



Hour of Prayer for the 100th Anniversary of the National Council of Catholic Women

****Leader's Guide--***This document is designed for planning purposes. It includes the full texts of Sacred Scripture passages, multiple hymn/song options, and other prayers and litanies in their entirety. A shorter service program is available for attendees that requires less printing.*

(This prayer service could begin with a period of Adoration if time permits.)

*(Leader welcomes & announces the first song; please **stand**)*

Hymn *(select an appropriate song from below or other from your local hymnal)*

Come Holy Ghost (attributed to Maurus, translated: Caswell)

Glory and Praise to Our God (Dan Schutte)

Gather Us In (Marty Haugen)

NCCW Mission Hymn (see link in NCCW Member resources at nccw.org)

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

(Leader) Come Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of your faithful,
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit,
And they shall be created,
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

(All) O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise, loving, and courageous leaders and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

(Other opening prayers may be used: The Magnificat, Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel, etc.)

(Leader reads)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Heavenly Father, we give you all honor and glory for the goodness you have shown to our National Council of Catholic Women during this first century of our existence. We thank you for the overwhelming love and mercy You have bestowed upon us.

- For the clergy who called forth our Catholic Sisters years ago to live the Mission of the National Council of Catholic Women; **R. *Thank you, Lord! (response)***
- For the vision of our early members and their willingness to give of themselves to develop our organization; **R.**
- For the women who have supported the NCCW with their time, talent, and treasure throughout these 100+ years; **R.**
- For the wisdom given to our Board of Directors in leading this organization; **R.**
- For the constant focus of our organization on leading our members to work to establish your Kingdom here on earth and to attain the eternal Kingdom; **R.**
- For the nourishment the NCCW provides members who search for spiritual enrichment, seek to develop leadership abilities, and have a willingness to serve others; **R.**
- For the insight of our commissions in developing relevant programs that enable our members to help others; **R.**
- For the many NCCW office staff members that are, and have been, so dedicated to our efforts; **R.**
- For the many Spiritual Advisors that guide, assist, and support our affiliates; **R.**
- For the talents that shine in our members as they work in our affiliates and in parishes; **R.**
- For giving our women continued persistence in accomplishing our NCCW Mission at all levels; **R.**
- For our association with grace-filled partners that assist us in our efforts to live the Gospel message. **R.**

(All) Loving Father, we ask you for holiness to be effective servants and to model the role of true Christians. We thank you, Lord, for this first century, and we humbly ask that you continue to shower our NCCW with Your blessings in the future! We make this prayer in the name of Your Divine Son, Jesus, who is united with You and the Holy Spirit, the One True God, forever and ever. Amen.

(Please be seated)

Scripture (*two readers prepare with Bible available; full text on pages 9 & 10 of this guide*)
(*First Reader*)

A reading from the Book of Ruth (1:1-18) (NABRE)

(Please **stand**)

(*Second Reader*)

A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke (1:39-45) (NABRE)

(*Pause for reflection*)

Hymn (*Please select an appropriate Marian song*)

Magnificat (Jacques Berthier)

Hail Mary, Gentle Woman (text, Hail Mary, altered Carey Landry)

Immaculate Mary (Lourdes hymn-public domain)

(*Brief readings from the four female Doctors of the Church. You may wish to designate four different readers.*)

Leader: Some of the greatest examples of spirituality, leadership, and service come from the four women Doctors of the Church. These women have been given this designation by the Church for their eminent learning and high degree of sanctity, exemplified in their writings. Let us listen and reflect on their words.

St. Hildegard of Bingen

1098-1179

Canonized in May 2012 – Named a Doctor of the Church in October 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI

“Listen: there was once a king sitting on his throne. Around Him stood great and wonderfully beautiful columns ornamented with ivory, bearing the banners of the king with great honour. Then it pleased the king to raise a small feather from the ground, and he commanded it to fly. The feather flew, not because of anything in itself but because the air bore it along. Thus am I, a feather on the breath of God.”

From her first major visionary work *Scivias* (or *Sci vias Domini, Know the Way of the Lord*)

(*pause for reflection . . . Leader: Envision yourself as a feather on the breath of God.*)

“O great the wonder
 that in a hidden female body
 a king entered.
 God did this
 as humility rises above all.
 And O great the happiness in that woman,
 because the evil that came from woman,
 this one then swept away.
 She built up sweet-smelling virtues
 and adorned Heaven yet more than
 she had first marred earth.”

Marian Antiphon, Number 11, Hildegard of Bingen: A Visionary Life by Sabina Flanagan page 110.

*(pause for reflection **Leader:** Think on ways to grow closer to the Mother of Jesus.)*

St Catherine of Siena

1347-1380

Canonized in June 1461 by Pope Pius II—Named a Doctor of the Church in October 1970 by Pope Paul VI

“You have said, Eternal Father, that through the love which You have for Your rational creatures and the prayers and the many virtues and labors of Your servants, You would do mercy to the world, and reform the Church, and thus give us refreshment; wherefore do not delay, but turn the eye of Your mercy towards us, for You must first reply to us before we can cry out with the voice of Your mercy. Open the door of Your inestimable love which You have given us through the door of Your Word.”

