVM (Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools), Justin Harkin and Jonathan Tiernan, members of CSP. All members of the team worked relentlessly in the interests of producing this collection of prayers.

Special tribute is due to Fr Paddy Jones for his patience, forbearance and wisdom in reading the manuscript and offering constructive recommendations. Many thanks to Tomás Kenny, President of the National Association of Post Primary Diocesan Advisors, for assisting with the sourcing of writers for many of the prayers and to Martin Cromie, team member of the Catholic Schools Trust Service (NI), for his counsel and advice.

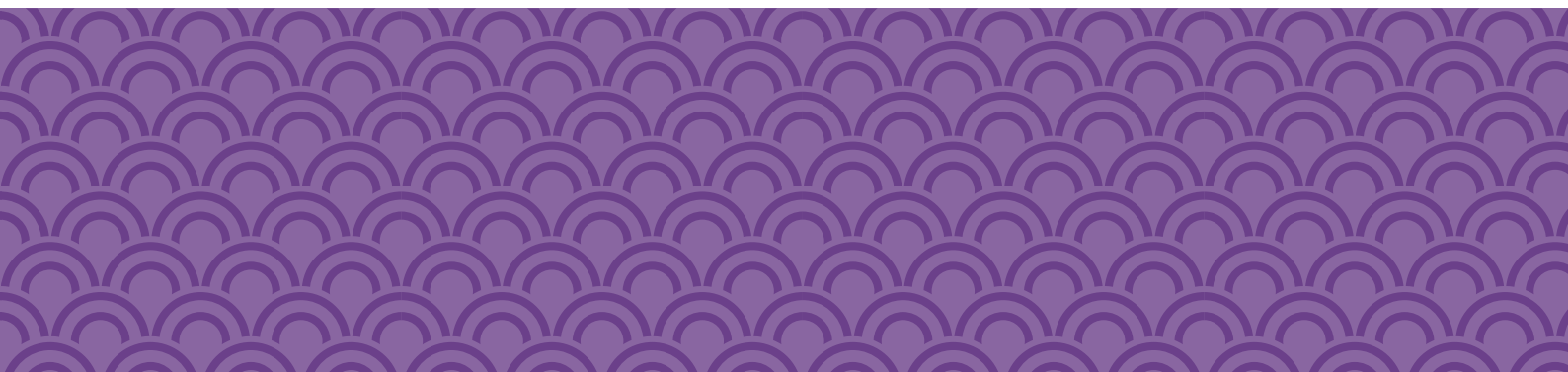
Most especially, we are indebted to all the contributors who committed to the project by sharing their faith in the writing of prayers for the various months in the academic year.

Many thanks to Sr Eithne Woulfe SLL for her support and encouragement and to Bishop Francis Duffy and members of the Council of the Catholic Schools Partnership.

Patricia Bourden
Acting CEO, Catholic Schools Partnership



AUGUST



Welcome

As we begin a new academic year we recall the words of Pope Francis:

Educators ... do not be disheartened in the face of difficulties that educational challenges present. Educating is not a profession but a way of being.

May God accompany and support us as we face the challenges this new school year brings.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, may you be the light that illuminates our path this year. We entrust ourselves and our school community to your loving care and guidance. Help us to be gracious in how we see others, courageous in the face of difficult decisions, and wise in how we respond. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 5:14–16

You are light for the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lampstand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

What will this year bring? We do not know. Will it bring its usual times of work and play, experiences of success and failure, all the things that are part of school life? Will it bring opportunities for new beginnings; the

planting of seeds that will grow and blossom in times to come?

Will it bring us new hope, the hope that comes with good work, successful results, friendships, fun and learning?

Will it bring us the light of God as an unseen Companion of our journey?

May all associated with our school experience life-giving opportunities and enriching experiences. May our light shine for everyone.

Closing Prayer

O God, may there be peace within us. May we trust God that we are exactly where we are meant to be. May we not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May we use the gifts that we have received, and pass on the love that has been given to us. May we be confident knowing that we are children of God. Let this presence settle into our bones, and allow our souls the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

Amen.

(Adapted from a quotation of St Teresa of Ávila)

Welcome

Welcome back after our summer break, hopefully refreshed and ready for this new year. The reopening of school is a time of beginnings and endings too. So as we come together as a board, we invoke God's blessing on our time together, this evening and throughout the year.

Opening Prayer

Spirit of the Living God,
fall afresh on us as we begin this school year.
Help us in our journey on behalf of staff, students
and families.
Guide us in the management of this school in
accordance with its Christian ethos that we may
all grow in your love and compassion.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

John 15:1-5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, unless it remains part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.

The word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Lord, you are the vine, we are the branches. Help us to remember at all times that you are with us. With your help and light within us, may we serve our school community to the best of our abilities.
Lord hear us.

We invoke your help at this time. Be with us as we begin this new school year, that we may always do what is right and in keeping with your holy will.
Lord hear us.

We pray for our school community, the board, staff, students and families. We ask you to watch over and guard us in our endeavours this year.
Lord hear us.

We pray for all students and staff who are starting their journey with us this year.
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have been sick or had ill-health over the summer. We remember all who have been bereaved recently, especially ...
Lord, hear our prayer.

Christ you have reminded us that you are the vine, we the branches, help us to remember you are:
with us
before us,
behind us,
in us,
all round us,
in all those we think of, meet, see and hear, listen to.
now and each day.
May we be open to being influenced by one another in your name,
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

(Adapted from *St Patrick's Breastplate*)

Welcome

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are always present to us. Let us take a moment to become present to them.

A brief period of silence follows.

Opening Prayer

Father in heaven,
Your care for us and our school community knows
no limits.
Endow us with a spirit of wisdom and
understanding
as we re-engage with one another after our
summer recess.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Peter 4:10–11

Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. If you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God; if you are a helper, help as though every action was done at God's orders; so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Our coming together demonstrates our commitment to our school community as a place of teaching and learning, of unity and diversity. It also marks an important moment of preparation for the new school year. We know from experience that our work is a work of service that can be both invigorating and challenging. We come to it wearing different hats, each charged with enriching our discussions and deliberations with the insights and wisdom we have accrued. More than that, according to our reading, we come to it as people gifted by God with graces oriented to the benefit of all the communities we serve.

This evening, let us take a moment to acknowledge the diversity of our unity and the tremendous potential it contains. May the Lord support us to recognise and create space for each other's viewpoints and competencies, that as we undertake the business of our meetings, we may grow in faith, hope and love.

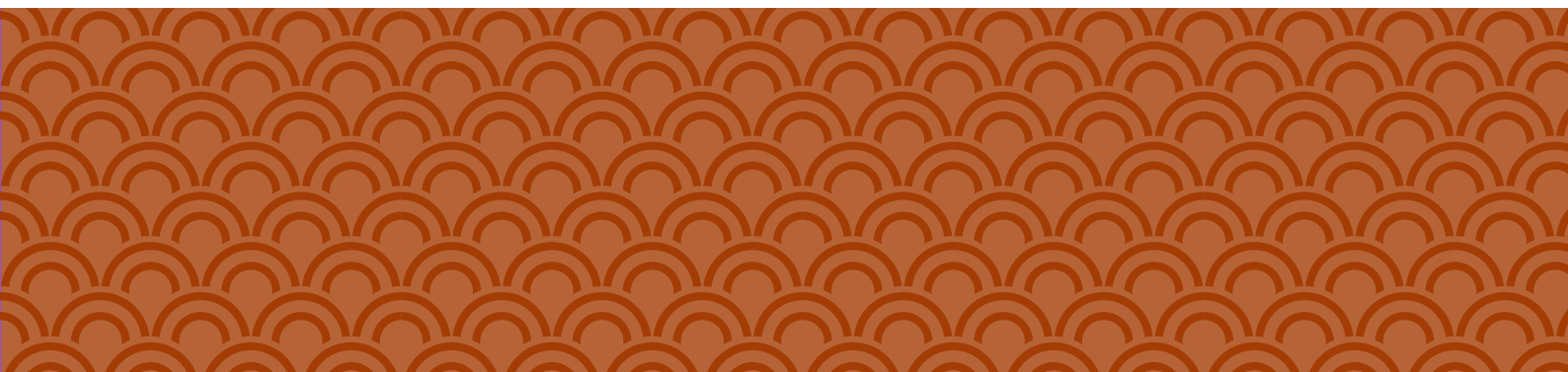
Closing Prayer

Let your blessing come down upon us, Lord,
that our time together will be fruitful for our
school community
and, in the words of St Peter, that in everything
You may receive the glory, through Jesus
Christ, since to Him alone belong all glory and
power.

Amen.



