

Policy for Prayer Ministry

June 2019

Introduction

Prayer ministry is the service of parishioners praying with another person for their needs. The request for prayer might be for a wide variety of reasons and not always for healing. We wish to give every human being their value and dignity and we desire to support and love one another. We wish to do this in a way that takes particular care of those who may be vulnerable because of age, illness, current or past life experiences.

Parish Prayer Ministry Team - Safe Running

- Develop a risk assessment document for the prayer ministry (use or adapt the diocese pro-forma). The leader needs to ensure that each involved parishioner understands the part which covers their role and activity. The risk assessment form needs to be signed by the Parish Priest.
- Follow the safe recruitment process with the parish safeguarding rep. Each parishioner in prayer ministry needs to complete a role application form, with references, based on a job description (use or adapt the diocese pro-forma), and the application needs to be approved by the Parish Priest.
- Additionally, each parishioner needs to attend both the diocese Vulnerable Adult Training (and refresher every 3 years) and the diocese Prayer Ministry Training.
- All those praying with others should be leading an active Catholic life including going to Confession regularly, a daily life of prayer and a personal relationship with the Lord.
- Only offer prayer in pairs, never on your own. One person of the pair must be of the same sex of the recipient
- Do not pray with under-age children alone - their parent must be present and give permission. If a child is presented to you as bad/evil/in need of prayer because of their behaviour then this is a Child Protection Issue, and no praying should take place. This is quite different from a parent asking for prayers for a sick child in hospital or at home, with a known physical illness.
- The prayer must be offered in an open space or in a room with an observation glass pane in the door
- Be aware of your physical presence – for example having fresh breath, not rocking when praying
- Before the prayer ministry starts, those praying should gather together and praise God, thanking Him for each person that will come, invite the Holy Spirit to come, pray for protection and rebuke any other powers (see suggested prayers later in document)

During the time of praying with others

- Give your Christian name, and ask for their Christian name
- Ask the person to tell you what they would like prayer for. Don't ask questions as the person doesn't have to tell you everything. If they ask whether they can share something with you in total confidence, gently make it clear that if it is something that affects safeguarding/the law then you cannot promise

- There is no particular reason to lay a hand on the person's shoulder during the time of prayer. It is possible to do this but it is essential that you ask the person if they would be happy for you to lay your hand gently on their shoulder or forehead while you pray. This must be a light touch so there can be no accusation of pushing. This must always be the only physical contact, even if the person is crying
- Ask the person if they have experienced prayer ministry before. Explain to the person what you will do and that they do not need to do or say anything
- Keep your prayer simple. Start by praying to the Holy Spirit for guidance & wisdom
- One of the pair prays aloud and the other person prays in silence. The pair may swap roles. If one of you is praying in tongues, please pray silently unless you feel you can ask the person beforehand if they give permission for you to pray in tongues
- Keep your eyes open so that you can see if anything in particular is happening
- You can all be either seated or standing. Seating is more straightforward. If standing, it is good practice to be at a right angle to the recipient, and be careful not to make the person feel claustrophobic
- Be aware that it is possible that the recipient may sway and want to fall to the floor and have a period of conscious relaxation which is called "Resting in the Holy Spirit". Therefore, if you want to pray standing, you need to think through how you could "catch" someone who might start to fall and gently assist them to the ground. Do not suggest or encourage it. You are still responsible for that person whilst on the floor. You need to think as a prayer team how you will handle this situation and have an extra person to supervise this
- Do not give advice or any counsel. If you offer a Word of Knowledge or image then ensure it is just an offer and the person should not feel they have to accept it, and after all you may be wrong
- Seek help from the Prayer Group Leader or Parish Priest if you are out of your depth, or when something happens that you do not understand
- End the time of prayer, ensuring the person is not in a worse state than at the beginning, with an obvious final prayer

After Prayer Ministry

- Confidentiality and privacy are very important – do not share with any others unless of course there is a safeguarding issue
- When all the prayer ministry is finished, it is important that the prayer team gather together to thank the Lord, and use prayers such as those suggested below, to sever any spiritual links.

If praying with others after mass

Ask your parish priest to gather the prayer ministers at the front of the church at the end of mass, lay his hands on you and give a blessing. Then go to the appointed place for the prayer ministry.

Suggested Prayers for the team to say together before Prayer Ministry

Prayer of Praise

I praise, thank, exalt, magnify, glorify, worship and adore You Lord for all You have given me and those who I will pray with today ...

Prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to prepare the way

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit, we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of protection, to rebuke any evil spirits that may try and interfere

Hail Mary, full of Grace ...

Cover me with the protective Precious Blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ (Col 1: 20)

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle.

Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray;

and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host,

by the power of God

cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits

who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Suggested Prayers to say after Prayer Ministry

After praying over people, it is important to gather the team together to say a Cleansing Prayer, such as:-

Lord Jesus we thank you for this ministry you have entrusted to us, unworthy as we are, and we thank you for each person that you have sent to us. We now release each one of these brothers and sisters to you and leave them in your hands. If any spiritual links remain between them and us, we now, in the Name of Jesus, sever them with the Sword of the Spirit. In the Name of Jesus we bind any evil spirits that would seek to oppress us as a result of our ministry and command them to depart.

and to praise the Lord, such as:-

Glory be to the Father ...