



Faith in
our Future

Diocese of Monmouth
Esgobaeth Mynwy



Pause for prayer

Time for reflection

"I am delighted to commend 'Pause for Prayer' to you. At the heart of our faith is our relationship with God which, like all relationships, requires nurturing if it is to grow and deepen. With busy lives, full of all kinds of demands and distractions, it's not always easy to find time or space to spend with God.

I hope that this material will encourage you to put aside a little bit of time each day to rest in God's presence and to focus on your relationship with him. In doing this, I trust that you will experience something of his amazing love for you and be continually transformed as you come to recognise his blessings more and more each day."

+ Cheryl



Take Time

We all need to take some time out from often busy lives. Time to think and reflect, time to be still, time to pray, time to think about ourselves and our own wellbeing as well as those close to us, and time to think about life. This is time to look after yourself.

What is 'Pause for Prayer' about?

As members of the Church in the Diocese of Monmouth we commit ourselves to follow our calling to be more like Jesus. It is a response to his love and grace and can help us to have 'Faith in our Future'. For this we need -

Faith in God, Faith in the Church, Faith in one another,
Faith in ourselves

We have launched a new Vision for churches and people throughout our diocese and we hope that this will be something that can help each of us follow that vision, mindful of our call to love God, the Church, one another and ourselves. Part of developing that vision is down to us, so it's important to take time to think about where we are – in our lives, in our relationships with others, in our relationship with God.

Take time for silence

Find a peaceful place where you can feel calm. Maybe make a cup of tea or you could go out for a walk.

Reflect on the things you have done in the day or are planning to do and consider how God was or will be a part of your day. Share your thoughts and feelings with God in prayer.

Reflect on one or more of the Diocesan themes, which we have called 'branches' which help to form our Vision:

- **Discipleship**
Deepening our everyday faith and growing more like Jesus
- **Stewardship**
Recognising God's love and gifts and living as thankful and generous people
- **Social Justice**
Thinking about what is right and serving together to strengthen our communities
- **Equality and Diversity**
Living out God's love and being welcoming to all
- **Environment**
Considering our impact on the environment and caring for God's creation

None of this is prescriptive, but as an example, perhaps you might decide to reflect on one of these branches each day of the week from Monday to Friday, if that is a rhythm that works for you.

On Saturday, you could reflect on the week that has gone. What has gone well and what hasn't? Remember, that all that has been done or not done is in the past and God loves you without conditions and without limits. Make space for yourself to rest and give thanks for all that you have.

On Sunday, you could reflect on the week that is to come. Think of ways in which you will make space to care for yourself. How you will care for the needs of others, and how you will care for God's creation? Remind yourself that in all you will do, God will never leave you.

On each of the following pages are reflections that might help you. In addition to a particular verse for each of the branches, there are a variety of different Bible readings if you want to look a bit more deeply. There are some thoughts to reflect on, as well as things to perhaps consider doing, as well as a short prayer.



DISCIPLESHIP

Growing more like Jesus

Reading

Short read: Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' (Mark 8.29)

Longer reads: Matthew 6.5-21; Luke 5.1-11; John 1.1-14; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26; Romans 10.8-15

Reflecting:

I think about my own journey of faith and doubt. I try to answer the question of Jesus, 'Who do you say that I am?' for myself, today. I consider what might help me to grow more like Jesus - being with him in prayer, listening to him through the Bible, worshipping him with others, wanting my attitudes and behaviour to look more like his. I remember those people who have helped me along the way and people who might help me now. I ask whether I have helped others in their walk with Jesus.

Acting:

I offer to do one small thing to help me grow more like Jesus.

Praying:

Jesus, draw me closer to you. Help me to know you better, to love you more deeply, to become more like you, Amen



STEWARDSHIP

Living as thankful and generous people

Reading

Short read: 'For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.' (1 Chronicles 29.14b)

Longer reads: 1 Chronicles 29.10-14; Psalm 147; Matthew 6.25-34; 1 Corinthians 12.12-31a; 1 Peter 4.8-11;

Reflecting:

I consider the range of good things that I have - the gifts I have been given. These include material things, but also my skills and abilities, my health and even the gift of time itself. I reflect that all things, ultimately, come from God. I think about my own response of love towards God who has given me so much.

Acting:

How do I use my gifts - my home, my money, my time, my skills - to reflect God's generosity, especially remembering those who are in particular need?

Praying:

Generous God, you pour your gifts on us. Thank you for all that you have given me, especially[name those things for which you are thankful]. Help me to use my gifts well, for the good of all people, especially those who have little. In the name of your son Jesus, who gave his last breath for us, Amen



ENVIRONMENT

Caring for
God's Creation



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Serving together to
make a difference in
our communities



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Welcoming all

Reading

Short read: 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good'. (Genesis 1.31a)

Longer reads: Genesis 1.1-2.3; Psalm 8; Job 12.7-10; Isaiah 11.1-9; Romans 8.18-28

Reflecting:

I consider for a few moments the incredible richness of life on the planet - in the seas, on the land, in the air. I marvel at God's overflowing love in creation. I reflect on how human beings have shaped the created world, for good and for bad. I reflect on my own life.

Acting:

What am I doing to care for the environment?
What am I going to do?

Praying:

Creator God, your love is shown in the flight of a bird, in the richness of soil, in the teeming oceans, in a human face. Thank you for the beauty of creation. Help me to play my part in nourishing your good earth. Protect me from exploiting it. In the name of your son Jesus, who walked this same earth with us, Amen

Reading

Short read: 'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' (Micah 6.8)

Longer reads: Leviticus 19.9-16; Psalm 82.1-4; Luke 4.14-21; John 13.1-14; James 2.1-13

Reflecting:

I call to mind the injustices which take place in the world. Some of these are major, some are minor. Some are faced by whole nations or communities, some by a single person. I remember times when I have suffered injustice, or acted unjustly. I consider the uses - and abuses - of power and wealth.

Acting:

How can I counter injustice in my own community, in however small a way?

Praying:

Lord of creation who washed the feet of your followers, you lift up the lowly and scatter the proud. Lift me up when I am unjustly treated. Forgive me when I act unjustly. Give me courage to speak up for those who are powerless. Save me from believing that change isn't possible, that I can do nothing, that the oppressor will win, Amen

Reading

Short read: There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3.28)

Longer reads: Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:9-14; Luke 10.25-37; Matthew 23.1-12; 1 Corinthians 13

Reflecting:

I become aware of where I feel welcome and whether there are places I feel unwelcome. I think about what helps me to feel welcome. I consider those people I am reluctant to welcome, to love, to pray for. I notice which faces, which people are missing - from amongst my friends, my work, my church.

Acting:

I decide on one thing that I will do to help make someone more welcome (as an individual or as a group), focusing on someone very different from me.

Praying:

Welcoming God, you took flesh as a Jew, you ate with Gentiles and touched those others thought untouchable. Help me to honour your image in every human being. Help me to know that I too reflect that image. May we, who call ourselves 'church', offer your welcome to all, Amen





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