SEPTEMBER



Welcome

As we gather together to begin a new school year, let us take a few moments in prayer to nourish us for the work that lies ahead.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray,
God of wisdom and understanding,
Guide us in our work this year.
Send the Holy Spirit to sustain us,
Strengthen us, and nourish us as we seek to serve
our school.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Luke 6:36–38

Jesus said to the disciples, ‘Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.’

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

As we begin this new school year this reading from Luke provides us with clear signposts to guide our deliberations and decision-making. Jesus reminds us to be merciful and we pray for the gift of mercy in a particular way when thinking about those who will be most affected by the decisions we take throughout the year. Jesus said that ‘the measure you give will be the measure you get back’. We now reflect silently in the stillness of our hearts on the following question:

What commitment do we give this year, as a board of management/governors to ensure that we serve our school and students as effectively as we can?

Closing Prayer

As we begin our first meeting of the new school year we invoke the blessing of our Heavenly Father as we pray:

Our Father who art in heaven ...

Welcome

I would like to welcome you all to our first meeting of the new school year. Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata tells us, 'In life we cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.'

Opening Prayer

We thank God for the skills, talents and service that all present bring to our school community. Lord, on our journey of new beginnings, we ask that your guiding hand enables us to show courage and wisdom as we watch over our school.

Reading

Mark 4:30–32

Jesus said, 'With what can we compare the Kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?'

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground is the smallest of all the seeds of the earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on this reading.

The Gospel values which underpin our school community enable us as leaders to assist our teachers, chaplains and parents, to raise our students to have a spiritual, moral and ethical compass to guide them through their lives. We hope too that the life and mission of Jesus will touch them on their journey at this time.

As board members, we must embrace our duty to be the custodians of the mustard seeds that are our students. We must strive to facilitate the nurturing, guidance and care that will be needed for them to go forward to be the great shrub whose branches offer shelter, hope, tolerance and peace to whatever society they live in as adults.

We ask, Lord, that you guide us in this work. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Behind you all your memories,
Before you all your dreams
Around you all who love you,
within you all you need.
Father in Heaven bless us and
Keep us safe on this journey
of New Beginnings.

Amen.

(New Beginnings, Lilli Vaihere)

Welcome

As we gather at the start of a new school year let us take a moment to remember and renew our vision for Catholic education.

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, inspire us and renew us as we embark upon a new school year. Spark our imaginations, fill us with desire to enhance the lives of our students, and help us to be grateful for the privilege of being involved in leadership roles in education.

Reading

1 Thessalonians 1:4–7

We know, brothers and sisters, that God loves you and that you have been chosen, because when we brought the Good News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction. And you observed the sort of life we lived when we were with you, which was for your instruction, and you were led to become imitators of us, and of the Lord; and it was with the joy of the Holy Spirit that you took to the Gospel, in spite of the great opposition all around you. This has made you the great example to all believers.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

You desire our well-being, Lord. Renew our faith, hope and love that we may hear and embrace your word to each of us at this time.

Lord hear us.

Bless our school community as we embark on another school year.

Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to be infused with enthusiasm, optimism and imagination.

Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to be kind and understanding towards the people we engage with in the coming school year.

Lord hear us.

Lord, help us to keep a positive attitude despite the challenges we will inevitably face.

Lord hear us.

A moment of silence for participants to place personal or private intentions before the Lord.

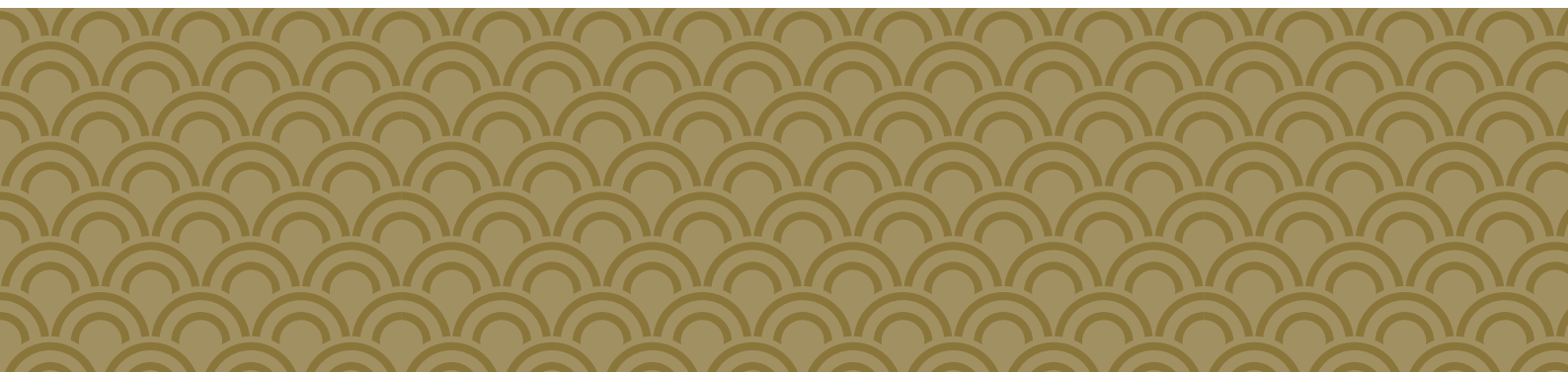
Closing Prayer

Lord, we know that our role in educating young people is a huge privilege. We hope we will always keep this in mind. Help us to be pure in spirit and genuine in all that we do in the service of our school community.

Amen.



OCTOBER



Welcome

You are all welcome to this, our October Meeting. As we near the end of our busy day let us take a moment together to pause and begin with prayer.

Opening Prayer

Lord, heal us of our doubts and fears, our cynicism and despair, so that we may always believe in your loving and saving presence in our midst in every time, in every place.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:5–12

These Twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, “The Kingdom of Heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey or two tunics or sandals or staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave.’

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Like the disciples we are all called by Jesus to go forth and share the Good News of justice, peace and love.

Let us pause to give thanks for all those whose involvement in our school, our parish and wider society supports the many initiatives that our pupils are involved in that empower them to serve their community and grow in an understanding of the world around them. Education through service to others is one of the core messages of our schools and serves as a beautiful witness to the transformational power of the Gospel message.

Closing Prayer

God of abundant harvests, transform our hearts to be sources of the seeds of peace, compassion, healing and justice. Be with us and guide us always.

Amen.

Welcome

October each year is the month that the Church dedicates to Mission. As we begin our meeting, let us take a little time to reflect on our mission as the board of management/governors in supporting and developing the mission of the school.

Opening Prayer

Lord, much of what we're doing is humdrum.
 Make it matter.
 Let our session stand its ground for the good of all.
 Remind us of your loving kindness
 Before we begin our business.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 18:1–5, 10

At this time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' So he called a little child to him and set the child in front of them. Then he said, 'I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 'Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me ... See that you never despise any of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven are continually in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Pope Francis reflects the spirit of this passage when he tells us, 'When we are before a child, although we have many problems and many difficulties, a smile comes to us from within, because we see hope in front of us: a child is hope. And in this way, we must be able to discern in life the way of hope, which leads us to find God, God who became a child for us.'

We ask for the grace to experience the love of Jesus in the unconditional way in which a child loves its parents.

We pray for the gift of hope, especially for those among us who are dispirited, grieving or forlorn. May the spirit of the Lord help us all to smile like a child.

May our work as a board be a source of hope to this school community.

Closing Prayer

God our Father, we pray that all our students, staff and parents may feel included, safe and cared for within our school community. We make these and all the prayers of our hearts through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

The school year is now up and running. We have had successes and, despite challenges, hopefully the seeds of our enthusiasm is still intact. Let us build on the good will of the whole school community.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we may not have made the perfect start to the new school year, but we hope and pray we have done our best. Thank you for your blessing and we are sorry for the times we have fallen short of our vision.

Reading

Matthew 13:1–9

That same day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there. He said, ‘Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold,

some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!’

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

It can be easier at some times than at others to start the new school year with enthusiasm and the freshness of a new beginning. Lord, at this time of year when we consider harvest themes, let the seeds of education that we sow bear fruit in many surprising ways in the hearts and souls of our students. Help us to be compassionate and effective in our valuable work.

