

Transform All Things in Christ

A faith-sharing process for healing in response to closures, consolidations or transitions.

(Needed: open bible in center, candle, basket, strips of paper and pencils/pens, soft music, songs for singing.)

Opening Prayer:

Leader:

From the letter to the Romans: “for I am certain that neither death or life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future nor powers will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:38-39)

Reader 1:

Gracious God, you have walked with us since our inception, continue to walk with us and teach us your ways even in times of difficulty. Send your Holy Spirit to dwell within us and give us the peace that we yearn for at this time. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Song (optional)

Purpose:

Leader:

Human life is filled with transitions and loss. Some psychologists suggest that learning how to deal with the various losses we all face through life is really what living is about. We take the risk of being emotionally and spiritually wounded if we do not address loss in our lives. Wounds can fail to heal and keep us from growth in other areas of our lives. This can also be true of a community. If members do not take the time to work through a loss as a community, it may prevent the group from moving forward as a community and fulfilling its purpose and mission.

Our faith tradition roots our understanding of transition and loss in the experience of the cross. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, called the Paschal Mystery, we find loss's

deepest meaning and ultimate source for healing. God continues to walk with us in the mystery of every loss and helps us welcome the new life that rises from the tombs of fear, anger and sadness created by such transitions.

We come together to pray, share and reflect on God's Word as we experience this (closure, consolidation, transition). May this time together help us to feel the support of the community and the God of our faith.

Share:

- Recall and describe your initial and continuing reaction to this reality.
- Recall what you loved best or share a memory of the (community, school, parish)?
- Recall a loss you have had in your life: a death, a lost job, a failed relationship. How did you face and deal with that loss? How did your faith help you deal with the loss?

Scripture Reading:

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every purpose under the heavens. . .”

Share: What “time” in life are you experiencing right now?

Reflection:

Leader:

The words of Ecclesiastes remind us of an important truth, that living is a process. We will find in every ending the promise of a new beginning. There is a time and purpose for every step we take. Every moment of our life is sacred

and is no mistake. The journey of the spirit rarely travels down a straight path. Sometimes it is contradictory or even circular. A step forward may require a step back, and sometimes learning requires unlearning. St. Teresa of Avila wrote a beautiful prayer to help us with this understanding. Let us pray together:

All: Let nothing disturb me. Let nothing make me afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes. Patience gains all things. If I have God, I will want for nothing. God alone suffices.

Leader:
What feelings about the (closure, consolidation, transition) disturb you?
Are you willing to surrender those feelings?
(Do not share these questions, they are meant to lead into the ritual.)

Ritual:
(distribute to each person a strip of paper and a pencil/pen. Play soft music while people are writing. Have them put their response in a basket by the Bible.)

Complete this sentence on a strip of paper and then place in basket by Bible.

*Lord, I surrender to you _____
_____ so that I can
experience new life.*

Let us pray together asking God for the strength and courage to accept this reality and trust in the promise that new life can emerge from any death.

Prayer:
God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
forever in the next. Amen.

(The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr)

Closing Song (optional)

(Leader: The basket with the strips of paper should be placed in a sacred place. Periodically lift up the intentions in prayer.)



This prayer service is from the Office for Formation of the Laity, Office for Black Catholics and the Office of Hispanic Ministries, Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

“Assisting parishes to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ”

(Portions of this prayer service came from the Diocese of San Bernardino, Office of Small Faith Communities. Used with permission.)