

## National Youth Sunday 2008

### Ideas for a time of prayer

Here are some ideas for a special time of prayer to reflect the themes of Reclaim the Future. This could be held on Sunday afternoon or evening (if there is no Sunday evening Mass) or on a weekday evening in the week before or after. It could be just for young people or it might be an opportunity to invite members of the parish. Some of the ideas are based on readings of Sunday Mass, which could be used, so it will be an opportunity to reflect further on God's word.

The comments on preparation on page 1 will also apply for this. Some of the suggestions for Sunday Mass could also be used.

### Prayers

#### Idea 1

#### A **Reclaim the Future!** prayer

Brilliant God,  
we celebrate your wonderful world  
and we thank you for the gift of your creation.  
On this National Youth Sunday  
inspire us, we pray,  
**to Reclaim the Future!**  
Help us to see how our actions today  
will make a difference tomorrow.  
And bring us together in faith  
to make that difference a positive thing.  
Amen.

#### Idea 2

You might like to use these prayers in your celebrations of National Youth Sunday. They are based on the **Reclaim the Future!** message given on this year's NYS poster.

*The following prayers can be led by different readers:*

Creator God, we can choose to live differently!  
Inspire us as we make choices  
so that we will recognise the impact our lives have  
on our environment and our fellow human beings.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

Loving God, we can reclaim the future!  
Encourage us to be people of hope  
as we look forwards in faith,  
knowing that we can build a world of justice and peace.  
We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



Brilliant God, we can choose to live in a way that creates a better world for everyone. Help us to know that our individual actions are made in solidarity with our sisters and brothers. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

Wonderful God, you invite us to live simply, to live sustainably, and to live in solidarity with the poor. So help us to respond to that invitation with conviction and generosity. We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

God of justice, listen to us as we pray this day. In the silence of our hearts, we place all our needs before you. (Allow some time for silent prayer.) We pray to the Lord: **Lord, help to reclaim the future!**

*Led by the celebrant:*

God of grace and love, we bring you our prayers, our needs and our hopes. Pour out your blessing upon us today. And help us to reclaim the future: your future. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Idea 3 You could lead the congregation in a more reflective Penitential Litany. For example, highlight the idea that God calls us to wholeness, and to mend a broken world. Use a picture of globe, cut into three pieces, and bring these broken pieces together in a mime, dance or movement as you pray the words, 'Lord, have mercy...' and so on.

Idea 4 Ask a group to think beforehand of some of the ways that we fail to live simply, sustainably or in solidarity with the poor, and name these in a litany of penance. For example:

For the times we've wasted energy...  
For throwing away unused food...  
For turning away from someone in need...  
For over filling our kettles...  
For wasting paper...  
For failing to speak up for the refugee or asylum seeker...  
Lord, have mercy.

## Readings

### **Ezekiel 34:11-12. 15-17**

Idea 1 This passage works well as a simple mimed drama or dance. One person can play the role of the shepherd Lord, who stands amongst his sheep. As the passage is read – slowly and strongly – different lines can be dramatised. For example, in the line, ‘I will rescue them from wherever they have been scattered’, ‘sheep’ can wander round in a confused way, using raised hands to symbolise searching in the darkness, with the Lord collecting each one and returning them together. Movements should be simple but obvious enough to be able to be seen clearly. You may wish to play some gentle, reflective music in the background.

Idea 2 Another option for illustrating this reading is to scatter the different ‘sheep’ across the congregation. This time, nominated people sit throughout the church or worship space and are brought together by the Shepherd who moves amongst the people. The growing flock of sheep can then be brought to the front of the church for the final lines.

### **Matthew 25:31-46**

Idea 1 Following the proclamation of the Gospel a drama group could illustrate the message of the Gospel, highlighting the different actions mentioned by Jesus, and perhaps even suggesting examples of how these actions are or can be achieved by the parish community. (For example, by holding a recycling clothes event, or arranging a food collection for a local homeless shelter.)

Idea 2 Display the Gospel Slides, based on the illustrations by Ellis Nadler, as a way of assisting reflection of the Gospel. (These are available as a PowerPoint file at [reclaimthefuture.org.uk](http://reclaimthefuture.org.uk))

Idea 3 If you’re feeling really daring, why not challenge the congregation to judge themselves. Ask those that consider themselves to be the sheep of the Gospel to move to the right of the church, and those that are self-confessed goats to be on the left. Then invite both groups to think about how they can put into action the words of Jesus.