The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, A Treatise of Prayer, How this devout soul, praising and thanking GOD, made a prayer for the Holy Church.

*(pause for reflection: **Leader:** reflect on how you can pray and act to help renew Christ’s Church)*

“Oh eternal Trinity! oh Godhead! Which Godhead gave value to the Blood of Your Son, You, oh eternal Trinity, are a deep Sea, into which the deeper I enter the more I find; and the more I find the more I seek; the soul cannot be satiated in Your abyss, for she continually hungers after You, the eternal Trinity, desiring to see You with light in Your light.”

The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, A Treatise of Obedience, How this most devout soul, thanking and praising God, makes prayer for the whole world and for the Holy Church, and commending the virtue of faith brings this work to an end.

*(pause for reflection . . . **Leader:** Do you truly hunger for God? How can you increase that hunger?)*

"If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze."

St. Catherine of Siena in a letter to Father Dom Stefano Marconi, adapted by St. Pope John Paul II at World Youth Day 2000.

*(pause for reflection: **Leader:** Are you truly living up to what you should be? How can you **be** more?)*

St. Teresa of Avila

1515-1582

Canonized in March 1622 by Pope Gregory XV – Named a Doctor of the Church in September 1970 by Pope Paul VI

"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things pass away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things. He who has God finds he lacks nothing. God alone suffices."

Poem found in St. Teresa's breviary, in her own handwriting, as cited on October 15, 2015 by Gretchen Filz at getfed.com

"The soul may also place itself in the presence of Christ, and accustom itself to many acts of love directed to His sacred Humanity, and remain in His presence continually, and speak to Him, pray to Him in its necessities, and complain to Him of its troubles; be merry with Him in its joys, and yet not forget Him because of its joys. All this it may do without set prayers, but rather with words befitting its desires and its needs."

The Autobiography of St Teresa of Avila, Chapter XII, paragraph 3.

(pause for reflection . . . **Leader:** *These two quotes speak to the heart of trusting in and resting in God's presence. How do you find rest in Him?*)

St. Therese of Lisieux

1873-1897

Canonized in May 1925 by Pope Pius XI – Named a Doctor of the Church in October 1997 by Pope John Paul II

"You know well that Our Lord does not look so much at the greatness of our actions, nor even at their difficulty, as at the love with which we do them."

Excerpts from a letter written October 20, 1888 as quoted in *The Story of a Soul*, Epilogue, Letters of Sister Therese to her sister, Celine.

"Dear Jesus! tis Thy Holy Face
Is here the start that guides my way;
Thy countenance, so full of grace,
Is heaven on earth, for me, today.

... Oh, leave on me some impress faint.
Of Thy sweet, humble, patient Face,
And soon I shall become a saint,
And draw men to Thy saving grace.

So, in the secret of Thy Face,
Oh! hide me, hide me, Jesus blest!
There let me find its hidden grace,
Its holy fires, and, in heaven's rest,
Its rapturous kiss, in Thy embrace!"

Excerpts of "Canticle to the Holy Face" written August 12, 1895, translation quoted in the First Part of "Poems of St. Teresa, Carmelite of Lisieux, known as the 'Little Flower of Jesus'" in *The Story of a Soul*.

(Pause for reflection... **Leader:** *Close your eyes and picture the face of Jesus, and stay there a while.*)

Leader: Please **stand**

Hymn (*select an appropriate song*)

For All the Saints (William Walshams How, tune—Sine Nomine with alleluias, Ralph Vaughan Williams)

Prayer of St. Francis/Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (*Prayer of St. Francis*, adapt. Sebastian Temple)

God, We Praise You (Based on *Te Deum*; Christopher Idle, tune Nettleton)

Litany of Women Saints

Leader: As we strive to be loving and courageous leaders, let us ask the Saints to intercede for us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,	Pray for us (<i>response</i>)
St. Ann,	Pray for us
St Mary Magdalene,	Pray for us
St Elizabeth,	Pray for us
St. Veronica,	Pray for us
St. Cecilia,	Pray for us
Sts. Felicity and Perpetua,	Pray for us
St. Hildegard of Bingen,	Pray for us
St. Clare of Assisi,	Pray for us
St. Catherine of Siena,	Pray for us
St. Gertrude,	Pray for us
St. Joan of Arc,	Pray for us
St. Rita of Cascia,	Pray for us
St. Rose of Lima,	Pray for us
St. Kateri Tekakwitha,	Pray for us
St. Teresa of Avila,	Pray for us,
St. Margaret Mary Alcoque,	Pray for us
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,	Pray for us
St. Theodore Guerin,	Pray for us
St. Catherine Laboure,	Pray for us
St. Bernadette,	Pray for us,
St. Therese of Lisieux,	Pray for us,
St. Josephine Bakhita,	Pray for us
St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross,	Pray for us
St. Maria Goretti,	Pray for us
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini,	Pray for us
St. Gianna Beretta Molla,	Pray for us
St. Faustina,	Pray for us
St. Teresa of Calcutta,	Pray for us
St. Jacinta,	Pray for us
St. Azelie-Marie Martin,	Pray for us
All holy women,	Pray for us

(Leader(s) reads & all respond)

Prayers of the Faithful

Mindful that God is our shelter and strength, we, His children, Sisters in Christ, ask our Heavenly Father with confidence to gently cradle these petitions in His loving hands close to His heart--

That the spiritual growth of all Catholic women in every state of life be enhanced through the sisterhood of the National Council of Catholic Women. We pray to the Lord . . . ***Lord hear our prayer.***

That the NCCW continues to explore possibilities and implement new ideas to meet the needs of Council members in today's world. We pray to the Lord . . .

