

Other Prayers for Listening Sessions

Prayer Suggestions for Listening Assemblies

Below is a small selection of prayers that might be appropriate for use in your Listening Assembly sessions. We strongly encourage using the "Opening Prayer", found separately, for the first session. Many more ideas can be found at the "Prayer Blog" of the Assemblies Community Network.

Prayer to Reclaim the Vision of Vatican II

Gracious and Holy God,

We join together in prayer for all who seek to reclaim the vision and spirit of Vatican II anywhere, and all those who gather here today.

May we be anointed by your Spirit to share in divine creativity in solving the challenges of carrying out Vatican II's empowerment of the baptized;

Send forth your Spirit!

May we benefit from the diversity of gifts you have bestowed on all your people and work toward recognizing and using those gifts fully and inclusively;

Send forth your Spirit!

May we be open to Your grace and steadfast in the face of scorn, opposition and dismissal;

Send forth your Spirit!

May we always remember all those who have gone before us, both blazing prophets and quiet souls, who have labored for freedom, truth and dignity for your people;

Send forth your Spirit!

May we join our footsteps with those of your Risen Son as we sing the Alleluia of a resurrected Church;

Send forth your Spirit!

May we be strengthened by the solidarity of this communal prayer to remember that in the grace and power of the God who binds us all together we can do more as one than any one of us dreams alone;

Send forth your Spirit!

Prayer Attributed to Oscar Romero (by Bishop Ken Untener)

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

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No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master
builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

*This prayer was composed by **Bishop Ken Untener** of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Card.
John Dearden in Nov. 1979.

Psalm of New Wineskins by Fr. Edward Hays

Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new.
Come and refresh me, Creator of green life.
Come and inspire me, Risen Son,
 you who make all things new:
 I am too young to be dead,
 to be stagnant in spirit.
High are the walls that guard the old,
 the tried and secure ways of yesterday
 that protect me from the dreaded plague,
 the feared heresy of change.
For all change is a danger to the trusted order,
 the threadbare traditions that are maintained
 by the narrow ruts of rituals.
Yet how can an everlastingly new covenant
 retain its freshness and vitality
 without injections of the new,
 the daring and the untried?
Come, O you who are ever-new,
 wrap my heart in new skin,
 ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.
Set my feet to fresh paths this day:

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inspire me to speak original and life-giving words
and to creatively give shape to the new.
Come and teach me how to dance with delight
whenever you send a new melody my way.

Prayer for a Meeting

O Holy and Hopeful Presence,
whose spirit moves quietly but surely in the fray of the world,
we gather here in this moment linked by hope for change
and the willingness to work for it.
Infuse your spirit into us so that we will be able to make hope visible.
inspire us to stretch our hearts and minds in ways not yet attempted,
so that we can discover *your* way for *your* church on earth
as we strive to be one with you in our hope for change.
Amen.

I Tremble on the Edge of a Maybe by Ted Loder

O God of beginnings,
as your Spirit moved
 over the face of the deep on the first day of creation,
move with me now
 in my time of beginnings,
 when the air is rain-washed,
 the bloom is on the bush,
 and the world seems fresh and full of possibilities,
 and I feel ready and full.

I tremble on the edge of a maybe,
 a first time,
 a new thing,
 a tentative start,
and the wonder of it lays its finger on my lips.

In silence, Lord.
I share now my eagerness and my uneasiness
 about this something different
 I would be or do;
and I listen for your leading
 to help me separate the light
 from the darkness

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in the change I seek to shape
and which is shaping me.

Deepest Fear (adapted from Nelson Mandela's 1994 Inauguration Address)

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, which most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are we *not* to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And, as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Prayer for Frustrated Catholics by *James Martin, S.J.*

Dear God, sometimes I get so frustrated with your church.

I know that I'm not alone. So many people who love your church feel frustrated with the Body of Christ on earth. Priests and deacons, and brothers and sisters, can feel frustrated, too. And I'll bet that even bishops and popes feel frustrated. We grow worried and concerned and bothered and angry and sometimes scandalized because your divine institution, our home, is filled with human beings who are sinful. Just like me.

But I get frustrated most of all when I feel that there are things that need to be changed and I don't have the power to change them.

So I need your help, God.

Help me to remember that Jesus promised that he would be with us until the end of time, and that your church is always guided by the Holy Spirit, even if it's hard for me to see. Sometimes change happens suddenly, and the Spirit astonishes us, but often in the church it happens slowly. In your time, not mine. Help me know that the seeds that I plant with love in the ground of your church will one day bloom. So give me patience.

Help me to understand that there was never a time when there were not arguments or disputes within your church. Arguments go all the way back to Peter and Paul debating one another. And there was never a time when there wasn't sin among the members of your church. That kind of

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sin goes back to Peter denying Jesus during his Passion. Why would today's church be any different than it was for people who knew Jesus on earth? Give me wisdom.

Help me to trust in the Resurrection. The Risen Christ reminds us that there is always the hope of something new. Death is never the last word for us. Neither is despair. And help me remember that when the Risen Christ appeared to his disciples, he bore the wounds of his Crucifixion. Like Christ, the church is always wounded, but always a carrier of grace. Give me hope.

Help me to believe that your Spirit can do anything: raise up saints when we need them most, soften hearts when they seem hardened, open minds when they seem closed, inspire confidence when all seems lost, help us do what had seemed impossible until it was done. This is the same Spirit that converted Paul, inspired Augustine, called Francis of Assisi, emboldened Catherine of Siena, consoled Ignatius of Loyola, comforted Thérèse of Lisieux, enlivened John XXIII, accompanied Teresa of Calcutta, strengthened Dorothy Day and encouraged John Paul II. It is the same Spirit that it with us today, and your Spirit has lost none of its power. Give me faith.

Help me to remember all your saints. Most of them had it a lot worse than I do. They were frustrated with your church at times, struggled with it, and were occasionally persecuted by it. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake by church authorities. Ignatius of Loyola was thrown into jail by the Inquisition. Mary MacKillop was excommunicated. If they can trust in your church in the midst of those difficulties, so can I. Give me courage.

Help me to be peaceful when people tell me that I don't belong in the church, that I'm a heretic for trying to make things better, or that I'm not a good Catholic. I know that I was baptized. You called me by name to be in your church, God. As long as I draw breath, help me remember how the holy waters of baptism welcomed me into your holy family of sinners and saints. Let the voice that called me into your church be what I hear when other voices tell me that I'm not welcome in the church. Give me peace.

Most of all, help me to place all of my hope in your Son. My faith is in Jesus Christ. Give me only his love and his grace. That's enough for me.

Help me God, and help your church. Amen.

For more possibilities, visit <http://acn.americancatholiccouncil.org/>.