

LITURGY OF HOPE RESOURCE PACK

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*All material in this booklet is available for download on
www.kandle.ie*

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THIS LITURGY?

This liturgy is a prayer service which will include readings, reflections, prayers and song. It is expected that the liturgy will take approximately 45 minutes. The prayer has been prepared by a diocesan appointed group, with the understanding that any necessary adaptations to the prayer can be made by a locally appointed preparation group in each parish.



WHY ARE WE PROMOTING THIS OCCASION OF PRAYER?

As a diocese we are very conscious that the reality of people's lives has changed enormously over the past year. Many people find themselves under huge financial and emotional strain. Across our communities people are faced with a multitude of stresses caused by the changes in our national economy. These changes bring with them not only financial hardship but all the ensuing social and emotional difficulties that arise for people.

Alongside this new reality we also acknowledge the on-going reality for people in our communities. Many people in our midst continue to struggle with bereavement, addiction, illness and depression.

The Advent season stands for us as a season of hope. On December 3rd, the first Thursday of Advent, we want to provide people with an opportunity to come together in a spirit of prayer, solidarity and hope. In this diocese, in this Advent season, this shared moment of prayer in every church across the diocese can be a beacon of light and hope for the people of our communities.

As we prepare to welcome Christ, the light of the world, at Christmas, we can remind ourselves through this prayer that we do have reason to celebrate. We can remember once more that our God became one of us, that our God took on the struggles and pains of humanity and, ultimately, that our God declares that each one of us is precious and holy.

WHAT IS ITS CONNECTION TO THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS GIFT?

In recent years the parishes of the diocese have distributed a Christmas gift. The gift this year is a fridge magnet, upon which is printed an excerpt from a letter of St. Paul. This text stands at the heart of our Liturgy of Hope and will be proclaimed during the liturgy.

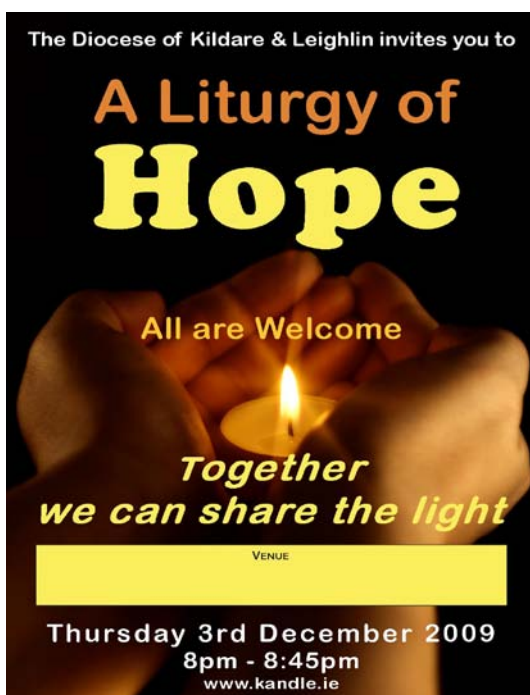
At the end of the Liturgy of Hope people will be invited to take a Christmas gift envelope. This will be the first occasion at which the gift will be distributed. Parishes will continue to distribute the remaining envelopes at the following weekend Masses.

This year's envelope contains the magnet as well as a Christmas card. The card contains a message from the bishop and a prayer for families to pray together before their Christmas meal.

All the content of this year's Christmas gift has been sourced within the diocese, supporting the local economy in difficult times.



PROMOTION



Posters have been provided for every parish to advertise and invite people to this liturgy. The preparation group might give some thought to where these posters are going to be displayed in the local community – perhaps in shops, schools, garages and other local amenities. The *parish bulletin* is another valuable tool for publicising this liturgy.

THE MINISTRIES NEEDED FOR THIS PRAYER

This prayer service draws upon a rich variety of ministers. The following list of possible ministries and ministers is not exhaustive. Whatever the final outcome of ministries and ministers in the local setting, hopefully their participation in the liturgy reflects the richness and diversity of the local worshipping community who gather to pray this liturgy.

Preparation Group:

The diocese has provided a prayer ritual for a Liturgy of Hope but it is the local preparation group that will actually ensure that this ritual becomes an experience of prayer in their particular faith community.

How this liturgy takes flesh will depend on the energy, imagination and preparation of this group. It will be up to them as a group:

- to take this ritual and imagine it in the context of their own place, their own people and their own resources, and to make local adaptations where desired or necessary,
- to draw people in to take on the different roles required for this liturgy,
- to ensure that people have the information they need to carry out their role and are given an opportunity to rehearse where necessary,
- to help ensure that the practical details are covered, for example seeing that prayer aids are photocopied for people that take into account any local changes that have been made by the group.
- to decide how best to advertise this liturgy locally, using the posters that have been supplied as well as the parish bulletin.

