

Perpetual Day of Remembrance

Resources for schools and all church agencies, groups

Wednesday September 15, 2021

Shine the Light of Christ

Ode to the Light of Christ

Introduction

Background information

National Child Protection Week

Conclusion

Prayer Resources for all agencies, groups and communities

Shine the Light of Christ Vigil

Prayer suggestions

Prayer Resources for Schools

Introduction

Organisation and preparation

Prayer options



Ode to the Light of Christ

Come, let us walk in the Light of the Lord.
Let us not fear the past
when our hearts were heavy.
Let us Shine the Light of Christ. (Is. 2:5)

Come, let us bring light from the darkness.
Let us make evil good
and find sweet in the bitter.
Let us Shine the Light of Christ. (Is. 5:20)

Come, let us weep together
when the light grew dark with the clouds,
from the darkness and distress.
Let us Shine the Light of Christ. (Is. 5:30)

Come, let us walk with our brothers and sisters,
those who have walked in darkness.
Let them see the great Light of God
and let us Shine the Light of Christ. (Is. 9:2)

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Introduction

2021

As we take another step into our experience of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*, we begin with what is immediately relevant to this year. The Background information below explains the rationale, intention and story of this day.

COVID-19 continues to impact our prayer and worship response. Consequently, there is little change in the resource this year. It is hoped this provides those taking responsibility for marking the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* in schools, agencies and groups an opportunity to deepen their appreciation of its meaning, and their familiarity with the prayer and worship options. Communities might consolidate and develop what was done last year.

Information in the '2020' section of the background information on p. 4-5 remains important in this process of consolidation. Bishop Bill's [decree on Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday](#) and the [accompanying letter](#) provide a concise and pastoral insight into the meaning and responsibilities of the day.

As always *National Child Protection Week* leads into our marking of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*. Further information is on p. 5.

National Child Protection week highlights the positive changes that have been made over many years. These include changes to policies, processes and procedures. These external changes need to be accompanied by a deeper change of heart so they become more than a legislative requirement to tick boxes. When they express our deep-set attitudes and values these actions will be natural and instinctive. The *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* seeks to bring about this deeper change of heart in all of us.

The Healing & Support Team – Zimmerman Service is available should any of this cause distress for any person. Please ring 49230636.

Background

2017

As part of [Lina's Project](#), Bishop Bill Wright established September 15 as a *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* throughout the diocese. Such a day holds before us our history of child sexual abuse and the reality of its continual unfolding in the lives of those directly and indirectly affected.

The intention is that this day be marked in a variety of ways including survivor led events which will develop from year to year. It is hoped these events provide an opportunity for all of us to stand with survivors.

It is equally important that the Church mark this day with prayer, ritual and worship. As a people of faith, commissioned by Jesus to live in remembrance of him, we know the importance and power of remembering. Our remembering not only functions to ensure that such abuse never happens again. More than that, our liturgical remembering is permeated with the light of Christ's Paschal Mystery becoming the source of our ongoing conversion

and hope. It is only with the power of this light that our eyes and hearts will be open to discerning the cultural change necessary for the Church to be ever more truly a sign and instrument of God's reign right here and right now.

Our Church response is shaped by our liturgical wisdom and experience, and by the light of the Paschal Mystery. It too will grow and develop from year to year.

2018

2018 saw a small start in the way the Church community marked the day. Resources were provided to all parishes for the celebration of Mass on Sunday September 16. The focus was on Mass at the Sacred Heart Cathedral where Bishop Bill presided.

2019

In 2019 the Diocesan Liturgy Council established a Perpetual Day of Remembrance Standing Committee. This committee worked in collaboration with Healing and Support Services, the Office of Safeguarding and Bishop Bill. The Church response was named **Shine the light of Christ**. This title captures the essence of the Church's mandate to repent, believe and proclaim the Good News, especially in the darkest places of our human experience. Three resources were developed to enable the participation of all people irrespective of their affiliation with a parish community: a resource for parishes, another for Church agencies, group and schools, and another for individuals and households.

September 15 fell on a Sunday and the parish resource focused on Sunday Mass. The Standing Committee finalised its work by undertaking an evaluation by all members of the community. The feedback though small, was collated to inform the future development of the Church's response to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*.

