

VII. WE ARE CATHOLIC
April 24, 2023

Hymn

Sing a New Church

Gather 743

Verses

1. Summoned by the God who made us rich in our diversity
Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity.

Refrain

Let us bring the gifts that differ and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.

2. Radiant risen from the water, robed in holiness and light,
male and female in God's image, male and female, God's delight. **Refrain**
3. Trust the goodness of creation; trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised, sprung from seed of what has been. **Refrain**

Prayer

Leader:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Let us pray as one:

All:

Good and Gracious God,

We come before you as the community of St. Margaret of Scotland,
gathered today to pray a Novena for clarity of mind and heart
during this search for new school leadership.

We ask you, O God, for support and strength,
direction and guidance,
joy and peace

as we seek to be one body, the People of God,
the hands and feet of Christ.

Lead us the way we need to go, as our story unfolds before us.

We make this prayer, filled with hope,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Pope Francis, from his homily May 15, 2022

Brothers and sisters, may this message be the core of our own faith and all the ways in which we express it: "...not that we loved God but that he loved us" (1 Jn 4:10). Let us never forget this. Our abilities and our merits are not the central thing, but rather the unconditional, free and unmerited love of God. Our Christian lives begin not with doctrine and good works, but with the amazement born of realizing that we are loved, prior to any response on our part. While the world frequently tries to convince us that we are valued only for what we can produce, the Gospel reminds us of the real truth of life: we are loved. A contemporary spiritual writer put it this way: "Long before any human being saw us, we were seen by God's loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we were heard by our God, who is all ears for us. Long before any person spoke to us in this world, we were spoken to by the voice of eternal love" (H. NOUWEN, *Life of the Beloved*). He loved us first; he waits for us; he keeps loving us. This is our identity: we are God's loved ones. This is our strength: we are loved by God.

Response

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| <i>Leader</i> | At dawn, fill us with your merciful love; |
| <i>All</i> | we shall exult and rejoice all our days. |
| <i>Leader</i> | Let your deed be seen by your servants, |
| <i>All</i> | and your glorious power by their children. |
| <i>Leader</i> | Let the favor of the LORD our God be upon us; |
| <i>All</i> | Give success to the work of our hands. O give success to the work of our hands. |

Word of God

John 13: 34-35

I give you a new commandment: love one another.
As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.
This is how all will know that you are my disciples,
if you have love for one another.

Questions for Reflection – *After leader reads questions aloud, all pause to reflect during one minute of silence.*

- Does our St. Margaret's community reflect the certainty that each one of us, and those we encounter, are deeply loved by God? In what ways? And in what ways do we need renewal?
- What would it look like for love to motivate every decision in our search for new school leadership?

Petitions

Leader: Christ hears and saves all who hope in him. Let us bring him our needs.

That our school might stand as sacrament for all, a place where Christ's love is encountered and becomes us daily, we pray...

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

That our children might learn to claim their God-given gifts and use them for the good of all, we pray... **R.**

That our community might grow in the unity to which Christ calls all people who heed the Gospel call, we pray... **R.**

For what else shall we pray?

Individuals may offer intentions.

Prayer of Saint Margaret of Scotland

Leader: Let us recall our mission as together we pray:

PRAYER IS PRINTED ON BACK OF COVER PAGE

Optional, following Novena:

Share your reflections from above questions, focused on the mission value of the day.

- Index cards available at the shared novena, or
- Email PraySMOS@gmail.com
- Comments received may be shared with the community and those who search for our new staff members.