

**Re-proclaiming our Distinctiveness with Warmth, Hospitality, Good
Humour and Joy**
Inaugural Leadership Team Meeting Opening Prayer

INTRODUCTION

As we begin our formal preparations for this new school year, let us take a few moments to reflect on our mission and identity as a Catholic school system – to give God our thanks and praise for calling each of us to our roles, and to ask His blessing on our labours in the months ahead.

OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song, *The Summons*, verses 1-3 (<https://hymnary.org/hymn/GG2013/page/899>)

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
And let us pray. Lord God, you have chosen each of us in Christ to live and work your witnesses. Before we were even conceived in our mother's womb, you knew us, loved us and called us to a future radiant with purpose and promise. We turn our hearts to you in thanksgiving for your call. Bless us with your wisdom, courage and peace as we embark on a new year. Strengthen us with hope, that we might continue to proclaim our distinctiveness as sharers in the Church's evangelizing mission – with warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.
And now, let us listen to God's word.

READING

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom 8: 28-39)

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those whom he predestined, he also called; those whom he called, he also justified; those whom he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

“For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

What a comfort to know that God foreknew and predestined each of us in Christ to a future that is bright with hope – to know that nothing can or prevent God from loving us as His children. This is the core of our identity as Christians, and the *raison d'être* for our mission as Catholic

educators. Buoyed with unshakeable confidence in God's loving plans for us, we are impelled to proclaim again and again our distinctive identity with warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who follow Jesus will recognize and promote with one heart and mind God's unfailing love for humanity in Christ.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the world. That all God's children will embrace the deep call to peace that is engraved in the depths of every human heart.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all who suffer and long for hands and hearts reaching out to them as visible signs of God's love – in our families, community and world.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those whom we are called to lead and serve. For their rest, rejuvenation and readiness to take up the tasks of this coming school year.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for ourselves. In thanksgiving for the gift of summer, and in supplication for all that we need to re-proclaim our distinctiveness with warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy throughout this coming year.

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our own personal intentions...

We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we thank you for the wonderful call to live and work as witnesses to Christ in our Catholic schools. We ask you to bless us now as we proceed with our planning for this coming year. Strengthen us by your grace and fill us with your wisdom to proclaim our distinctiveness as sharers in the Church's mission to announce the Gospel - with the warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy of your children and disciples of Jesus, your Son. We make this prayer to you in his most holy name. Amen.

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Please join in our closing song, *The Summons*, verses 4-5 (<https://hymnary.org/hymn/GG2013/page/899>)

The Summons

Capo 3: (D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (Asus) (A)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 Csus C

1 "Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
 2 "Will you leave your-self be-hind if I but call your name?
 3 "Will you let the blind - ed see if I but call your name?
 4 "Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
 5 Lord, your sum-mons ech - oes true when you but call my name.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 B^b F

Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?
 Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?
 Will you set the pris-oners free and nev - er be the same?
 Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?
 Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.

(Em7) (G) (F#m7) (G) (Asus) (A)
 Gm7 B^b Am7 B^b Csus C

Will you let my love be shown; will you let my name be known;
 Will you risk the hos - tile stare should your life at-tract or scare?
 Will you kiss the lep - er clean, and do such as this un - seen,
 Will you use the faith you've found to re-shape the world a - round,
 In your com - pa - ny I'll go where your love and foot-steps show.

(D) (A7) (Bm) (Em7) (G) (D)
 F C7 Dm Gm7 B^b F

will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?"
 Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?"
 and ad - mit to what I mean in you and you in me?"
 through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?"
 Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

The first four stanzas of this ballad-like hymn are understood to be in the voice of Christ, with the fifth reflecting the individual singer's response. Created for this traditional Scottish tune, the text was written to mark the conclusion of a youth volunteer's time of ministry.