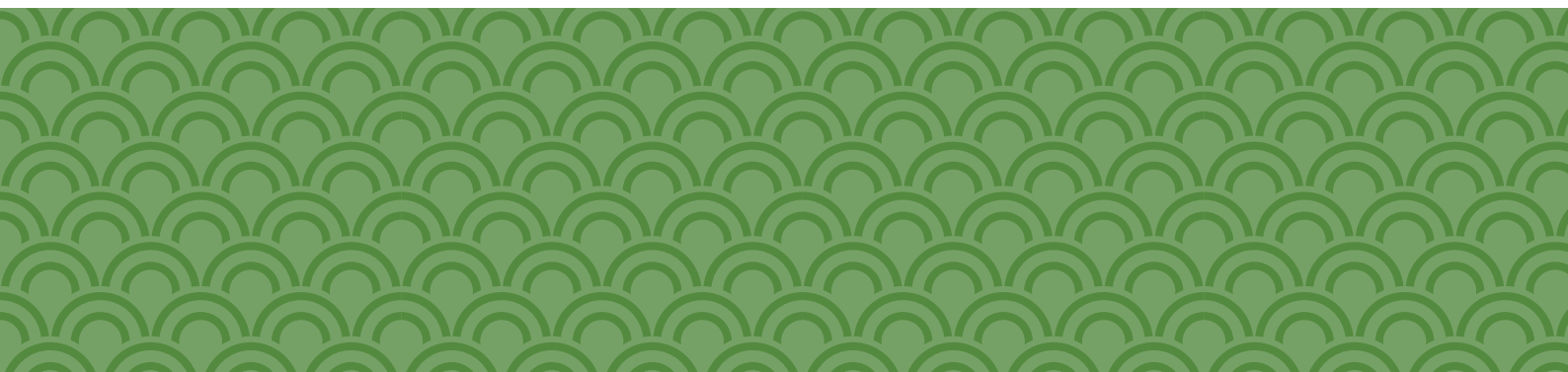
Closing Prayer

For all this, in Your name, we pray:
Our Father who art in heaven ...

Amen.



NOVEMBER



Welcome

You are all welcome to our November meeting. Thank you for being here again to share your wisdom and insights. At this time of year we remember those who have gone before us, who have left a mark on our lives. Perhaps we could take a few moments in our reflection this evening to remember them.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus
You are a God of love and peace.
Grant peace to those who have gone before us.
Open our minds and guide our hearts,
Help us to grow in knowledge of you.

Amen.

Reading

Ecclesiasticus 44:1–15

Let us praise illustrious people,
Our ancestors in their successive generations.
Their good works have not been forgotten.
In their descendants there remains,
a rich inheritance born of them.
Their bodies have been buried in peace,
And their name lives on for all generations.
The peoples will proclaim their wisdom,
The assembly will celebrate their praises.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

During the month of November we remember those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. We are encouraged to pray for our family and friends, our ancestors, and for those

who may have no one to pray for them. This unifies us as a Christian family, connecting earth and heaven.

Let us remember someone who has influenced us from our past, our school days, a teacher, a school friend.

Reflect quietly for a few moments, thanking God for that person.

We pray that through our work as a board we may be inspired by their wisdom and courage, so that all our work tonight is for the greater glory of God.

Closing Prayer

Let us end with the prayer of St John Henry Newman:

May He support us all the day long
Till the shades lengthen and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life
is over
and our work is done.
Then in his mercy may He give us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last.

Amen.

Welcome

As we gather this evening, I am conscious that we are all coming from different places in a busy world. Thank you for being here and for your commitment to this board. In this month of the Holy Souls, let us also keep in mind and remember all those who have gone before us.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus
As we gather here this evening
we pray for light and guidance,
so that all in this school community
may benefit from our work and decision-making.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 5:13

Jesus said
'You are the light of the world.
A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden.
No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub.
They put it on a lamp-stand,
where it shines for everyone in the house.
In the same way your light must shine before all
people,
so that, seeing your good works,
they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Let us reflect for a few moments in silence on the words of Jesus in the Gospel of St Matthew.

What light can I bring to this meeting?

How can I shine a light for good on decisions being made that will impact the lives of all those in this school community?

Intercessions

Lord, give us the courage to share truth and wisdom at this meeting.

Lord hear us.

Lord, enlighten our minds and hearts through the power of your Holy Spirit.

Lord hear us.

Lord, may all our work tonight give praise to your Father in heaven.

Lord hear us.

Lord, grant healing to the sick and those in distress.

Lord hear us.

Lord, give eternal rest to all those who have died. We remember especially all those associated with this school community. May they enjoy eternal happiness with You forever.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

God our Father,
Be a bright flame before me,
a guiding star above me.
Be a smooth path below me,
a kindly shepherd behind me,
Now and forever.

Amen.

Welcome

As we gather this evening, during the month of the Holy Souls, let us remember those who have gone before us and in particular all those associated with this school community.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God
We gather as your faithful people.
Send your Spirit of wisdom upon us,
so that our hearts and minds may be open
to all that is shared and discussed throughout this
meeting.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 43:1-2, 4

Thus says the Lord, who created you,
'Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by your name, you are mine.
You are precious in my eyes,
You are honoured and I love you.
Do not be afraid for I am with you.'

The Word of the Lord.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the words we have just heard.

Intercessions

We pray for those who inspired and influenced our lives. Lord, grant them rest.

Lord hear us.

Let us remember those in our school community who are sick. Lord, sustain them.

Lord hear us.

For all those in exam years, that they may not grow weary or be stressed.

Lord hear us.

For teachers everywhere, may they be beacons of light to all those in their care.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for all those who now share eternal glory with you,

particularly those we have known and loved.

Grant them the rest and peace they deserve.

As we begin our meeting may we be mindful of their legacy

and the good they have done.

Grant us wisdom and courage to make wise decisions.

We make our prayer to you through the intercession of Mary.

Amen.



DECEMBER



Welcome

Before we proceed with the business of our meeting let us open our hearts and minds to God as he speaks to us in prayer.

Opening Prayer

Lord, in the quiet of Advent, we prepare our hearts.

May we be inspired and moved by your spirit in all our decisions and discussions together.

As we await the coming of your son, we pray that we be Christ-like, that our thoughts, words and deeds may glorify your name.

Amen.

Reading

Corinthians 4:1–2, 5

Brothers and sisters:

People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God.

What is expected of stewards is that each one should be found worthy of his trust.

There must be no passing of premature judgement.

Leave that until the Lord comes;

he will light up all that is hidden in the dark and reveal the secret intentions of men's hearts.

Then will be the time for each one to have whatever praise he deserves, from God.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

In this passage, St Paul mentions how we should be regarded in our lives – as servants of Christ. Our work in schools as elsewhere, particularly in this season, can be busy and relentless. We can easily become consumed by the hustle and bustle. How are we demonstrating the Christ-like servant leadership and management that we are called to? In what ways can we make Christ's love evident in our vocation as leaders and management?

This season offers us the opportunity to focus on our capacity to be Christ-like instead of servants to the money, wealth, power, overindulgence, and so on, and to support and lead the faith development of the school community.

Closing Prayer

God our Father, through this Advent season, we are inclined to hurry through our days, preparing for Christmas in our homes and schools – forgetting to prepare our hearts too. Teach us to wait patiently, taking time to pause, to restore ourselves in quiet and prayer. Teach us to open our hearts to your voice, waiting for your word that we may meaningfully welcome your coming into our lives.

Amen.

Welcome

As we begin our December meeting, we give thanks for the many blessings that have been bestowed on this school community. Throughout this meeting may we continue to reflect a spirit of kindness and compassion.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word made flesh, the communication of God's love for the world. Be with us as we begin our meeting, that our words and ideas come through clearly and reflect your truth.

Reading

Isaiah 9:5

For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Lord, we pray for our school community: That we not only talk about you, but make you present in our classrooms; not only encourage faith, hope, and love, but embody those virtues in our students.

Lord hear us.

Lord, we pray that you might help us respond to the needs of others.

Lord hear us.

We pray for the vulnerable who have no place to call their own. Let your blessings be with all who work to help those most in need this Christmas, and inspire us with courage to do the same.

Lord hear us.

This season of Advent reminds us that your grace continues to break forth into our world and into our lives. Grant that we might recognise your work and invitations during this season.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Lord,

We actively seek you in our lives and welcome you among us this Advent season. May we reach out to others in a meaningful and Christ-like way.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

As we begin our meeting, let us take a moment to become present to ourselves and to invoke God's blessing on our time together.

A brief period of silence follows.

Opening Prayer

Father in heaven,
We turn to you during this busy month
calling to mind the birth of your Son
Bless our time together, that our hearts may be
 open to your spirit of love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

May the God who gives us peace make you
completely his, and keep your whole being, spirit,
soul, and body, free from all fault, at the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you will do it,
for he is faithful.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

You desire our well-being Lord. Renew our faith,
hope and love that we may hear and embrace your
word to each of us at this time.

Lord hear us.

Bless our school community. May every member
experience the gift of your peace this Advent and
Christmas season.

