

Background and Basic Format Christ Our Hope Hour of Prayer

(An initiative by which men of the Archdiocese gather to pray on the First-Fridays of 2009, in response to a stressful time in our State and Nation.)

In any parish that may begin this prayer practice, it is suggested that the leader of the hour first give a simple orientation that would cover the genesis and specific purpose of this prayer hour before the Lord.

As to the genesis, a number of men from various parishes around the Archdiocese recently sensed a need to gather to pray and intercede for our economic, political and spiritual situation. Paco Gavrilide's men's group "the Upper Room" decided to meet at 6:00am for an hour of prayer on each First Friday, beginning with twenty-five men in the lower chapel at St. John's Center for Youth & Family on the first Friday of the new year, January 2nd. Their experience seemed to confirm that this endeavor was quite fitting.

Now, the intention is to encourage other Catholic Men's Groups to arrange and lead the "Christ Our Hope" Hour of Prayer in their respective parishes throughout the year, 2009. There are currently several other parishes that have committed to hosting such a prayer hour. The names and locations of these parishes are posted elsewhere on the www.christschosen.com website.

Proposed Format

(see the companion "Elements..." file on this website for a suggested timeline and a description of four ministry roles that individuals can cover.)

1. Both men and women are invited to assemble from 6:00 to 7:00am on the First Fridays of each month in 2009.
2. The setting could be a Eucharistic chapel, the main church, or another parish facility that his suitable for prayer.
3. The session opens with a song or two, using available hymnals or songsheets.
4. At least 20-25 minutes is then spent in silent prayer.
5. One of the leaders offers a 5-7 minute reflection on a spiritual topic pertinent to the purpose of our coming together in prayer and

- intercession. This can be done by reading from a spiritual book, from the Liturgy of the Hours, making some comments based upon a Scripture passage, etc.
6. Following the reflection, and after a few-minutes of silence, petitions of intercession are offered, beginning with a set of written prayers. Then, participants are encouraged to pray out spontaneously for their own needs and the needs of others. The time of spontaneous intercession may fill out the end of the hour.
 7. The session closes with the Lord's prayer and then a final song.

Pastoral comments:

- Having two or three men who can alternate in leading the prayer session in the morning would be advisable.
- If one of the brothers is capable of choosing the songs and leading the singing, it would help in facilitating this aspect of the session.
- Please consider the suggested format as a guideline rather than a rigid rubric. The goal is for men to begin to express their prayerful trust in God, given the many serious needs that face us.
- This arrangement amounts to an investment in helping men learn how to pray in a faith-filled manner and a persevering spirit.
- Some themes for meditation and reflection that may apply here are: Hope, trust in God, genuine repentance, loving one another, courage, praying with expectant faith, listening to the voice of the Lord... and the like.
- Invite your Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Deacon to participate if they would like to do so. We are not asking them to lead it, but to participate in it. If they want to lead it, at least sometimes, that is fine too. However, this is essentially an initiative coming from the laymen involved in men's ministry throughout the Archdiocese.