



Stewards of God's Gifts

Prayer Service to Open School Council Gathering

INTRODUCTION:

Good evening, and welcome to our prayer to begin this gathering of Renfrew County Catholic school councils. The theme for our prayer is *Stewards of God's Gifts*. Each of us has been chosen by God to serve the body of Christ, and given unique gifts to do so. As members of our school councils, much has been entrusted to us to help guide our young people's growth in faith and learning. As stewards of many gifts that help shape young lives, it is only fitting that we pause at the beginning of our gathering to reflect and give thanks for all God is doing through our service to Renfrew County's Catholic schools.

OPENING SONG:

Please join in singing our opening song, *For the Beauty of the Earth*, verses 1, 2 and 3.

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us begin our prayer: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Lord God, we praise You for having called us to share in the unfolding of Your Kingdom in the lives of those we serve. May our prayer this evening be a joyful reflection of Your goodness, which sustains us in all we do. We ask You this in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

And now, let us be attentive to God's word.

READING:

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 3:14-19)

I bow on my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION:

As members of the baptized, we have been lavishly equipped as stewards of God's gifts for service to the body of Christ. The impact of our service in love ripples through many lives, affecting students, staff members,

families and communities across generations – strengthening the body in ways we may only fully understand in the life to come.

We don't always get the chance to stand back and ponder how our efforts to serve can be so important. In this busy world, we move quickly from one situation to the next in our personal, family and professional lives. St. Paul reminds us that all the good we do is sustained by the Holy Spirit, abundantly poured out on us by God in Christ. This same Spirit grounds and flows through our service to one another. In this way, the small things we do as stewards of God's gifts can be infused with great love.

Knowing this, we can be confident that God is indeed glorified by our stewardship exercised in love. St. Paul reassures us that *God's power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine*. Despite our limitations, God is doing wonders through our service in love. And so we too can proclaim with St. Paul: *"To Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."*

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray for the Church. That all who share a common Baptism might work together for the growth of God's Kingdom. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the world. That all God's children might respond generously to the Holy Spirit's call to oneness in love of God and neighbour. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the sick and suffering of our world. That they might find hope and healing in God's love, reaching out to them in persons dedicated to their comfort and peace.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our Catholic school communities. That all who pray and work for our children's growth in faith and knowledge might be strengthened in faith, hope and love by God's abundant grace.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the young people in our Catholic schools. That they might constantly grow in the love of Christ.

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us now bring before the Lord our own intentions in the silence of our hearts...

We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us unite these prayers with one voice, bringing them before the Father in the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father...

CLOSING PRAYER:

Let us pray: Lord, in Your infinite goodness, You have made us stewards of Your abundant gifts. We ask You to bless our gathering this evening. May it help us continue pouring out these gifts in service to one another in faith, hope and love. We make this prayer to You in the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Lord. Amen.

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

CLOSING SONG:

Please join in our closing song: *For the Beauty of the Earth*, verses 4, 5 and 6.