Lord hear us.

Bless the efforts of our students, staff, RE team
and chaplain who give expression to your love
through our Advent and Christmas celebrations.

Lord hear us.

Bless all who are unwell in mind, body and spirit at
this time. Bless too those who mourn and grieve.
May they experience your healing and consolation.

Lord hear us.

*A moment of silence for participants to place
personal or private intentions before the Lord.*

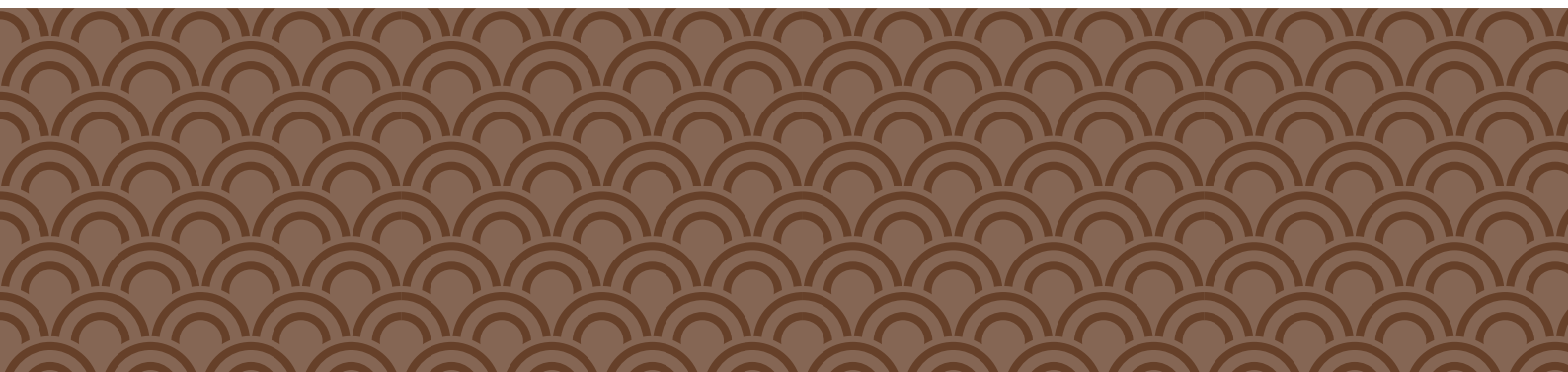
Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the human birth of your only
 begotten son.
Number all members of our school community
 among His people,
for He is our the salvation.
Through the same Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



JANUARY



Welcome

As we gather after the great celebration of Christmas may the joy of that season continue to feed us in the term ahead.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we thank you for this group that is gathered here and for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We ask for your continued blessing on our work together. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 9:35–38

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

As we return from the holidays we think of those students who may not have encountered fully the joy of the Christmas season in the past month for reasons of illness, loss, or family circumstances. May their return to school offer them a safe harbour from their pain and suffering.
Lord hear us.

We pray for all members of our school community at this time of renewed hope for all that is to come. May Jesus wrap us all in the safety and comfort of his Love in the year ahead.
Lord hear us.

We pray for the members of this board and their families. May the Lord bless us in the year ahead and bestow peace and joy on all who we love.
Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for the blessings you have bestowed upon us. Give us insight to see your hand at work in our lives and guide us in all that we do in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

As we come together this evening for the first meeting of the new school year, we are grateful for the grace of fresh starts and new beginnings.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus we know that you are with us as we
reflect
on the issues before us at this meeting.
We ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all
our deliberations.
We make this our prayer through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

John 13:34–35

I give you a new commandment: love one another;
just as I have loved you, you also must love one
another. By this love you have for one another,
everyone will know that you are my disciples.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Faith, Love and Service are at the heart of the
Catholic vision for education. God calls us to
a leadership of loving service. May our work
as servants and leaders in our school system

demonstrate the spirit of loving service which
Jesus showed.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to
inspire the school community to exemplify the
words of St Teresa of Ávila:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the
world.

May God bless our efforts.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to make our school community a
place with a special care for the suffering and
the weak.

Give us wisdom and strength to help all students
reach their full potential and respond to Your
call.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

As we begin a new year with all its promises, opportunities and challenges, we look forward to committing our time and energy to supporting the school community to be a place where everyone, students and teachers, can flourish and be their best selves.

Opening Prayer

Lord, as we begin a new calendar year, we renew our commitment to offering our students the best possible quality education, based on human and Christian values of respect, equality, diversity and inclusion of everyone.

Give us courage to take on the difficult challenges and wisdom to make the right decisions along the way, always listening to your Spirit and what is best for our students.

Reading

Corinthians 12:4–11

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy; another the gift of recognising spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

The Word of the Lord

Intercessions

‘There are different gifts but the same Spirit.’ We pray that each member of the school community may be given the opportunity in the coming year to develop their unique and God-given talents and to put those talents at the service of the wider community.

Lord hear us.

We pray that, as a board, we will always act in the best interests of the school community, students, teachers and parents and that our efforts will enhance and support a quality education for every student in this school.

Lord hear us.

We pray that the vision of our Catholic school may permeate the entire life of the school community, promoting love of God and love of others.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

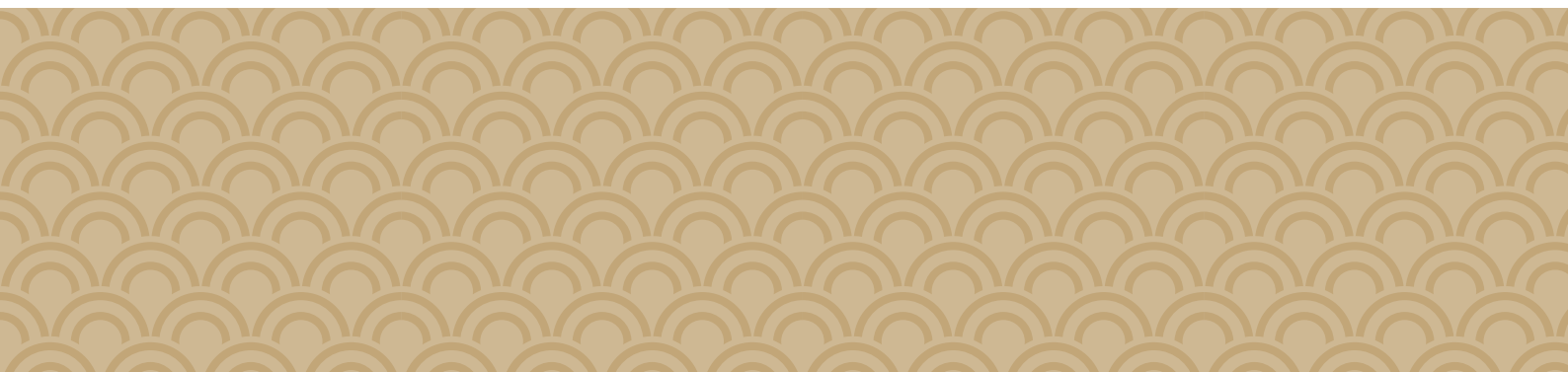
As Jesus taught us, we pray:

Our Father who art in heaven ...

Amen.



FEBRUARY



Welcome

Thank you for gathering this evening to attend this board meeting. Let us begin by praying again for our school community.

Opening Prayer

Lord, you have placed your spirit within each of us for the good of all those we work for in this school.

During our meeting,
allow us to listen to one another,
to be open to new ideas and plans,
to take risks where necessary,
to put our trust in you,
so that all that we do is for your greater glory and honour.

Amen.

Reading

Mark 10:13–16

People were bringing little children to Jesus, for Him to touch.

The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this He was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to them. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'
Then He gave them his blessing.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Let us pray for the students in our school, that God may bless and protect them.

Lord hear us.

Let us pray for the teachers who inspire our students to work well, be curious and enjoy the discovery of knowledge.

Lord hear us.

Let us pray for the parents, grandparents and guardians of our students.

Lord hear us.

Let us pray for ourselves as a board, that in all our decisions and deliberations, God may be with us. May our focus always be on the well-being of each student in this school.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

These are our prayers, Lord.

Bless us as we work together this evening.

May our decisions and deliberations be made in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

Welcome to our board meeting this evening. Thank you all for being here. As usual let us take a few moments to be still, to listen to the words from scripture and reflect in our hearts.

Opening Prayer

Father in heaven,
As we gather this evening,
Grant us wisdom, courage and discernment.
So that our work, in your name, may bring joy to
our school community.

Amen.

