



## Closing prayer

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning,  
is now and ever shall be  
world without end.

Amen.



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT

# Growing Vital Parishes

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE



## Gathering prayer

Come Holy Spirit  
Fill the hearts of your faithful  
and enkindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit  
and we shall be created  
and you shall renew the face of the earth.

Amen.



## Spiritual Conversations

Spiritual conversations take place over **three** rounds. In the first two rounds there is no discussion, comment, or crosstalk. It is a time of deep listening and sharing of personal reflections.

The structure is as follows:

### ROUND ONE

- Take time to read the scripture or definition, for reflection. (10 minutes).
  - What words or phrases are you drawn to and why?
- Sharing and listening (2-3 minutes per person).
  - In my reflection today ...
  - I feel ...

### ROUND TWO

- Reflect on what has been said so far (5 minutes).
  - What resonated, challenged, surprised, or struck you in the sharing you just heard?
- Sharing and listening, this time focussing upon what resonated with us from what was said previously (2-3 minutes per person).
  - I have heard ...
  - It leaves me feeling ...

## ROUND THREE

- Reflect on any of the themes, but especially the divergences and convergences (5 minutes).
  - Was there a common theme emerging?
  - Might the Holy Spirit be encouraging, enlightening, or calling you in some way?
- Unstructured sharing, listening, and discussing any common themes or ideas that emerged, or any divergences (10 minutes approx.).



## Scripture for reflection

### The Great Commission (Matt 28: 16-20)

Now the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him they worshipped him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe everything I have commanded you. And look, I am with you always till the end of time.'

## Definition for reflection

**Vital parishes** read the signs of the times with hope and missionary vision. They understand their local neighbourhoods, culture, and history. Having been shaped by the past, they are nevertheless filled with hope for their future.

This may involve openness to new ideas, acknowledging that past methods no longer fit where God is calling the parish today. They have clear direction, purpose, and collaborate effectively with others to further the kingdom of God.