Idea 4 After the proclamation of the Gospel, consider presenting the following sketch, which interprets the Last Judgement from the perspective of a television news broadcast.

You will need five people to play the different roles:

Angus McCoatUp (news presenter); Sue Stainable (reporter); Larry Lamb (sheep); Theresa Green (special correspondent); Billy Gruff (goat)

## This is the Good News – Sheep and Goats

Angus

This is the Good News. The headlines at six o'clock.  
Bong! Feeling sheepish? It's eternal life for the nation's favourite animal.  
Bong! Get your goat up! Gruff news for selfish beasts.  
Bong! It's the end of the world as we know it. Which side will you end up on?

Good afternoon, I'm Angus McCoatUp.

There was high drama in Jerusalem today as Jesus presented his vision of how the world was ending up. The good Lord divided people up into sheep and goats and had some startling news for them. For the latest, let's cross to our reporter, Sue Stainable.

Sue

Angus, thank you. Well, it's been quite an afternoon here, with renowned messiah Jesus Christ really causing a stir with news of a final judgement. He warned people that they'd be put into groups of sheep or goats depending on how they acted on earth. One of the witnesses to this powerful speech was Larry Lamb. [Turns to Larry] Larry, thanks for joining us.

Larry

That's okay.

Sue

Larry, tell us, what happened here today?

Larry

Well, Sue, Jesus certainly wasn't pulling the *wool* over our eyes. He didn't *mince* his words; he told us quite clearly that we had to do good things for one another.

Sue

What sort of things, Larry?

Larry

Things like feeding the hungry, giving clothes and shelter to the poor, *ewe* know the sort of thing – thinking of and caring for those in need. And, crucially, all, he said we had to do all these things to him.

Sue

Wow, sounds pretty radical, Larry. How did people react?

Larry

Well, they'd *flocked* to see him – it was so busy you couldn't see *past your* own little space. The crowd were pretty divided really. I have to say that some of the goats looked a little *sheepish*, funnily enough.

Sue

What were these goats saying?

Larry

Well, they *bleated* on about how they would definitely do all those things for Jesus – but that they'd never seen him in need.

Sue

And how did Jesus react to that?

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- Larry Oh, he was *mint*. *Source* of all wisdom, isn't he? He told them quite plainly that what they failed to do for others they failed to do to him.
- Sue I bet the goats didn't like that.
- Larry No, Sue, they were *baaa*-rking mad. Especially when he told them they'd be for the *chop*.
- Sue How do you mean, Larry?
- Larry Well, Sue, it seems that people who are too selfish to do good for others are destined to eternal punishment.
- Sue Sounds pretty grim, Larry. Well, thanks for filling us in on those events. This is Sue Stainable in a field, handing you back to the studio.
- Angus Sue, thank you. We can cross exclusively now to one of the goats at the scene with our special correspondent Theresa Green.
- Theresa Thanks, Angus. Well yes, as you can imagine, there's been a pretty strong reaction to these events. Billy Gruff is one of the goats who joins me now. Billy, how do you feel after Jesus' warning?
- Billy I'm shocked by what I've *herd*, Theresa, I don't mind telling you.
- Theresa But surely you realised that you were being selfish and stubborn?
- Billy I think we've been made to look like scapegoats, to be honest. And anyway, Theresa, I think it's okay to look after number one. All that stuff about looking out for others, feeding the hungry and all that – I mean, you've got to be *kidding*, it's just so pointless!
- Theresa Er, is it? I thought Jesus' words were pretty convincing.
- Billy Well, he's really got my goat. If people are poor, it's their own fault. If people get sick – what's that got to do with me?
- Theresa But surely you'd want people to help *you* out if you got into a difficult position? Don't you think it's important to live in solidarity with others?
- Billy I don't know, Theresa, it's just another example of the *nanny* state.
- Theresa So you won't be changing your ways, Billy?
- Billy I'm not convinced – why should I bother?

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



Theresa

Well, Angus, as you can see there's been a stubborn reaction here. Let's just hope Billy and his friends are happy with their decision come judgement day. Back to you in the studio.

Angus

Let's hope he likes the heat, Theresa! Well, you can join in the debate here on the Good News – tell us where you stand by texting in sheep or goat to 80085.

Just time for a quick look at the weather.

[Holds up a picture of a cloud, or just looks up to the sky]

Pretty overcast, but don't worry, the outlook's bright with Jesus!

I've been Angus McCoatUp and this has been the Good News.