Reading

Letter of St Paul to the Colossians 3:12–17

You are God's chosen race, his saints; He loves you. You should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and peace. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you are called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. Never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

As we gather this evening, we reflect on all the positive aspects of our school community. In our hearts let us reflect on what we have to be thankful for in our own lives. What have we to be thankful for in our school community?

How do I, as a member of the board, bring kindness and compassion, gentleness and peace to discussions and decisions?
How do I live by the motto/characteristic spirit of the school?

Closing Prayer

O God,
stay with me;
let no word cross my lips that is not your word,
no thoughts enter my mind that are not your thoughts,
no deed ever be done or entertained by me that is not your deed.
Amen.

(Prayer of Malcolm Muggeridge from *Jesus Rediscovered*)

Welcome

Welcome, once again, to our meeting and thank you for your time and your engagement with the business of the board. Let us begin in our usual way by taking a few moments to pause and reflect on the Word of God.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord,
You have entrusted us with the care of this school
and so many precious lives.
Thank you for the generosity of our teachers and
for the enthusiasm of the young minds and
hearts that long to learn, respond to fun and
learn to share.
Come lead us as we pray and may your wisdom
and inspiration be our guide as we meet
together this evening.

Amen.

Reading

Micah 6:8

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act
justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with
your God.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Let us pause to reflect on the words we have just
heard.

The simple words in this reading say so much!

What really matters most to me?

Does the Prophet Micah challenge me to face up to
how I live my life?

How do I make the right choices?

As followers of Jesus, let us pray for the grace
to make just and loving decisions during this
meeting.

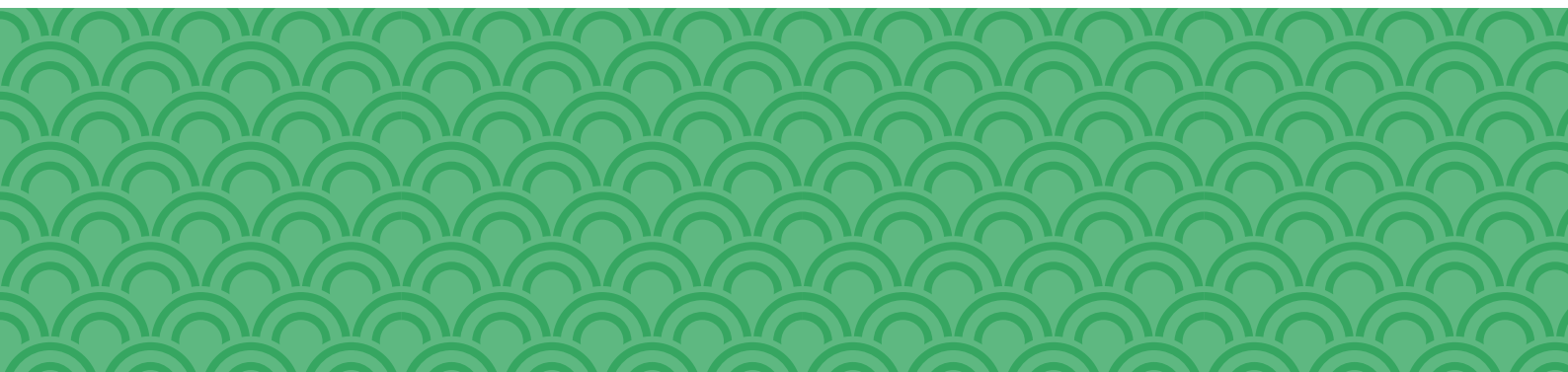
Closing Prayer

Gracious Lord,
Please help all of us to respect each other,
understand one another
and never fail to offer kindness and care.
In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we make
this prayer.

Amen.



MARCH



Welcome

Welcome everyone to our board meeting. As we gather, we are aware of the advancing spring and the gradually lengthening evenings, which bring hope of warmer days and new life to come. (We are also approaching Easter and the celebration of new life in the Risen Christ.)

Opening Prayer

Lord, as we journey through Lent, grant us the grace to accept things as they are, however imperfect that may be, and for the ability to see the wonder in the ordinary world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

John 9:1-7

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him ... As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.' Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

In today's world there is a great tendency to be judgemental, whether online or in comments that we make about other people, to write them off, so to speak. Is this true about something we have said, done or thought today? In this passage, Jesus urges his disciples not to jump to conclusions but, instead, to be open to different ways of looking at things.

The man here is physically blind, but we can all be blind in other ways – where is the blind spot in my line of vision? Am I intolerant? Who do I blame for things that don't work out? During this board meeting may we see with new eyes so that we are open to all possibilities.

Closing Prayer

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end.

Amen.

Welcome

Thank you for gathering this evening to attend this board meeting. Let us, as always, begin with prayer.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, bless our work, bless our school
community
and all who strive to follow your Gospel message.

Pause for silence.

Reading

Ephesians 3:16–19

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will, with all the saints, have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Lord, we pray that we may always be your hands and feet in the world.
Lord hear us.

We pray that Christ will always remain in our hearts through faith.
Lord hear us.

We pray that our interactions as members of this school community will always be characterised by compassion and caring in our day-to-day deeds.
Lord hear us.

For the gift of this time and the gift of love.
Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Let us now conclude with the prayer Jesus taught us:
Our Father who art in heaven ...

Welcome

As we gather for our meeting this evening, we ask the Lord for the wisdom to make good decisions that will enable each member of our school community to reach their potential.

Opening Prayer

Come to us, Holy Spirit, remain with us,
Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your
power,
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Reading

Book of Proverbs (3:13–26)

Blessed are those who have discovered wisdom,
those who have acquired understanding ... In
wisdom, the Lord laid the earth's foundations, in
understanding he spread out the heavens ...
My child, hold to sound advice and prudence,
never let them out of sight. You will go on your
way in safety, your feet will not stumble. When you
go to bed, you will not be afraid; once in bed, your
sleep will be sweet. Have no fear either of sudden
terror or attack mounted by the wicked, since the
Lord will be your guarantor, he will keep your
steps from the snare.

Intercessions

For wisdom: We ask for the wisdom to make
decisions that will enable the members of our
school community to reach their full potential.
Lord hear us.

For courage: We ask for the courage to make the
difficult decisions that will allow our school to
become a place where people flourish.
Lord hear us.

For diligence: We ask for the strength to work hard
with the best interests of every member of our
communities at the core of each decision we make.
Lord hear us.

For the ability to listen: We ask for support
in listening to all stakeholders in our school
community so that we can become a school of our
members rather than a school for our members.
Lord hear us.

For the ability to reflect: We ask you to help us to
reflect on the needs of our school communities
and do our best to respond to those needs.
Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Let us conclude with the Serenity Prayer:

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



APRIL



Welcome

You are all welcome to our April meeting, in the season of Easter when we are especially aware that Christ has risen from the dead and is with us – as students, teachers, leaders and management.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
Guide us to help our students to develop the capacity to shape their lives in line with the highest of human values, to belong to you and make our world and universe a better place through their lives.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 40:28–31

The Lord is an everlasting God
He created the boundaries of the earth
He does not grow tired or weary.
His understanding is beyond fathoming
He gives strength to the wearied,
He strengthens the powerless.

Young men and women grow tired and weary,
Youths may stumble.
But those who hope in the Lord renew their strength,
They put out wings like eagles.
They run and do not grow weary,
Walk and never tire.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Lord, our reading reminds us of your steadfastness, energy, wisdom and strength. During this month of April, a time of new beginnings, we entrust once again all our young people to your watchful care. Guide us in supporting them to the fullness of life. In the power of your love may we support them to know who they truly are, reap the benefits of the education being provided and grow in generosity regarding the abilities with which you have blessed them.

Closing Prayer

Let us conclude with the prayer of St Ignatius of Loyola:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labour and to ask for no reward,
Save that of knowing that I do your will.

Amen.

Welcome

Welcome everyone. As we gather on this April evening, the evenings are lengthening and the signs of spring are everywhere. Let us pause a moment to quieten our minds, to become aware of God's presence with us and to be thankful for all the blessings we receive at this time of the year.

Opening Prayer

God, our Father, thank you for bringing us together here this evening. We pray that your Holy Spirit will guide us in our work and that our discussion and decision-making will be inspired by the teachings of your Son. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 28:18–20

Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.'

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Father, we pray that, remembering your Son's passion, death and resurrection, our work here this evening will be conducted in a spirit of faith, hope, love and joy.

Lord hear us.

Lord Jesus, we ask you to fill this place of learning with your love and peace. May our students flourish here as they encounter you and learn to develop their gifts and talents in becoming the people you have called them to be.

Lord hear us.

Holy Spirit, fill our teachers with your wisdom; bless them in their work each day as they inspire their students with a love of learning.

Lord hear us.

