

Opening Prayer for Session Two
of the “Celebrating the Season of Hope” Listening Assemblies

Gathering Song: “All are Welcome” (verses two and four)

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God’s children dare to seek to dream God’s reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God’s grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they’ve known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God’s face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Reading: Matthew 10: 26-28; 34-36 (courage under persecution)

Short Reflection: In this section of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus speaks frankly and starkly about persecutions and discipleship. He says point blank, “Do not be afraid” – yet he also warns that his coming will bring not peace, but the sword. What, in terms of dealing with Church issues, makes you afraid? (Pause for silent reflection)
When you hear that “one’s enemies will be those of one’s household” how does this make you feel? (Pause for silent reflection)

Responsorial Prayer (Psalm 27)

R/ The Lord is my light and my salvation

Reader 1: Though an army encamp against me, my heart does not fear;
Though war be waged against me, even then do I trust. **R/**

Reader 2: Hear my voice, Lord, when I call; have mercy on me and answer me.
“Come,” says my heart, “Seek God’s face”; your face, Lord, do I seek! **R/**

Reader 3: Lord, show me your way, lead me on a level path; Do not abandon me to
the will of my foes; malicious and lying witnesses have risen against me. **R/**

Reader 4: But I believe I shall enjoy the Lord’s good in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord, take courage; be stouthearted, wait for the Lord! **R/**

Prayer Affirmation (based on Nelson Mandela’s 1994 Inaugural 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.

Session Two, Opening Prayer (Celebrating the Season of Hope) (8/13/13)

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.