Prayer leader:

The prayer leader will in many circumstances be one of the priests of the parish or a member of the parish team. In some cases the prayer leader will be a lay member of the local community.

The prayer leader helps to facilitate the prayer by welcoming and introducing the prayer, setting the pace of the prayer, leading some of the prayers and indicating to people when to sit or stand during the prayer.

All texts for the prayer leader have been scripted and are contained in the master copy of the prayer.

At the beginning of this liturgy the prayer leader lights three candles – as indicated in the prayer service that follows.

Prayer leaders will need to familiarise themselves with the liturgy and to be aware of and work with whoever is carrying out particular ministries within the liturgy.

During the liturgy, the prayer leader will need to be both visible and audible.

We suggest that the text that the prayer leader uses on the night is placed in a suitable folder for use.

Hospitality Ministers:

Every liturgy hopefully begins in a spirit of welcome, friendship and hospitality. This prayer service will benefit hugely before it ever begins from the ministry of a few members of the community welcoming people as they come into the church and giving them whatever they need to help them pray this liturgy – i.e. a candle and a prayer leaflet. These ministers might also help distribute the Christmas gift as people leave the church. Hospitality on the night might also extend beyond the liturgy by, where practical, inviting people to remain for a cup of tea/coffee after the celebration!

Music Ministers:

This liturgy has been designed to put as little demand as possible on local parish music resources. The chosen music should already be familiar to parishes. At a minimum the music of this liturgy could be led by a cantor. Ideally there will also be an accompanist. Parishes that have the local resources may well choose to draw in other singers and instrumentalists to enrich the celebration. Together, music ministers and the local preparation group should also feel the freedom to change the music choices to better suit their own circumstances and resources.



Readers:

A variety of readers is used during this liturgy. It is hoped that this use of a number of readers reflects the fact that this is a liturgy being prayed by the local community.

The following are points within the liturgy when readers can be used:

The second psalm, the New Testament reading, prayers of intercession, the litany of hope.

People to carry and light candles:

During the opening hymn, one person is needed to carry in the Paschal Candle. Having placed the Paschal Candle in its place, this person lights a taper from the Paschal Candle and uses the taper to light three candles that have been placed ahead of time beside the Paschal Candle and to light one candle on the advent wreath.

During the liturgy people's candles will be lit – similar to the lighting of candles during the Easter Vigil. It would be very helpful to have a number of people to bring light from the Paschal Candle to people's candles throughout the church.



Three Monologues:

Three monologues have been scripted for this liturgy. These short monologues require a young adult, a middle aged woman and an older man. An important preparation ahead of time is to ensure that these monologues can be heard on the night. This requires practice & rehearsal on the part of the people delivering them and adequate amplification of their voices where necessary.

After each monologue the prayer leader hands the person one of the three candles that has been lit from the Paschal Candle. When all three monologues have been delivered these three candles are placed before the icon of the Holy Family. This ope involved needed to be informed and rehearsed in this action.

Art & Environment Ministers/ Set-up:

An important task to be done in readiness for this prayer is to ensure that the “things” needed for this celebration are in place and that the Church space itself is prepared in a way that is welcoming and inviting. This ministry is explored further in the next section.

PREPARING THE CHURCH – SOME SUGGESTIONS

As people walk into the church on this Advent night hopefully they will come into a space that is welcoming and has been prepared for them to enter fully into this particular prayer. The *lighting* and *heating* of the church adds to the sense of welcome and can help create the desired atmosphere that supports the prayer.

When preparing this prayer it is important to look at the “*things*” of the liturgy and the *layout* of the church. In this particular prayer we draw upon the *symbols* of the **Paschal candle**, the **advent wreath** and the **icon of the Holy Family**.



Where will these symbols be placed in the church so that they support the ritual being prayed? For example, when placing the Icon of the Holy Family the group will have to take into account that in the opening stages of the liturgy three candles will be placed before this icon. (Note: Each parish received this icon a number of years ago as part of the Christmas campaign)

What will be the quality of the Advent wreath and the candles we use? Are the candles of large enough size to be visible in a large church? What candles will be given to people as they enter the church? Experience has shown that the most suitable are tapers with the protective disc – these are both easier to pass on light and less likely to drip wax.



This group might also consider the following practical details of set up:

- The placement of candles and prayer aids at the back of the church for distribution – in baskets or other suitable container.
- The placement of any necessary microphones.
- A seat within the sanctuary area for the prayer leader, if other than a priest.