May all members of our school community have the courage to contribute all they can to creating a just society which respects the dignity of all people and a world which takes responsibility for the stewardship of your creation.

Lord hear us.

A moment of silence for participants to place personal or private intentions before the Lord.

Closing Prayer

We pray for your blessing, Father, on each of us here, and for the guidance of your Holy Spirit. May we always remember that it is faith that is the foundation of all that takes place in our work and in this school.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

As we journey through Easter, we welcome you all to this meeting. May this season bring us new energy and inspire us in our work. Before we begin our prayer, let us take a moment of quiet to call God into our presence.

Pause.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, we call upon your blessings this Easter. May this final school term be filled with hope and joy.

May the joy of your resurrection be always in our hearts and minds.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

John 20:19

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the door was closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you' and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you, as the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

On reflection of the above Easter story we see this great sense of joy and hope. Hope is as necessary for the spirit as bread is for the body. Easter provides an enormous injection of hope for the human spirit. And how much it is needed. Good things are destroyed, good people are cut down, Jesus was cut down, but, he rose again. There is always a quiet joy among us and a deep sense of peace as we know life is stronger than death, love is stronger than fear, and hope is stronger than despair.

(Flor McCarthy, *SDB, New Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, pp. 105–106)

Closing Prayer

May your Spirit be our inspiration, may your resurrection bring us joy,

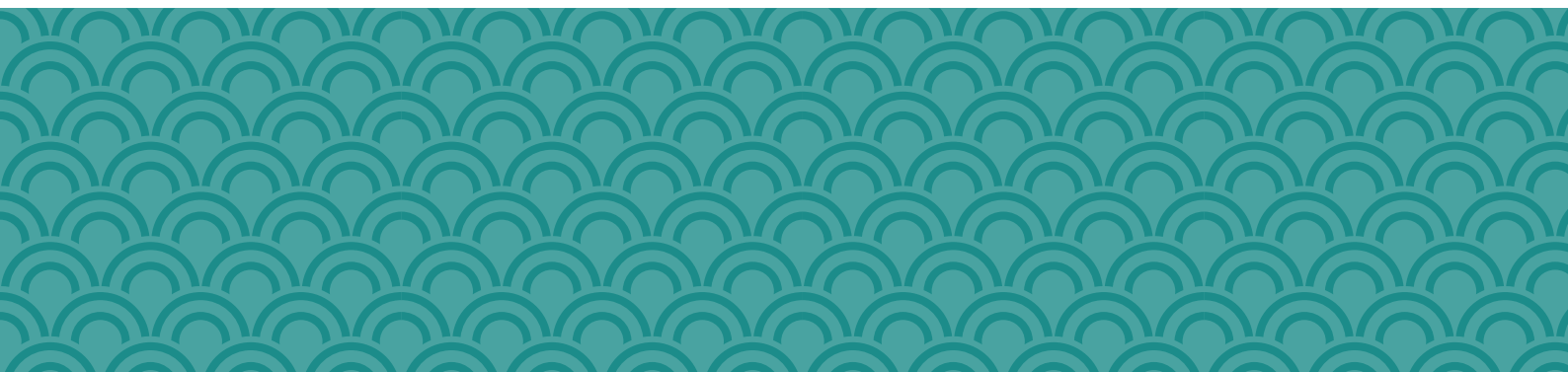
May we be always filled with your peace.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



MAY



Welcome

Before we proceed with the business of our meeting let us open our hearts and minds to God as he speaks to us through the words of Sacred Scripture.

A moment of stillness.

Opening Prayer

God our Father,
Guide and help us in all we say and do throughout
this meeting.

May our words, actions and decisions be modelled
on the Word of God.

Help us to respect and value each other's opinion
and realise the tremendous responsibility we
have in the educational welfare of this school
community. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 55:10–11

Thus says the Lord:
'As the rain and the snow come down from the
heavens and do not return without watering
the earth, making it yield and giving growth
to provide seed for the sower and bread for the
eater, so the word that goes from my mouth does
not return to me empty, without carrying out my
will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

God has spoken to us in his Word; now we are
moved to speak to Him in prayer.

Lord, we thank you for your Word that gives us
new vision and hope each day. May it imbue our
minds and spirits with faith and a renewed way of
understanding and living life.

Lord hear us.

For the welfare of children and young people:
that their individual needs and abilities will be
recognised, understood and honoured with ample
opportunities to develop spiritually, mentally,
morally, physically and psychologically.

Lord hear us.

For families living in third world countries: that,
conscious of our own educational advancement
and opportunities, we will never lose sight of the
vast numbers of children who have neither the
facilities nor the educational resources to acquire a
basic education.

Lord hear us.

For children preparing and receiving the
sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation:
that they will cherish these days of grace and
blessing and grow in appreciation of God's desire
to nourish and strengthen them through the
sacraments.

Lord hear us.

For examination students: that through their
diligent studies they will discover and develop
their God-given abilities and that You will help
them to be perceptive and responsive in their
examinations.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

May the Lord be a sure path beneath our feet,
A bright light before us,
A kindly shepherd behind us;
This day, this night and always.

Amen.

(The Roman Missal – Feast of St Columcille)

Welcome

Welcome to our May meeting. In our tradition May is sometimes called ‘Mary’s Month’. The Gospel presentation of Mary offers plenty of food for thought for boards of management and school community leaders.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus,
In the month of May,
We are inspired by your mother Mary,
Be with us in these moments of reflection.
May the gentle presence of the Holy Spirit
touch each of us as it touched Mary.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 12:46, 50

He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly his mother and his brothers were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. But to the man who told him this Jesus replied: ‘Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?’
And stretching out his hands towards his disciples he said: ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

From the moment of her ‘Yes’ at the Annunciation, through her ‘Do whatever he tells you’ at the wedding in Cana, the Mary of the Gospels is presented as ‘the perfect disciple’. Her abiding qualities are her faith and her love. We honour her in this month of May. The words of Jesus in the Gospel passage we have just read honour her too, not just as his mother, but as the perfect disciple, the one ‘who does the will of my Father in heaven’. Each one of us is called to be a disciple in service of God and those around us. Mary shows us the way. Be it as a principal or member of a board, may the call of Jesus to be his disciple, to be his brother or his sister, to be one who does the will of his Father in heaven, be at the heart of our lives.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray together:
Hail Mary, full of grace ...

Welcome

Before we proceed with the business of our meeting let us open our hearts and minds to God as he speaks to us through the words of Sacred Scripture.

A moment of stillness.

Opening Prayer

God our Father,
Guide and help us in all we say and do throughout
this meeting.

Help us to respect and value each other's opinions
and realise the tremendous responsibility we
have regarding the educational welfare of our
school community.

May all our words, actions and decisions be
modelled on the Word of God.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 55:10–11

Thus says the Lord:
'As the rain and the snow come down from the
heavens and do not return without watering
the earth, making it yield and giving growth
to provide seed for the sower and bread for the
eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does
not return to me empty, without carrying out my
will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

In this short scripture reading we have heard, the prophet Isaiah compares the word of God to the rain and snow that softens the earth and makes the seed grow.

Lord, enlighten our minds with the message of your life-giving words, instil vision and hope in our hearts so that we will be inspired to sow seeds of truth and goodness in our own lives and in those who are influenced by our words and actions.

Everybody born into this world is born for a time and purpose. There are opportunities in this life that are unique to each of us. Help us to be conscious of the possibilities presented to us in this role. Let nothing be left undone that might hinder the good that can be achieved.

We are in a pivotal position of influence to do good, stay silent or obstruct the good that can be accomplished. Lord, be with us and help us to do our best.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
We thank you for this time together, bless our
work in the managerial and leadership care of
our school.

May we value and listen to the opinions of each
other.

