



Bishop's Welcome Back Pentecost Project

Possible Scenarios for Distribution of the Blessed Candles and Prayer Cards

1st Scenario: Simplest version

Upon the Solemnity of Pentecost, each parish places the blessed candles and prayer cards in a convenient area for each family to receive one set on their way out of Mass, asking the families to spend an octave of prayer with the various intentions listed in the prayer card as a family to call back the “lost sheep” from among the flock. In doing this, we will be praying in union with all our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Lansing, for each other, and for those fallen away from the faith.

Then the following Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the parish family would be made aware that the candles remaining signify those who have not yet come back to the parish. The priest could then invite the people in the pews to take another candle and prayer card at the end of Mass and prayerfully consider a family or friend who they know has not yet come back to the practice of the faith. The priest would ask that they pray for that family or friend and consider taking the candle and prayer card to the family or friend's home. The parishioner can let the family know that they are missed in the church, give them their gift blessed by the Bishop, and ask them if they have any prayer intentions that we could pray for as a parish family.

The following Sunday, the parish could have a prayer intention box or basket for all the prayers brought back to the church to offer along with the gifts of bread and wine in the offertory. That same Sunday, the priest could invite the families to once again take an unclaimed candle home to continue praying for all those who they know are still not in church with us.

2nd Scenario: List to check off each family upon receiving their gift

This scenario would follow a similar format of the 1st scenario above with a small addition of asking the families, upon taking their candle and prayer card, to check off their family's name from a list of parishioners. This would require that each parish print a few copies of a spreadsheet of all the families in your parish and check off the names of candles that are taken home by families. This would provide that on the following Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the leftover candles could be distributed by volunteers who would consider taking a family a candle and prayer card to actively seek them out and pray with that family. The coordination of providing addresses of parishioners to other parishioners would be determined by your staff on how that should go.

3rd Scenario: An additional step of labeling each candle with a family name

This scenario would follow a similar format of the 1st scenario above, while accounting for each family's presence or lack thereof by labeling each candle with each family's name. This would not be at all to shame anyone who has not taken their candle, but would allow each parish family to know who exactly isn't with us so that we could personally pray for and reach out to those families by name, so none are forgotten.

With this format, upon the Solemnity of Pentecost, the families present would find their own family's blessed candle and take a prayer card home to light the candle and pray one of the eight intention for an octave of prayer to call back the “lost sheep” from among the flock.

The following week on Trinity Sunday, families present would be invited to consider taking a candle and prayer card for a family who is not there and deliver it the family's home to let them know it is a gift blessed by the Bishop for them. Then they could ask the family for any prayer intentions they could bring back to the church, let them know they are missed, and invite them back if it is the right moment to do so.

The parish may appoint volunteers to deliver any candles left after Trinity Sunday to the families who were not ‘adopted’ by a family yet.

*The diocesan staff can provide parish family labels to parishes who would like to use them.