

The See is Vacant

LET US PRAY



Introduction

We are in a liminal space framed by the death of Bishop Bill Wright on 13 November 2021, and the appointment of a new bishop. Like Advent, liminal spaces invite us to wait with purpose and hope, and to prepare the way.

One of the ways we the faithful wait with purpose is through prayer. This resource is offered to support that prayer both in the liturgy and beyond it.

Within the liturgy, the **Universal Prayer** is the appropriate place to include this prayer. On the next page there are three SAMPLE petitions. You might like to use ONE of these at a time. This will give you some variety from Sunday to Sunday and across a range of liturgies. The samples may also serve to inspire your own petitions. If using any of the samples, you will need to amend them to fit the pattern of the Universal Prayer in your community.

The **Prayer for the Appointment of a New Bishop** is for use OUTSIDE the liturgy. Our diocesan Communications Team is preparing Prayer Cards that will be available for distribution amongst the faithful. In addition to that, the text can be included in bulletins and at any meetings and gatherings as appropriate.

The **Reflection on the Ministry of a Bishop** invites us to consider how we are preparing for a new bishop. Let us be like those wise women of the gospel doing did all we can to ensure our lamps and alight, ready for when a new bishop is appointed.

... meanwhile,
let us go forward
on the road that has brought us
to where we are.

Philippians 3:16

*This scripture reference is the conclusion of the second reading from
Bishop Bill's episcopal ordination and funeral.*

Acknowledgements

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For the Liturgy

Petitions for the Universal Prayer on Sunday (Samples)

For those discerning who will be called to be Bishop for our Church of Maitland-Newcastle: May the Holy Spirit be their guide.

We pray to the Lord ... **Lord hear our prayer.**

For the one called to be Bishop for our Church of Maitland-Newcastle: May the Holy Spirit inspire his yes to echo the words of Mary, 'Here I am, the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.'

We pray to the Lord ... **Lord hear our prayer.**

For our Church of Maitland-Newcastle: that as we wait with joyful hope for a new Bishop, we will be cleansed and renewed by the Word of God so that we will be ready, our lamps lit, when a new Bishop is announced.

We pray to the Lord ... **Lord hear our prayer.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The phrase referencing 'N our Bishop' is omitted. Nothing replaces it.

Prayer for the appointment of our new Bishop

Shepherding God
you reveal your way of unfailing love
in the image of the Good Shepherd
who seeks the lost,
shows compassion
knows and is known by the sheep
and lays down his life for them.

We your people of Maitland-Newcastle
are without a bishop to shepherd us.

We ask that your Holy Spirit
who moves through this great south land,
inspire the choice of our new Bishop,
empower his 'yes'
and open our hearts in hospitality and love.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help pray for us
Mary MacKillop of the Cross pray for us.

Reflecting on the ministry of a Bishop

On 22 November, Pope Francis shared eight "Beatitudes for Bishops" with the bishops of Italy.

Blessed is the bishop who makes poverty and sharing his lifestyle,
because with his witness he builds the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed is the bishop who is not afraid to wet his face with tears,
so that in them may be reflected the sorrow of the people, and the work of priests,
and who finds God's consolation in the embrace with those who suffer.

Blessed is the bishop who considers his ministry a service and not a power,
who makes meekness his strength, gives everyone a right to a place in his heart,
so as to give the promised land to the weak.

Blessed is the bishop who does not shut himself up in government buildings,
who does not become a bureaucrat more attentive to statistics than to faces, to procedures than
to stories,
who seeks to fight alongside people for God's dream of justice
because the Lord, encountered in the silence of daily prayer, will nourish him.

Blessed is the bishop who has a heart for the misery of the world.

Who is not afraid to dirty his hands with the mud of the human soul in order to find the gold of God
there, who is not scandalized by the sin and fragility of others
because he knows his own misery,
because the look of the Risen Crucified One will be the seal of infinite forgiveness.

Blessed is the bishop who stays away from the duplicity of the heart, who avoids every ambiguous
dynamic, who dreams of the good even in the midst of evil,
because he will be able to rejoice in the face of God,
finding His reflection in every puddle in the city of people.

Blessed is the bishop who works for peace, who walks along the path of reconciliation, who plants
the seed of communion in the hearts of priests, who accompanies a divided society along the path
of reconciliation, who takes every man and woman of goodwill by the hand to build fraternity:
God will recognize him as his son.

Blessed is the bishop who is not afraid to go against the current for the Gospel, and hardens his face
like Jesus going to Jerusalem, without letting himself be stopped by misunderstandings and
obstacles
because he knows that the Kingdom of God moves forth against the world.

*What would such leadership ask of us, the community of the faithful in the Church
of Maitland-Newcastle?*

*What would such leadership affirm in me and us? What would it challenge?
What hope would it offer?*