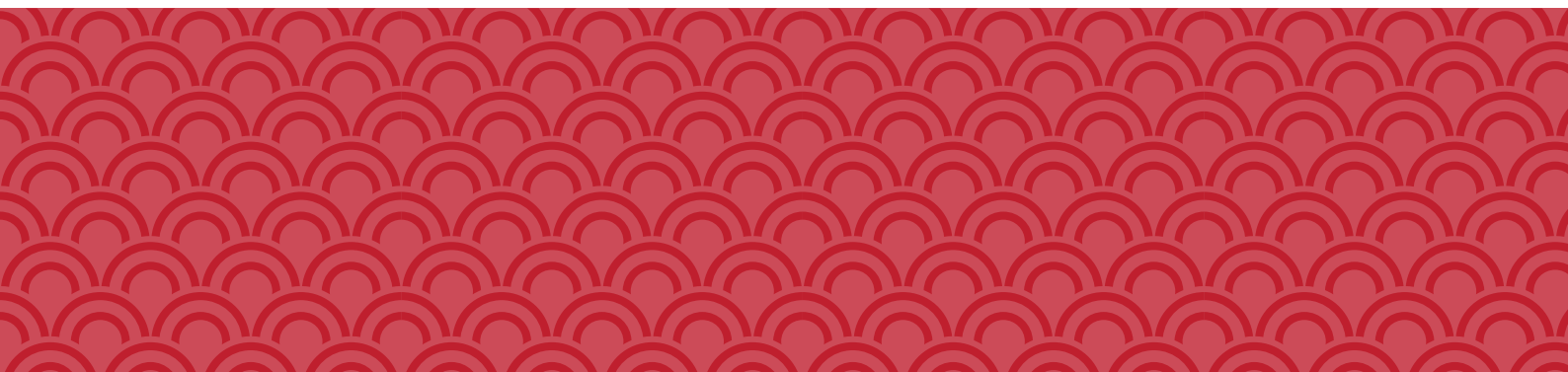
May we be patient and understanding with one
another.

Help us in our deliberations to reach a mutually
agreed consensus
and come to decisions for the common good of all.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



JUNE



Welcome

As we gather at this time of endings we remember that our work begins and ends in love. We take a moment to open our hearts to the love of God for each one of us.

Opening Prayer

God of endless love,
We thank you for this school year
and for all we have shared.
We place our students and their families;
our staff and all who support our school
community
into your grace, and ask your blessing as we meet
in your service.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

John 13:34–35

Jesus said:
'I give you a new commandment:
love one another;
you must love one another
just as I have loved you.
It is by your love for one another,
that everyone will recognise you
as my disciples.'

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

Jesus gave this commandment after the washing
of feet at the Last Supper, which we recall in every

celebration of the Eucharist and in many other ways.
In our school community we find Christ where we
find love:
in friendships among students and colleagues;
when staff and students go the extra mile for each
other;
and give each other second chances;
when we grieve with those who grieve,
and rejoice with those who rejoice;
in every person's care for those who are struggling;
in our humour and our prayer.

In our meeting together as leaders and servants of
this school community
we commit ourselves again to put love first
in all we do and stand for,
with Christ at the centre.

Closing Prayer

Spirit of God,
you live in the heart
of every member of our school community.
Unite us in your love.
Bless and guide the students and staff who are
leaving us
and keep us all safe during the holidays.
Strengthen us, now, with all the gifts we need
to do the work that is before us.
Sacred Heart of Jesus we place all our trust in you.

Amen.

Welcome

You are all very welcome. At the beginning of our time together let us take a moment to become present to one another and to root ourselves in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
as we gather in your name,
we acknowledge our need of your guidance.
Bless our time together.
May our sharing be open
and our deliberations fruitful for our school
community.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Letter of St Paul to the Romans 14:17–19

It is not eating and drinking that make the Kingdom of God, but the saving justice, the peace and the joy brought by the Holy Spirit. It is the person who serves Christ in these things that will be approved by God and respected by everyone. So then, let us always be seeking the ways which lead to peace and the ways in which we can support one another.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Loving God, we pray for all students in primary schools at this time as they receive the sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion.
Lord hear us.

God of Wisdom, bless and support all students who are sitting public examinations such as Leaving Certificate, A Levels and many others at this time.

Lord hear us.

God of healing, we remember those in our school and other communities who are unwell in mind and body at this time. May they experience your peace and be restored to good health.

Lord hear us.

God of love, we thank you for all the positive experiences of our school community during this academic year. We pray for the health and safety of students, staff and families over the summer months.

Lord hear us.

We pause for a moment in silence to place before you our personal prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition.

Closing Prayer

God of wisdom and life,
we invoke your blessing at this time.
Bestow again the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon us,
especially understanding, wisdom, fortitude and
good counsel,
that they may bear positively on the business of
our meeting.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

You are all very welcome. June is a time to become aware of the Creator God, filling days with the long stretch of evening, the fragrance of flowers, and the song of birds. May we support our school towards a greater appreciation of the Creator at work today.

Opening Prayer

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty ... God of love show us our place in this world as channels of your love ... Praise be to you.

Amen.

(Laudato Si', 246)

Reading

Deuteronomy 22:6

If, when out walking, you come across a bird's nest, in a tree or on the ground with chicks or eggs and the mother sitting on the chicks or eggs, you must not take the mother as well as the chicks.

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Luke 12:6

Can you not buy five sparrows for two pennies? And yet not one is forgotten in God's sight.

The Word of the Lord.

Litany of Praise from the Canticle of St Francis

Praise to you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom you give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour; and bears a likeness to you, Most High.

Praise to you my Lord.

Praise to you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praise to you my Lord.

Praise to you, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praise to you my Lord.

Praise to you, my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and precious and pure.

Praise to you my Lord.

Praise to you, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you light the night. He is beautiful and robust and strong.

Praise to you my Lord.

Reflect for a few moments as to what you want to praise God for in your life.

Closing Prayer

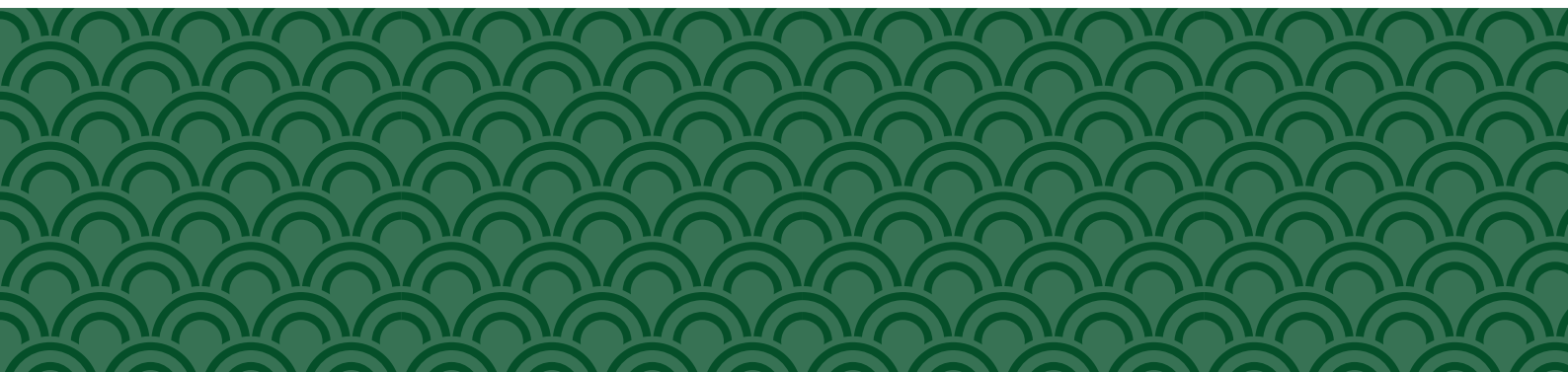
Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thanksgiving for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. Praise be to you.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



ADDITIONAL SITUATIONS



Welcome

Welcome and thank you for attending this special meeting. Let us take a moment to gather our thoughts and invoke God's blessing.

Opening Prayer

Lord, you are our refuge,
no harm or disaster is beyond your reach.
Command your angels to guard us at this time.
We rely on your care and protection.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.
(Psalm 91)

Reading

Mark 4:35–41

Jesus said to the disciples: 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake' ... They took him in the boat ... It began to blow a great gale and the boat was almost swamped. But Jesus was asleep. They woke him and said to him, 'Master, do you not care? We are lost!' And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Quiet now! Be calm!' And the wind dropped and there came a great calm. Then he said to them, 'Why are you afraid?'

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Lord, we stand in need of your support. Give us courage and hope. Help us to remember that no disaster can overtake you; nor plague come near you. We trust in you.
Lord hear us.

Like the disciples, we want to say to you 'Master, do you not care? We are lost!' We put our trust in you and ask your blessing on those supporting our school community to cope.

Lord hear us.

Bless all who are most affected by this crisis and give them courage and hope.

Lord hear us.

Bless all called to leadership and give them wisdom in their decision-making.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we ask you to give us courage to cope with the present crisis, wisdom to make good decisions, and insight to recognise that apart from you we can do nothing. Help us to meet the present with confidence, knowing that you are always faithful. We make this and all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Welcome

As we gather for our meeting we pause to remember _____ (name) from our school community and ask God's blessing on him/her, upon his/her family and all who are impacted by his/her death.