SELECTED MUSIC AND ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS

Opening Hymn:

- ❖ Christ be our Light - Bernadette Farrell- Gather Hymnal
- ❖ All are Welcome - Marty Haugen - Gather Hymnal
- ❖ The Light of Christ - Donal Fishel - Alleuia Amen

Quiet Time :

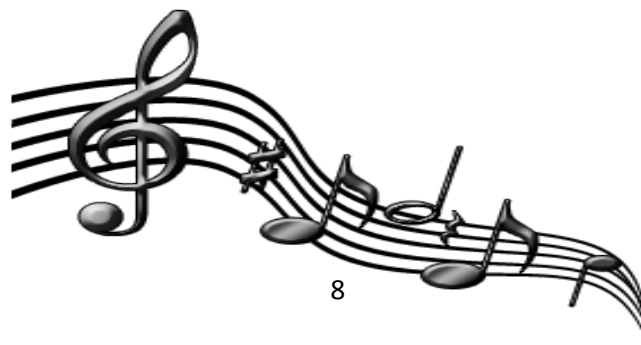
- ❖ You are Mine - David Haas - Gather Hymnal
- ❖ Come to me - Liam Lawton - Healing Song Collection
- ❖ Be not Afraid - Bob Dufford - Gather Hymnal
- ❖ Stand by Me - Tom Kendsia - Clothed in Love Collection

Response to Intercessions:

- ❖ Kyrie, kyrie, eleison

Closing Hymn:

- ❖ Lord of All Hopefulness - In Caelo Hymnal
- ❖ Will you Let Me be your Servant - Richard Gillard - Gather Hymnal
- ❖ A Place at the Table - Lori True - Gather Hymnal
- ❖ How Great Thou Art - Stuart Hine - Gather Hymnal



OPENING MONOLOGUES

After each monologue the prayer leader takes a candle from beside the Paschal Candle & hands it to the person who has just spoken, while the refrain of "Christ be our light" is sung. At the end of all three monologues the speakers together walk over to the Icon of the Holy Family, place their candles in the place before the icon that has been prepared. They then return to their seats.

1. (Teenager/Young Person):

I was always told that if I worked hard, and got my exams all would be well – but it's not well, not well at all. I keep sending out CVs, I want to work - I hate signing on – but I can't get a job anywhere – there are so many people out there all job hunting, they're much more experienced than me and some of them have lost their homes. God* it's very difficult to keep going and believe that all will be well, that I will be ok – I, and many like me, need your help your guidance – we desperately need to experience your Hope during these difficult times.

2. (Mother):

Dear God*, I can't believe the test results are positive. The family are still at school – they need two parents, even the thoughts of all that's ahead – more tests, treatment, it's all unknown territory, it's so frightening – at the moment I beg of you to help me. Lord, hear my prayer, help me to cope, show me the way forward. Please give me the courage to Hope.

3. (Father):

When my son died, my world fell apart. I'll never know why, he was the light of our lives – sport, music, friends. It's been nine years, I think of him every day, I miss him all the time – and the days I don't think of him is because I numb the pain through the bottle – then I'm no help to anyone. God Almighty* help me, help my family – show us how we can have Hope in these dark days and help us to move on with our lives.

**these phrases are intended to be spoken as colloquial expressions rather than as direct addresses to God – a subtle reminder of how often we unconsciously pray to God in times of need...*

LITURGY OF HOPE

GATHERING

Welcome – (The prayer leader or another)
In the name of _____ parish I welcome each of you to this time of prayer. Your presence here tonight is a sign of the strength and the support that we can give each other in times of difficulty.

We gather on this Advent night, in the darkest time of the year, mindful of the many challenges and concerns facing people in our parish, across our diocese and across our country.

On this night we carry these concerns with us and lay them down before God in prayer – they are the struggles of our children, our parents, our neighbours, our friends, our strangers, ourselves.

Yet, in the midst of Winter - when even nature itself seems to be declaring decay - we gather as people of hope. We gather as people who know that in the very darkest hour our God is with us. And our God is a God of light, a God whose light is stronger than any darkness...

Together, as one community united in prayer this night, let us stand and welcome in song the God of light among us... **(Please stand)**

Opening hymn & procession of light: **Christ be our Light**
During the opening hymn one person carries the paschal candle – slowly - through the assembly & places it in the receptacle. Once in place they take a taper and light it from the Paschal Candle. They then use the taper to light the three candles that are in place beside Paschal Candle and to light one candle on the Advent wreath. They then return to their place.

Once the opening hymn is sung and the three candles and the advent wreath are lighting the prayer leader introduces the monologues in these or similar words:

Leader: We now take a few moments to acknowledge the reality facing many people in our community. These words, though scripted for tonight, might begin to put before us what many of us are experiencing in these days ... please be seated **(Please be seated)**

Monologues –
3 people representing situations of today come to the front of the sanctuary area...microphones as required – after each monologue the following response is sung –

“Christ be our light, shine in our hearts, shine in our darkness, Christ be our light, shine in our Church gathered today.”

