

## **Prayer Service for Beginning a New Council Year**

Leader 1 Loving God, You who have created all good gifts, we praise You and thank You for gathering this community together.

You know how different each one of us is. Help us to use those differences in background, in culture, in history and in experience to make visible Your divine and human face, the face which depicts love and compassion for all human kind.

Leader 2 May our deep conviction be in the reality that, together and with all humanity, we compose the Body of Christ in this world and that without any one of us the Body is incomplete. Help us therefore, to be open to one another, to truly listen to one another as we work together during the next year.

Guide us in our decisions; help us to be aware of and relevant to what is happening in our Church and in our world. Keep us conscious of the dignity that Your Son showed to each human being, whether He was dealing with the prostitute, the tax collectors, the Samaritan woman, or the beloved disciple.

Leader 3 Help us to use our frailties and our differences to bring about a more compassionate and understanding world. Make us always conscious that You are to be found in the lives of each of us. Envelope us in the realization that no one of us has all the wisdom but that together, in Your Spirit, we possess power that is capable of changing human events.

Keep us ever-hopeful so that we may be empowered to work unceasingly to see Your Reign in our lives and in the world. Make us aware, as You made Teresa, that You have no body on earth but ours, that you have no hands on earth but ours, that You have no eyes or ears on earth but ours.

Leader 4 Help us pledge our lives to working together with each other in a spirit of unity and love so that we can use the gifts You have given our members to make Your Reign more visible in our Church and in our world.

Help us to realize that all of life is holy ground; therefore all areas are appropriate places for us to do Your work.

ALL We praise You. We thank You. We ask for Your forgiveness and the forgiveness of one another. Send Your spirit to be with us and with our membership as we set out on our course for the coming years. We ask You these favors in the name of Jesus, Your beloved Son and our Redeemer. Amen.