Opening Prayer

Lord God,
Bless _____, who is ever alive to you.
Give us your grace and support us to continue with
our journey.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Letter of St Paul to the Romans 14:7-9

For none of us lives for himself and none of us dies for himself; while we are alive, we are living for the Lord, and when we die, we die for the Lord: and so, alive or dead, we belong to the Lord. It was for this purpose that Christ both died and came to life again: so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

In this time of need we put our prayers before you,
O God of hope.

For those who mourn for _____, may
you strengthen us at this time of bereavement.
Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

For all those supporting our community to cope

with the loss of _____, may You
support them as they provide us with a listening
ear and words of encouragement.
Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

For an outpouring of Your gifts of compassion,
patience and understanding as we each deal with
this loss.
Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

We pray also for others who have died at this time.
May they too enjoy eternal peace in your heavenly
home.
Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

God of consolation,
You sent your Son to live among us.
He suffered, died and rose from the dead.
Grant that _____ may have a share in
His resurrection.
Comfort us with your love during this time of loss,
And strengthen our belief in your promise of
resurrection.
Through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Welcome

Coming together at this time of distress and turmoil let us take a few moments of quiet to calm ourselves. We ask that God's blessing may flow through us and allow us to go about our work for this community in His name.

Opening Prayer

Lord God, fill us with your spirit of love.
Wash away our tears and strengthen us at this time.
Help us to go about our work secure in the knowledge that you travel this path with us.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:35, 37–39

Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ – can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence; No; we come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Intercessions

Welcoming God, you have shown your glory to the world through Christ your Son. Guide our work so that it may, in some way, help bring about your kingdom on earth.
Lord hear us.

Almighty and eternal God, you know the longings of our hearts. Watch over us so that we may remain true to you by being beacons of hope in times of darkness.
Lord hear us.

Compassionate God, you give strength to those that are weary and weighed down. Give us strength so that we may help soothe the suffering and comfort the afflicted.
Lord hear us.

Ever-present God, in these troubled times when dismay takes root, give us courage and wisdom to work through our struggle and confusion. Help us to accomplish what must be done so that we may become more perfect witnesses of Your love.
Lord, in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Almighty God,
Light our way as we act in your name.
Be ever in our thoughts
so that we may show your love to those who are in need.
Silence the quiver in our voices, that we may confidently speak your words of compassion and hold out your helping hand.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Welcome

Welcome to this special meeting, in which we celebrate the contribution of _____ (name) to the life and mission of our school community. _____'s commitment to the school has been a blessing. His/her thoughtfulness, kindness, willingness to listen and to support staff and students helped make the school a happy and holy place for all to thrive in.

Opening Prayer

Lord,
We come to you today to thank you for the gift and talents of _____. May your presence be with him/her as he/she seeks out new horizons and new challenges. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Reading

Ecclesiastes 3:1–2, 4

There is a season for everything,
a time for every occupation under heaven
a time for giving birth,
a time for dying;
a time for planting,
a time for uprooting what has been planted.
A time for tears,
a time for laughter;
a time for mourning,
a time for dancing.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again
May God hold you in the palm of His hand

(Traditional Irish Blessing)

Lord,
We pray in gratitude that _____'s vocation to teach and lead benefited the lives of so many.

Lord hear us.

We ask your blessing on him/her during this time of transition and the next phase of his/her life.

Lord hear us.

We pray that he/she may have friends and family to enjoy on the journey ahead.

Lord hear us.

We pray that he/she may be blessed with good health for the next chapter of her/his life.

Lord hear us.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
We ask your blessings on our work and we thank you for the gift of all who contribute so much of their being to developing the academic and spiritual life of our young people.

We give thanks especially for _____, who is leaving us but who will remain forever in our hearts. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

At this time of great joy, coming together as a board, we pause to reflect on the bounty that we have received and to give thanks for this as we go about our work.

Opening Prayer

God of all that is good,
you have done so much for us.
May we today, and always,
lift up our voices in gratitude for all that you have
brought about.
May we be receptive to the work of your Spirit in
us and for us.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Mark 5:18–20

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed begged to be allowed to stay with him.
Jesus would not let him but said to him, ‘Go home to your people and tell them all that the Lord in his mercy has done for you.’
So the man went off and proceeded to proclaim in the Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

We have much to be thankful for, but often we do not realise just how much.

Open our eyes that we may see the abundance of good that is before us.

Let us shout from the rooftops this joy that we have received.

May our joy help us to appreciate the beauty and wonder of our community.

May it aid us in becoming witnesses of joy so that all may be transformed by it.

Allow us to share our joy with those who are in need of hope that they too may be raised up at this joyous time.

Closing Prayer

God our Father,
We know that everything that is good comes from you.
You watch over us and are with us always.
May we always thank you for your faithfulness and love
and share with others our firm belief
that you are the source of our joy.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Welcome

As we gather in gratitude for a school year almost complete, we bring to mind the graduates as they reach this end, and as they chart new beginnings. May what they have learned support them to truly be women and men for others.

Opening Prayer

Good and loving God,
We thank you for the completion of another academic year, and for the gift of our involvement.
We are grateful for your guidance and love throughout our engagement in this important work.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading

Isaiah 43:1–12

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you; or through rivers, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your saviour. I give Egypt for your ransom, and exchange Cush and Seba for you. Because you are precious in my eyes, because you are honoured and I love you, I give men in exchange for you, peoples in return for your life. Do not be afraid, for

I am with you ... You are my witnesses – it is the Lord who speaks – and I, I am your God.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

School-specific content – to be written by a member of the leadership team.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus,
We unite our hearts in prayer and entrust to You all who are graduating at this time.
May the good work you have begun in them carry through to completion, enabling them to use their gifts and talents to reach their true potential.
In the power of Your Spirit,

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

List of Contributors

August

Lily Barry
Archdiocese of Dublin

Patricia Sheridan
Diocese of Kilmore

Justin Harkin
Diocese of Elphin

September

Jonathan Tiernan
Director of Jesuit Education, Irish Province

Brendan O'Regan
Faitharts

Angela Ryan
Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge
(Retired)

October

Angela Ryan
Holy Family Secondary School, Newbridge
(Retired)

Patricia Bourden
Catholic Schools Partnership

Brendan O'Regan
Faitharts

November

Ann O'Donoghue IBVM
Association of Trustees and Patrons of Catholic
Schools

December

Ciara O'Brien
Alliance for Catholic Education Ireland, University
of Notre Dame

Ian Corbett
Alliance for Catholic Education Ireland, University
of Notre Dame

Justin Harkin
Diocese of Elphin

January

Jonathan Tiernan
Director of Jesuit Education, Irish Province

Eileen Gallagher
Diocese of Clogher

Luke O'Connor
Diocese of Killaloe

February

Ann O'Donoghue IBVM
Association of Trustees and Patrons of Catholic
Schools

March

Patricia Bourden
Catholic Schools Partnership

Tomás Kenny
Diocese of Kerry and President of National
Association of Post Primary Diocesan Advisors

Karen O'Donovan
Deputy Principal, Rosmini Community College

April

Dermot Cowhey
Diocese of Limerick

Margaret Farrell
Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin

Tomás Kenny
Diocese of Kerry

May

Fr Francis M. Beirne
Diocese of Elphin

Fr Noel Rooney
Diocese of Elphin

Fr Francis M. Beirne
Diocese of Elphin

June

Dr Anne Francis
Galilee Centre for Spirituality

Kevin McGeeney
St Cuan's College

Moya Hegarty OSU
Diocese of Elphin

Additional Situations

Mary Kenny PBVM
Archdiocese of Tuam

Sean Wright
Diocese of Meath

Mary O'Boyle
Diocese of Derry

Lily Barry
Archdiocese of Dublin

Words

Written, spoken or unspoken
can unite us in friendship
or separate us in painful memories.

Words can reveal who we are,
or disguise us from whom we should be.
Words can forgive, heal and liberate us,
Instil peace or cause hostility.
Words can incite and alienate,
embrace and unify.

Words can be welcoming and enriching,
encouraging and joyful;
or they can be weapons of distrust,
vulgar, deceptive and insensitive.

Words can express empathy,
be compassionate and consoling,
Inspiring and enlightening.
They can empower and be life-giving,
stimulate positivity and promote optimism.

Words spoken can never be taken back!
They resonate links with the past,
keep us in touch with the present,
and give us hope for the future.

Words said on the spur of the moment
can be thoughtful or thoughtless,
leading to varied consequences,
in the minds and hearts of those who hear them.

A word is sacred;
A word is our bond;
A word is memorable
A word is immortal
The Word is God. Amen.

Fr Francis M. Beirne PP



Catholic Schools Partnership

Columba Centre

Maynooth

Co. Kildare

Email: office@catholicschool.ie

Website: www.catholicschool.ie