That the achievements and accomplishments of Council leadership inspire members to step up and follow in their footsteps. We pray to the Lord . . .

That the work of present and future Council membership be fruitful through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Council. We pray to the Lord . . .

For greater understanding of the needs of refugees and victims of human trafficking and for laws that uphold their safety and dignity. We pray to the Lord . . .

For families wounded by domestic violence, suicide, or addiction, that they would receive help and compassion. We pray to the Lord . . .

For all members of Council who have passed to eternal life that they enjoy peaceful rest in the place God prepared just for them. We pray to the Lord . . .

And for all the intentions that we hold deeply in the silence of our hearts. *(pause)* We pray to the Lord . . .

(All) Heavenly Father, bless us, our families, our parishes, and the work of the National Council of Catholic Women as we now place these petitions before You with heartfelt humility knowing they will be answered in Your time and according to Your will through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Leader: To conclude this time of prayer and reflection together, let us now, as members and friends of the National Council of Catholic Women, recite the Centennial Anniversary Prayer recognizing the priceless gift this organization is to all Catholic women.

(All pray--)

Centennial Anniversary Prayer

Heavenly Father, we give You thanks and praise
 for the National Council of Catholic Women's
 100 years of service to the Universal Church.
 We are thankful for the Bishops who founded NCCW in 1920
 and for the beautiful and inspiring legacy
 provided by our leaders, Spiritual Advisors, and NCCW sisters
 who have preceded us.
 We give thanks to Our Lady of Good Counsel
 for guiding us to be loving and courageous leaders
 in building the Kingdom of God.
 Lord, we pray that You stir the hearts of all Catholic women
 to realize the value of serving Your Church and society
 through membership in the NCCW.
 Bless us with many more workers in the vineyard
 as we embark on our next century of
 Spirituality, Leadership, and Service.
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn *(select an appropriate song)*

Anthem (Tom Conroy)

Go, Make of All Disciples (text-Matthew 28:19-20, Leon M. Adkins, tune: Ellacombe)

Bring Forth the Kingdom (Marty Haugen)

(Additional texts for use throughout the program)

A reading from the Book of Ruth (1:1-18) (NABRE)

Once back in the time of the judges there was a famine in the land; so a man from Bethlehem of Judah left home with his wife and two sons to reside on the plateau of Moab. The man was named Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah. Some time after their arrival on the plateau of Moab, Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah, the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion died also, and the woman was left with neither her two boys nor her husband.

She and her daughters-in-law then prepared to go back from the plateau of Moab because word had reached her there that the LORD had seen to his people's needs and given them food. She and her two daughters-in-law left the place where they had been living. On the road back to the land of Judah, Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD show you the same kindness as you have shown to the deceased and to me. May the LORD guide each of you to find a husband and a home in which you will be at rest." She kissed them good-bye, but they wept aloud, crying, "No! We will go back with you, to your people." Naomi replied, "Go back, my daughters. Why come with me? Have I other sons in my womb who could become your husbands? Go, my daughters, for I am too old to marry again. Even if I had any such hope, or if tonight I had a husband and were to bear sons, would you wait for them and deprive yourselves of husbands until those sons grew up? No, my daughters, my lot is too bitter for you, because the LORD has extended his hand against me." Again they wept aloud; then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.

"See now," she said, "your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her god. Go back after your sister-in-law!" But Ruth said, "Do not press me to go back and abandon you!

Wherever you go, I will go,
Wherever you lodge, I will lodge.
Your people shall be my people
And your God, my God.
Where you die, I will die,
And there be buried.

May the LORD do thus to me, and more, if even death separates me from you!" Naomi then ceased to urge her, for she saw she was determined to go with her.

The Word of the Lord R: Thanks be to God

A reading from the Gospel according to St Luke (1:39-45) (NABRE)

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Gospel of the Lord R: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner."

Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel

God of heavenly wisdom, you have given us Mary,
Mother of Jesus, to be our guide and counselor.

Grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life
and so enjoy her blessed presence in the life to come.

O Mother of Good Counsel,
Patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women,
intercede for us, that we may be wise, courageous,
and loving leaders of the Church.

Help us, dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your Son.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with reverence for God's creation,
and compassion for all God's children.

May our labors of love on earth enhance the reign of God
and may God's gifts of faith and living hope
prepare us for the fullness of the world to come.

Amen