2020

The Diocesan Liturgy Council's Standing Committee established in 2019 gathered again to prepare resources for 2020. A development this year has been the establishment of the 'Perpetual Day of Remembrance and National Child Protection Week Coordinating Committee'. This has enhanced consultation with Healing and Support Services, the Office of Safeguarding and provided a platform for further consultation with Bishop Bill and Fr Andrew Doohan, the Vicar General.

2020 has also presented its own challenge – the COVID-19 pandemic – which continues to impact all aspects of life across the nation. Schools, parishes and households are experiencing uncertainty, grief, change and restrictions. The primary concern remains the safety and wellbeing of communities and individuals. In the midst of these circumstances it is important that our commitment to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* remains strong.

Because of COVID-19 it has not been possible to facilitate a survivor led event this year. Without the opportunity to gather, survivors and their families will acknowledge the day as is most appropriate for them.

The significant development in the Church response for 2020 is Bishop Bill's decision to [decree](#) *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday* as a feast day to be inscribed in the diocesan liturgical calendar. It will be celebrated on the Sunday of or prior to September

15 replacing the Mass for the Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. This has enabled us to determine the readings and prayers used for the celebration of Mass on this Sunday.

This decree will assist parishes in resolving clashes with other events as experienced last year. Parishes will be able to ensure that sacraments of initiation, first reconciliation, altar server graduations and other events are scheduled for other weekends.

True to the nature of Catholic prayer and liturgy, some aspects of our Church response will remain the same every year, other things will change, and new things will be included as we continue to change and grow.

The *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* continues to push us to think deeply about what it means to be and live Catholic. 'Catholic' is a big word. Our unity is marked by enormous diversity. As noted in some of the evaluations received last year, this diversity requires great sensitivity in discerning our communal faith response. No matter what we do, some will appreciate it and some will find it challenging and even offensive. Some want us to keep remembering our history of child sexual abuse and some find the constant reminders harmful.

The following resources seek to respect this diversity by giving communities and individuals a range of choices, from Sunday Mass to something as simple and powerful as turning on a light.

As a faith community it is important for all of us to recognise that this day responds to a deep need in some of our brothers and sisters. As members of the community of Jesus' disciples – irrespective of our affiliation with the worshipping community – we stand together, with survivors, against all forms of abuse and for cultural change that will promote fullness of life for all. As the saying goes, 'It takes a village ...' We need every glimmer of light if together we hope to **Shine the light of Christ** into this dark space: a light of solidarity, a light of prayer, a light of courage and commitment to change, a light of healing and hope.

National Child Protection Week

National Child Protection Week is not part of the diocesan *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*. However, as an annual national event it stands as an important prelude which helps prepare us for the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*. This year *National Child Protection Week* runs from Sunday September 5 to Saturday September 11. The 2021 theme is **Every child in every community needs a fair go**.

Our diocesan community is committed to support National Child Protection Week. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and promote the great work that has been done and continues to be done in this space. Parishes and schools have been sent an array of resources by Connie Peate and Sophie Dougherty from the Office of Safeguarding. Please click on this [link](#) for more information.

Conclusion

Overall, we recommend keeping it simple.

We will mark the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* on September 15 every year. If you and your community think of other ways to assist schools, agencies and group to mark this day, please send your ideas to the Liturgy Office via the email link below.

There will also be a review for people to complete after the day.

Thank you for your commitment to stand with our brothers and sisters who are suffering and to shine the light of Christ in our Church and neighbourhoods. Together we can be a sign of hope.

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Prayer Resources

for all Church agencies, groups and communities

Note additional resources for schools beginning on p.11

There is an option here and in the school section for everyone!

Shine the Light of Christ Vigil

Churches, Schools, Diocesan Agencies and associated groups, individuals, house mates, families and communities.

To draw a line of continuity with *National Child Protection Week*, we invite you to begin our *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* with a Shine the Light of Christ Vigil.

All communities are invited to turn/leave on a light on Saturday night September 11, the last day of *National Child Protection Week* and the Vigil Mass for *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday*.

This is a simple and public way to show we stand with survivors, their families and friends, and that we are committed to **Shine the Light of Christ** on this issue. See the *Prayer for Turning on the Light of Christ* below.

Schools and agencies may be able to organise someone, or a small group, to turn on the light of Christ and pray the prayer. This would be easy for primary schools adjacent to the parish church. Someone may be able to do that after the Vigil Mass, or some members of the Mass community may move from the church to the school to do it.

