

# en·coun·ter.

[ *catholic cornerstones* ]

Leader: God of Love,  
You are with us in every transition and change.  
As we enter into this new opportunity to encounter Catholicism with excitement  
and even some anxiety,  
we recall your deep compassion, presence,  
and abounding love.  
We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills  
with which you have blessed us.  
We thank you for the experiences  
that have brought us to this moment.  
We thank you for the diverse faith experiences of those  
gathered here that give breadth and depth to our own encounter with Christ.

(As each speaker reads, he or she pours a different color of sand around the  
candle.)

Speaker 1: For the cradle Catholics  
All: We give thanks for your strong faith.  
Speaker 2: For those who attended Catholic schools  
All: We give thanks for your wisdom.  
Speaker 3: For the converts to Catholicism  
All: We give thanks for your experience.  
Speaker 4: For those from other Christian backgrounds  
All: We give thanks for your perspective.  
Speaker 5: For those returning to active practice of their faith  
All: We give thanks for your return.  
Speaker 6: For those who have been part of the Church since before Vatican II  
All: We give thanks for your wisdom.  
Speaker 7: For those desiring to know more about Christ  
All: We give thanks for your seeking.  
Speaker 8: For those in religious life, and our seminarians, deacons and priests  
All: We give thanks for your vocations.  
Speaker 9: For those with advanced catechesis or theological degrees  
All: We give thanks for your insights.  
Speaker 10: For those with no formal faith formation since confirmation  
All: We give thanks for your spirituality.

Leader: As these colors of sand remind of us of the beauty of our diverse backgrounds,  
we light this candle to remind us of Christ's presence in this gathering. Be with us as we move  
forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another. We ask this in your Holy Name.

All: Amen.

## Closing Prayer

Almighty God,

As Christ's disciples we close this first **en-coun-ter catholicism** session to return to our daily lives.

We know that we are called to "make our whole life a gift, a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God" (cf. Rom 12:1).

Let us feel indebted to our brothers and sisters in your universal church, allowing the good news we have received to overflow into our lives and move us to mission in the world.

In your precious son's name we pray.

Amen.