

Embracing Change, Anchored in Christ
Staff Prayer Service to Begin a New School Year

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. At the outset of this new school year, let us take a few moments to unite ourselves in prayer as a staff, to listen to God's word, to offer God our praise and petitions for our labours, relationships and concerns.

OPTIONAL: OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song, (Sugg: *Though the Mountains May Fall*).

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin with the sign of our redemption: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. And let us pray.

Lord God, we praise you for calling us to share in the work of your Kingdom through our Catholic school. Open our hearts now to receive your word. As we ponder the changes of a new year, may it anchor us more firmly in the truth and joy of Christ, whose risen life that is ours through Baptism. We make this prayer to you in His name. Amen.

And now, let us listen to God's word.

READING

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28: 16-20)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

REFLECTION

Matthew's account of Jesus' ascension is a consoling reminder that Christ is with us as we meet the demands of life and the changes they require along our way. No matter how much things change, Jesus continues to walk with all who work for the spread of His Gospel.

Knowing this, we confidently labour in faith, embracing the changing demands of our times, grounded in the truth of Christ's Gospel, which remains the same in every age. As we answer God's call to work each day, we can embrace new methods for becoming more effective, and new structures for ensuring accountability to those we are called to serve.

Change is at the core of who we are to become as Christians. Jesus makes this clear at the start of his earthly ministry, calling for a change of heart: "Repent (*change your heart*), and believe the Good News!" He calls us to turn away from what keeps us from living, working and loving as God's children

amid the demands and necessities of our time. In so doing, we can embrace new methods and means designed to help us become more effective in our labours for the sake of His Kingdom in every age.

Let us remember that Jesus Himself is walking with us. He continues to enlighten and strengthen us with the gift of His Spirit, to nurture us in word and sacrament, as we place our gifts and talents at the service of young hearts and minds entrusted to our distinctive educational care in our Catholic schools.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

The response to our prayers is, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Let us pray for the Church – that all who follow Jesus will be renewed with confidence in His abiding presence in their labours for the sake of His Gospel amid the changes of our times. We pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the world – for a change of heart among all God's children toward peace, love and respect for one another's human dignity. We pray: *Lord hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for all those who are sick and suffering in our families, parishes, schools and communities – for all their needs, and a change of heart among those who are indifferent to them. We pray: *Lord hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for all those who contribute their gifts and talents to the life of our Catholic school. That buoyed with confidence in Christ's abiding presence, they might embrace required changes as our board grows and develops in meeting the needs of those we serve. We pray: *Lord hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for ourselves – for all our needs as a staff in this coming school year. We pray: *Lord hear our prayer.*

Let us gather up all our prayers – those we have spoken, and those still in our hearts. And let us bring them before God our Father using the prayer that Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

We praise and thank you, O God, for calling each of us to this wonderful work of educating young hearts and minds in the light of the Catholic faith. Help us to embrace the changes required of our hearts and methods as we embark on a new school year. Fill us with the joyful confidence that comes from knowing Christ is with us each day. We ask you this through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen. And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPTIONAL: CLOSING SONG

Please join in our closing song, (Sugg: *Children of the Light, Praise the Lord to the Sound of Trumpet, Lord of All Power*).