It is also hoped that the families who comprise schools, agencies and groups would be encouraged to do this in their homes. This would help to 'shine the light of Christ' more widely.

Prayer for turning on 'the light of Christ'

If there is more than one person pray the dialogue as usual. If you are alone, you might also say the response and omit 'Let us pray.'

Person 1: The light of Christ shines in the darkness

Response: and the darkness shall never overcome it.

Let us pray

God with us,

you have made us in your image

and filled us with the breath of your divine life.

Through the life of Jesus

you show us the way to proclaim the greatness of your love in our lives.

As darkness falls may these lights remind us
of our mission to shine the light of your love
on the darkness of our Church and world.

Create a clean heart in us O God.

Where people are disempowered
may we shine the light of your saving wisdom.
Where there is privilege and prestige
may we shine the light of your humility.
Where there is dishonesty and denial
may we shine the light of your truth.
Where transparency doesn't exist and agendas are hidden
may we shine the light of your integrity.
Where there is fear
may we shine the light of your courage.
Where there is judgement
may we shine the light of your compassion.
Where there is disrespect
may we shine the light of your love.
Where people feel silenced
may we shine the light of your word.
Where people feel excluded
may we shine the light of your acceptance.
Where there is sin
may we shine the light of your forgiveness.

Create a clean heart in us O God.

For turning off the lights

Day has dawned.
As we turn off our lights
we commit to shining the light of Christ
in all we do throughout our day.



'Ode to the Light of Christ' by Fiona Duque

Fiona Duque from St Bede's Catholic College Chisholm has written a beautiful *Ode to the Light of Christ*.

This can be used for personal or communal prayer, or as part of a more formal prayer. If the latter, in keeping with the traditional way we proclaim an Ode, for example on Anzac Day, we recommend that it be read by one person and listened to by the community. **See p. 2.**

This Ode will remain one of the permanent features of the Church response to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*.

Sunday Mass for September 12 (including the Saturday night Vigil)

As previously indicated, in 2021, *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday* falls on Sunday September 12.

As a community of faith we can do nothing better than bring the diocesan *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* to our celebration of eucharist; to join our story of abuse and suffering to Christ's offering, that the light of the mystery of Christ's dying and rising will convert our hearts and lead us forward in faith and hope.

Please invite the members of your community to join the parish Mass on this weekend. They will need to check with the parish regarding attendance requirements because of COVID-19.

The text for this Mass is available in the parish resource on the diocesan [website](#).

Mass for September 15 – Our Lady of Sorrows (Memorial)

September 15 falls on Wednesday this year. It is the Twenty-Fourth Week of Ordinary Time and the memorial for Our Lady of Sorrows.

Some people may like to join the community for Mass on the day. Parish Mass times can be found on the diocesan [website](#) or the Diocesan [App](#).

Given COVID-19 it would be advisable to ring the parish to check the Mass times.

Song: *If not Now* by Carrie Newcomer

Carrie Newcomer and her manager have given us permission again to use her beautiful song 'If Not Now' **in prayer and worship associated with the 2021 Day of Perpetual Remembrance.**

The song is not about abuse. It is about a change of heart. Those who used it in 2019 and 2020 found it very meaningful.

You might consider the following options

- Permission includes the use of the video available [here](#).
- The song can be played from various music platforms and also purchased. You might like to do that in return for Carrie's generous response to our request to use her work.

Listening to this song or watching the video is a very prayerful experience for individuals and communities.

Some of Carrie's other songs are also a rich source for reflection and prayer.

Prayer Resources for Schools

Introduction

Marking the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* is challenging for all of us. We appreciate that this is even more so for school communities and that staff are consequently hesitant.

In November 2020 members of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance and National Child Protection Week Co-ordinating Committee* engaged in conversation with a focus group of School Principals who were representative of the diversity of schools. This was organised by Brian Lacey (Assistant Director), a member of the Co-ordinating Committee. It was an invaluable conversation in which honest sharing broke open the challenges and opportunities of marking both *National Child Protection Week* and the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* in schools.

The *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* presents most challenges. The Principals in the focus group expressed a desire to lead in this space and a commitment to mark the day as most appropriate for their school. Indeed, the Principals were looking to do more than this resource asks, talking about 'embedding' prayer and worship across the week.

