

## Dear Teacher - Catechist,

We are very excited to provide you with an initiative that has been requested over the last several years by, most notably, high school students, Catholic school teachers, directors and coordinators of Religious Education, youth ministers, catechists, parents and priests. **“Going Deeper in Prayer”** is the title of this initiative.

### The vision:

Many prayers and ways of praying are taught each year, and that needs to continue. However, there is a need for you, as well as the parents and their sons and daughters and indeed, all of us who hand on the Faith, to go deeper in prayer by spending a whole year focusing on one prayer and allowing it to become very personal and a place of encounter with Jesus for each person who is praying with it. Praying *Psalm 23* each day allows for an encounter with Christ.



*Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd.*

### **“Going Deeper in Prayer” needs to begin and continue in an ongoing manner primarily in the family:**

- “Family catechesis... precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 2226)
- “Parents are the primary educators in the faith.” (*General Directory for Catechesis for the Universal Church*, n. 225).
- “...With their parents leading the way by family prayer, children... will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation and holiness.” (*The Church in the Modern World – Gaudium et Spes*, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, n. 48)

**The role of the family** is vital to each person’s understanding of the importance of and commitment to a daily habit of prayer. A model that is working to promote intentional parental engagement is by praying with the students using the Prayer Card on a regular basis for several months in the school or parish program. While continuing to focus on this one prayer and praying through the simple process with the students, send a Prayer Card home with each youth. The student will be familiar enough with how to use the Prayer Card and can pray with their parents. Guide the students to choose a place for the Prayer Card for safe keeping. The “Going Deeper in Prayer initiative may also be explained through a parent gathering, where the Prayer Card is read over, the simple prayer modeled, and formation on prayer can take place. Parents want the best for their children and therefore, their participation in such gatherings is essential. Formation on family prayer needs to be offered in an ongoing manner.

### The goal:

The goal is that children and young people pray in the home with their parents each day as well as in the Catholic School and Parish Program in order to continue to deepen their friendship with Jesus Christ. When the year of praying and learning about this specific way of praying is completed, it will become a part of your, and their life, which they will never forget.

## Teacher and Catechist Resources

Parents are the primary educators of their children in helping their sons and daughters come to know the Person of Jesus Christ through studying the Catholic Faith, daily conversation with Him in prayer and reception of the Sacraments. Learning about Jesus in an ongoing way, being committed to speaking with and listening to Him on a daily basis and receiving the Sacraments, most especially the Holy Eucharist every Sunday, are needed in order to be strengthened to love God and our neighbor. This is the path to happiness – interior peace and true joy.

The Catholic School teacher and catechist are to support the parents in their role of teaching their children to pray. In this regard, to be consistent, it is essential to choose a specific time during the religion session that *Psalms 23* is prayed along with one or more of the steps as specified on the Prayer Card.

It is helpful to have a picture or statue of Jesus in the room to remain focused on Him during prayer time.

The following **Parents and Teacher-Catechist Resources** are provided for use in helping students to go deeper in their understanding of *Psalms 23*: [diolc.org/prayer](http://diolc.org/prayer) 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

- A simple introduction about God's love
- The goals for praying this prayer each day
- The meaning of the words of the prayer
- Learning the Principles
- Activities to help students remember and understand the words on a personal level
- Spiritual Comprehension: do they understand
- Encountering God in Prayer
- The Scriptural Foundation of the words of the prayer
- Resources



### The following truths underlie any formation in prayer:

1. *The Person of Christ desires that you develop a friendship with Him.* This relationship is prayer. You are to support the parents in helping to teach the children about the Person of Jesus, but even more importantly, to help them encounter and develop a friendship with Him by modeling your own personal and communal prayer.
2. *Every person needs to learn how to pray.* “Like a wise teacher Jesus takes hold of us where we are and leads us progressively toward the Father.” (CCC, paragraph 2607). *Jesus teaches you how to pray!*
3. *The Holy Spirit dwells within you and guides you in prayer!* “The Holy Spirit is the interior Master of Christian prayer” (CCC 2672). The Holy Spirit helps and guides you to develop a daily habit of prayer. If you ask, He will even give you the desire to pray.