**Advent Prayer Service Synod Experience**

**OPENING SONG:** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

**OPENING PRAYER:**

**Leader:** Prayer for Communal Discernment

Good and loving God, our source of love and light -
Thank you for bringing us together today
in a spirit of generosity.
May we honor one another
by keeping an open mind.
May we voice our truth
and listen with an open heart.
May we discern your will
to unite in fruitful outcome.
We ask for your wisdom and grace,
to use our talents for the betterment of others.
With gratitude, we offer this prayer in your name.

**All:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Explanation of the Synod**

Like many of the words that we use in our tradition, Synod is an ancient Greek word that means assembling to determine the path forward. Pope Francis is inviting the Church to gather and to listen to each and every Catholic to find the Church’s path forward at this time in our history. During adoration today, we will take time in prayer to ready our hearts with answers to the Pope’s questions about our church and fully open ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**Images of the Holy Spirit**

There are many ways the Holy Spirit has been revealed to us throughout the ages.  There have been many images of the Holy Spirit used in Scripture.

Breath: The best translation for the term “Spirit” is “Ruah” or breath, air or wind.  The Holy Spirit is the “Holy Breath of God.”  This image is seen in various places in the Scriptures.

**READING:** (Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-10)

A reading from the prophet Isaiah:

Comfort, comfort my people,
   says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
   and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
   that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD’s hand
   double for all her sins.

 A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare
  the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert
   a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
   every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
   the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
   and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

 A voice says, “Cry out.”
 And I said, “What shall I cry?”

 “All people are like grass,
   and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
   because the breath of the LORD blows on them.
   Surely the people are grass.
The grass withers and the flowers fall,
   but the word of our God endures forever.”

 You who bring good news to Zion,
   go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
   lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
   say to the towns of Judah,
   “Here is your God!”

The Word of the Lord

**All:** Thanks be to God.

***Take a moment to allow the Holy Spirit to prompt an awareness of the aspects in the church’s life and where His gentle breath needs to breath in her.***

*(At this time, hand out or display a power point of the question)*

**RESPONSE:**

**Left:** When comforts all but fail

To quell the soul’s desire for peace

We look to You, expectantly

Whose gaze brings waiting hearts release.

**Right:** The humble, poor and tired

For whom you are the soul’s Great Rest

Will find their yearning satisfied

When you. O Lord become their guest.

**Left:** And so the time is now

To straighten paths once gone astray

To welcome you with open hearts

In those we meet throughout the day.

**Right:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful

and kindle 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.

**Closing Song:** The Summons *John L. Bell & Graham Maule*

**Hear Us, O God**

"Know that the LORD is God,
he made us, webelong to him,
we are his people, the flock he shepherds."
- Psalm 100:3

Hear us, O God.  Hear our families of mixed status. Hear those who wait in fear of separation, burdened with anxiety.

Hear us, O God. Hear all who are called "foreigner."  Hear us when we experience cold stares or mistrust because of the color of our skin or the language we speak.

Hear us, O God. Hear our brothers and sisters who sweat in the fields. Hear those who work long, backbreaking hours growing food, serving us at restaurants, and cleaning our homes.

Hear us, O God. Hear those young people who were brought to this country as children.  Hear their dreams for a future of hope.

Hear us, O God. Hear vulnerable women and children. Hear those who have fled domestic violence, rape, or gangs to seek safety in this country.

Hear us, O God. Hear those who work in the shadows and are exposed to exploitation and harassment. Hear those for whom just pay for a just day's work is always uncertain.

Hear us, O God. Hear us as we raise our voices. Hear your people as we seek laws and policies to protect the vulnerable and welcome the stranger.

Standing together—a single yet diverse body of Christ, we pray:  Shepherd of the flock, hear us. Be with us, restore us, and strengthen us, for we belong to you.

**Prayer of the Synod on Synodality**

*We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.*

Thank you for coming. Please join us in the Hall for fellowship and small group conversation.