As we have continued to reflect on this Focus Group conversation, we want to clearly say that at this stage the hope is for schools to have **ONE prayer** to mark the day simply and appropriately for both staff and students. Ideally this would be on 15 September or, if necessary, on another day in the same week.

As we continue to find our way in this space, we can explore ways of 'embedding' this more deeply in the coming years, when hopefully we are not so consumed and constrained by COVID-19.

COVID-19 continues to impact our prayer and worship response. Indeed, the ongoing COVID roller coaster has meant we have been unable to action some of the suggestions made by Principals, particularly for dialogue with all Principals and more support to primary Religious Education Co-ordinators and secondary Ministry Co-ordinators. There has been no opportunity this year to fit this issue into already crammed Assembly Day agendas for these groups.

Because feedback indicated that the direction taken last year was helpful and due to the continuing complexity of COVID life, there is little change to the resources this year. It is hoped this continuity provides those taking responsibility for marking the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* the opportunity to deepen their appreciation of the meaning of the day, and their familiarity with the prayer and worship options. Schools are encouraged to consolidate and develop what was done last year.

As discussed with Principals, the resource endeavours to provide simple options that offer enough guidance and support to free staff to identify the most appropriate way to mark the day in schools.

Feedback affirmed the need for two different approaches – one for staff and one for students – and the preference for marking the day with students in class/home room groups

rather than larger assemblies. Such groups enable simple and meaningful prayer that engages students and staff in a way that is sensitive to their reality and remains COVID safe.

It may be helpful to pray with staff on Tuesday September 14, as a way of preparing them for prayer with their class group on Wednesday.

Following is a 'ritual outline' followed by a number of prayer options that can be inserted into the ritual outline. It is hoped the options accommodate the needs of different school communities and classes. Some people will develop their own responses. We recommend keeping it simple and doing **one** thing.

Schools are important ...

As outlined in the previous pages, the focus of the Church response to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* is the change or conversion that is at the heart of God's call to discipleship. We remember the harm that has been done for the sake of this change.

The need and desire for personal and communal change emerges when we encounter Jesus, the one who shows us how to live a good human life. The more I know and love Jesus, the more I want to become the best person I can be, and the more we want to become the best community we can be, radiating the all-inclusive love and mercy of God. Our task is cultural change and that's the hardest task we face.

School communities are key to forging the path of cultural change which is not only the intent of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance* but also the imperative of the Gospel 'That all may have life and have it to the full'. (Jn 10:10)

The school community is the ideal place to shape young hearts and minds – children, teenagers and young parents – according to the heart and mind of God. As a Gospel focused community seeking always to embody the mercy and forgiveness of God, the school is the safe place where young and old experience the freedom that comes from being sorry and being forgiven, being other focused and being community focused. The school is the place where societal change begins.

Faced with such possibilities and opportunities, as people of faith ... we pray. We pray about the everyday things we all do that can leave others feeling hurt and knocked about. The 'Prayer for turning on the light of Christ' (p. 7-8) focuses on some of these behaviours and prays for the grace to be changed so we better shine the light of Christ. We can do this unafraid because as people of faith we turn to our God who we know is full of mercy.

Schools are privileged places that hold the promise and hope of a culture renewed in the light of Christ. Schools do this every day. Please seize this additional opportunity with both hands and see where the journey takes you. It is important to all of us.

Organisation

Pastoral Care is a strong dimension in all schools and these normal processes will ensure sensitivity and care is shown to all members of the community – staff and students – on this day.

Some schools, particularly secondary schools might consider organising the prayer to be prayed throughout the school at a designated time. This would mean the Introduction could be done by the Principal or another member of the leadership team over the PA or via an interactive platform such as ZOOM. This may relieve some pressure on staff who could focus on being prepared to pray the prayer in their class.

Preparation

Individual staff will need

- a candle and matches and anything else you might like to use such as a piece of material
- to choose a prayer from the following options
- to be aware of how the Introduction is to be done – by you or the Principal. We recommend going over it ahead of time, so it sounds natural.

Ritual Outline

It is hoped this outline will assist you to pray the prayer with staff and in classes.

Once you have the candle in position and the class is settled begin the prayer as follows.

Introduction

You may use the following text as written, or as a guide for your own words.