At the end of each monologue the prayer leader gives one of the candles beside the Paschal Candle to the speaker as the refrain is being sung...

At the end of all three monologues the three speakers together bring their candles and place them before the icon of the Holy family. The speakers then return to their place...

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer leader: We sing together God’s word to us this night...

Psalm 22: Sung

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want.
He makes me down to lie.
In pastures green he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make.
Within the paths of righteousness,
E’en for his owns name sake.

Yea, though I walk through death’s
dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;

For thou art with me, and thy rod,
And staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished,
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup over flows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me:
And in God’s house for ever more
My dwelling place shall be.

Pause

Psalm 26: Recited

R. The Lord is my saving light; whom should I fear?

1. The Lord is my saving light;
whom should I fear?
God is my fortress;
what should I dread? **R.**

2. One thing I ask the Lord,
one thing I seek:
To live in the house of God
every day of my life. **R.**

3. I know I will see how good God is
while I am still alive.
Trust in the Lord. Be strong.
Be brave. Trust in the Lord. **R.**

Pause

New Testament Reading:

A Reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried. Nothing can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

QUIET TIME:

Leader: Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ. Let us take a moment of quiet now and in this time may each of us bring our own cares and concerns before the Lord who loves us...

(Instrumental or sung music might accompany this time, for example "You are mine" – David Haas or other music suggested above)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Leader: In sure and certain hope that our God listens to the petitions of his people, let us stand and bring our prayers to God....

Reader: For those given the responsibility of civil leadership in our country
That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with wisdom and right judgement.
We pray to the Lord. *(Lord hear our prayer – or sung Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison)*

For those called to lead us in faith
That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with a prophetic voice to raise up
God's people
We pray to the Lord.

For those who have lost their jobs and for those who face the threat of losing
their jobs
That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with hope...
We pray to the Lord.

For families and people living on their own who are struggling to make ends meet

That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with courage

We pray to the Lord.

For the people in our midst who feel vulnerable and alone

That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with a sense of friendship and connection with those around them

We pray to the Lord.

For those in our communities making choices in their lives about alcohol and drugs

That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with the desire to turn away from destructive choices and towards ways of life

We pray to the Lord.

For the sick and the dying and those who care for them

That the love of Christ will fill their hearts with his healing presence

We pray to the Lord.

ACCEPTING AND SHARING OF THE LIGHT

Leader: We have brought our cares before the Lord.

On this Advent night we stand as people of hope.

And on this night we choose to let this hope shine in our midst for all to see as we say together....

*Lord,
the light I choose to let into my life today
is based on my hope in you.
It is a small flame,
but I believe that it can dispel a bit more darkness tonight.
I join this flame to the flames of each individual here,
for it is through us
that Christ's light will shine
in the midst of the struggles and cares of the world.*

Leader: I invite you to take your candles now and to help spread the light within this church as people go among you bringing the light from our Paschal Candle.

(the light is taken from the paschal candle by a number of people and brought out to the church to be passed on – music – sung solo/congregational, instrumental...)

LITANY OF HOPE

(when the music is finished and all the candles are lit a reader comes forward to lead the following litany...)

With the eyes and hearts of faith we look upon our world and we proclaim to our God:

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We acknowledge Your beauty and goodness in every created thing.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We move out of the shadows to follow you and walk in the light of true life.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We celebrate Your compassion as revealed by so many who care for the poor and marginalised.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We stand together in solidarity with and care for one another, united in faith and hope.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We prepare to welcome Your coming once more into the very heart of our lives.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

We look forward to our Christmas feast as people who believe that You, our God, dwells among us in love.

R. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come, you are our light and our hope.

LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us: Our Father

INVITATION TO TAKE PARISH GIFT:

LEADER: (these or similar words, depending on local practice...)

As you leave tonight we invite you take home a gift from the parish. As in previous years we invite you to take one for your home and perhaps another for someone who could not be with us tonight. This year's gift is a fridge magnet that contains the words of our Reading tonight as well as a Christmas card with a greeting from Bishop Jim. On the back of the Christmas card is a prayer that you might like to say before your Christmas dinner...

(AN INVITATION TO A CUP OF TEA IF BEING PROVIDED COULD BE DONE AT THIS POINT)

CLOSING PRAYER

LEADER: Let us pray...

Ever loving and faithful God,
Your will is justice for the poor, peace for the afflicted,
Strength for the fearful and weak.

May the light that we have shared this night
Go with us as a source of blessing and hope in the days ahead.

May it remind us
Of the common bond of love and faith
that we share as sisters and brothers in Christ.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God

CLOSING HYMN

Lord of All Hopefulness

(at the end of the hymn the prayer leader leaves their place to join with the rest of the congregation as they depart)