Leader: Today is September 15, an important day in our Diocese. It is known as our *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*. Today we pause to remember that children have not always been as safe as you/they are now. Lots of things have changed since then. You will recall that last week we celebrated *National Child Protection Week* when we highlighted all the good things we do today to make sure children and young people feel safe and supported in our schools and the broader church.

It is important that all of us do our part to make sure everyone in our school – students, staff and families – feel safe, respected and supported. Today is a day to focus on Jesus and pray that we will keep changing and growing and behaving in ways that allow all people in our community to be safe, to be respected and to be free to learn and grow.

The prayer is called 'Shine the Light of Christ'. So, let us pray together that Jesus will be our light, helping us to see how to love and respect each other so that our school community radiates the love and compassion of God.

I invite you to be still and silent for about a minute, and open your heart and mind to the light of Christ ...

Light the candle and allow a period of silence. If possible stretch it to a minute or whatever is comfortable for the group.

Prayer

Pray the prayer you have chosen from the options below.

Allow 5 - 10 seconds silence at the end of the prayer.

Conclusion

Leader: As we blow out the candle let us commit ourselves to shine the light of Christ in all we do and say today and every day. Lest we forget.

Blow out the candle.

Option 1: Prayer for turning on the Light of Christ

This prayer is one of the permanent elements of the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance*.

Use either the full version of the prayer on **p. 7-8** or the abbreviated version below which may be more appropriate for primary school.

Revised Prayer for turning on the Light of Christ

God with us,
you have made us in your image
and filled us with your love.
Through the life of Jesus
you show us the way to live a good life.

Where people are 'put down'
may we shine the light of your strength.
Where there is dishonesty and denial
may we shine the light of your truth.
Where there is fear
may we shine the light of your courage.
Where there is judgement
may we shine the light of your compassion.
Where there is disrespect
may we shine the light of your love.
Where people feel silenced
may we shine the light of your word.
Where people feel excluded
may we shine the light of your acceptance.
Where there is sin
may we shine the light of your forgiveness.

Option 2: *If not Now* by Carrie Newcomer

Use this song for prayer and reflection. See more detailed information on **p. 10**

Option 3: Ode to the Light of Christ

Fiona Duque from St Bede's Catholic College Chisholm, has written a beautiful *Ode to the Light of Christ*. In keeping with the traditional way we proclaim an Ode, for example on Anzac Day, we recommend that it be proclaimed by one person and listened to by the community. **See p. 2.**

This Ode is one of the permanent features of the Church's response to the Perpetual Day of Remembrance.

Option 4: Praying a form of the Examen

This traditional form of prayer lends itself to the *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Prayer*.

The following outline with its examples may help you. If students/staff are not familiar with this prayer it would be best to take only a short time with each step – perhaps 10-15 seconds.

1. Ask God for light.
God fill me with the light of your love, so I see this day/time as you see it.
2. Give God Thanks.
Invite people to quietly recall the good they have experienced during the day/lesson ... and to thank God for these gifts.
3. Review the day/class with God.
Invite people to look back over the day/time recalling anything that left them feeling disappointed or hurt ...
4. Talk to God about what you need or would like to change.
Ask God to help you to become more ...
5. Look forward to the coming day/class/afternoon.
Ask God to be with you and guide you ...

Other options

Some of the following suggestions are from teachers who have shared their experience:

- **Use contemporary images** of people working together, side by side to make the point that working together can heal and mend.
- Provide an opportunity for students to **write their own prayer**.
- Use **songs** that provide an opportunity to reflect on living as the light of Christ shining in darkness.

- The Magnificat is the gospel for *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday*. It would lend itself to **scriptural prayer** with most age groups. You will find it in the Children's Lectionary on p. 564. (Lk 1: 46-56). This could be offered as an option for students who are looking for an extended form of prayer.



For those looking for something more ... Praying with the Scripture

COVID has helped us see some things more clearly. Over the past 12 -18 months as a faith community, we have become more aware of the importance of the Word of God as a focus for prayer and a source of nourishment and faith sharing.

As noted in the Introduction, Bishop Bill decreed a special Mass marking *Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday* with its own readings and prayers.

Those wanting a more scriptural prayer – such as Lectio Divina – might like to pray with the readings from that Mass. They are available in the parish resource found [here](#).

There you will also find an outline for two prayer forms: Lectio Divinia and Mystagogical Reflection.

Shine the Light of Christ