

Service of Commissioning

This service can be easily adapted for a range of occasions, for example, the installation of a Student Executive or the commissioning of a new Head of College.

*A **Service of Commissioning** is a public recognition of a person or group of people assuming a leadership role within a community. It involves celebrating with the person(s) elected, honouring the significance of the office within the community, and acknowledging the pastoral responsibilities that come with the role.*

The word “commission” has connotations of both “entrusted authority” and “calling”, “vocation”, or “sending”. Both meanings reflect a servant understanding of leadership. The authority of the leader is entrusted, given by the community, for the benefit of the community they are called to serve.

An important aspect of commissioning services is acknowledging the limitations and weaknesses of human beings. It's important that we don't glorify leadership roles or place those elected to leadership on an unrealistic (and unachievable) pedestal. These services are an opportunity to acknowledge that we all fail and make mistakes, we all get tired and complacent, we can't do everything and, to pretend that we can, places an intolerable burden on those in leadership.

WELCOME and STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa, te atawhai me te rangimārie o te atua.
Grace and peace be with us all from God.

Nau mai, haere mai.

Welcome to this service to commission [name] to the role of [role title].

Words of welcome

A commissioning is a special service
to recognise that a person has been called to a particular role in a community.

And so today we acknowledge that [name] is being called
to serve [the community] in humility and with integrity.

We recognise that the authority that comes with this role
is a gifted authority, entrusted by [the community]
for its ongoing life and work.

With authority comes responsibility,
With leadership comes loving service.

In this commissioning we do not just honour [name],
we also point to what *kind* of leader [he/she/they] is called to be:
that is, a *servant* leader.

HĪMENE or HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

As we gather, we pause in the presence of the Creator God.

Kia inoi tātou, let us pray.

E te Atua, eternal God,

in whom we live and move and have our being,

you made the sea, sky, and soil,
and everything in it;
you knit each of us together in our mothers' wombs,
calling us forth from the dust
to which we shall one day return.

In your presence, we confess that you are God and that we are not.
We are human: fearfully and wonderfully made,
incalculably loved, abundantly blessed,
and yet undeniably mortal.
We acknowledge our frailty, weakness, insecurity, and natural limitations.

And we confess that when we step beyond our creaturely limits,
dominating others and the world around us,
we diminish the fullness of life together that you intend for us.

In the witness of Jesus, we see your way of leading in the world.
It is the way of servant leadership.
The way of suffering love.
The way of the cross.

By your Spirit, make us more like Christ,
Sharing in your suffering love for the world,
treading lightly and serving compassionately,
that we may more fully love as you first loved us.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus,
who journeys alongside us,
and who leads us in suffering love,
to fullness of life with you and each other. Amen.

OR:

O Lord, our sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
When we look to the heavens,
the moon and the stars that you have established,
more numerous than all the grains of sand on the earth —
When we consider the incredible diversity of flora and fauna,
the unquenchable thirst for life in all things —
what are human beings that you are mindful of us?

When we reflect on the mountains, unchanging and resolute,
or sit by the banks of the Ōwheo, the Leith, flowing ceaselessly,
we become all the more aware that we are mortal,
that we are but a moment in time,
and you, O God, are eternal.

Forgive us when we step beyond our natural limits,
when we forget our transience,
when we have an inflated sense of our own importance,
when we show lack of reverence for your world or the people who live in it.
Forgive us and awaken in us a reverence for your world which you have created
good.

For in Jesus Christ, you have come to dwell here among us,
blessing all things with your sanctifying presence,
imbibing all life with incalculable worth.
And by your Spirit, you are inspiring all things with your life-giving breath,
drawing all things into fullness and newness of life with you and with one
another.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

FIRST READING

SECOND READING

MESSAGE

MUSICAL REFLECTION

A choral or instrumental musical item fits well here. Alternatively another Hīmene or Hymn can be sung.

WORDS OF INTRODUCTION and NARRATIVE

Some words that further explain the significance of commissioning can be said here. It is a good time to again recognise human fallibility: the elected person is not expected to be perfect! For a Commissioning, it is appropriate for a Narrative to be given (a brief account of how the person came to be appointed to the role). The Narrative is typically given by the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Appointment Committee (or equivalent person).

QUESTIONS

E te whanau, there are many different gifts,
but the same Spirit who gives them.

There are many different ways of serving,
but the same God of all whom we serve.

The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person
for the good of all.

Today we recognise the gifts given to [name]
and the role of service to which [he/she/they] has been called.

Invite the person being commissioned up the front

[Name], are you persuaded that you have been called to the role of [role title], and are you ready to take on the entrusted authority given to you by [the community]?

I am.

Do you promise to honour and uphold the life and mission of [the community], respecting its identity and caring for its people, and seeking to nourish the life of [the community] in order that it may grow and thrive?

I do.

Will you perform the duties of your commissioned [role] at [the community] to the best of your ability, while remembering that you are in fact *only mortal* and can't do everything!

I will.

PRESENTATION OF SYMBOLS

The person is presented with symbols of the role to which they've been elected. For a Student Executive or a Residential Leader/Subwarden a badge or something similar would be appropriate. For a commissioned role (like Head of College), a number of symbols might be presented, for instance:

- *A symbol representing the tradition of the past, the witness of those who have gone before and on whose shoulders we stand*
- *A symbol of the open future, which we are continuing to unravel and shape through wise discernment and leadership*
- *A symbol of pastoral care (e.g. a coffee cup)*
- *A symbol of servant leadership*
- *A roll of students or people under the commissioned person's pastoral care*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A prayer of blessing for the person(s) for their time in the role

We give thanks for [name];
And for the commitment [he/she/they] have made
to serve [the community] in humility and with integrity.
We give thanks for the many gifts [he/she/they]
will bring to the role of [title role].

We pray for [name].
When [he/she/they] is weary, may [he/she/they] find strength.
When [he/she/they] is weighed down by the burdens of the role, may
[he/she/they] find comfort.
When [he/she/they] does not know the way forward,
may [he/she/they] receive patience and wisdom.
When [he/she/they] feels isolated,
may [he/she/they] find support in family, friends, and colleagues.
When [he/she/they] feels lost,
may the road rise to meet [him/her/them].
And may [he/she/they] never, ever forget,
that [he/she/they] is but only human,
prone to weakness, limitation, and mistakes,
and yet unconditionally loved and of incalculable worth.

We pray for [the community],
giving thanks for its rich heritage
and the many people that have been part of its life.
And we also acknowledge the struggles, trauma, and hurt
that have taken place in [the community].
Bless the people that participate in the life of this community now,
Grant them wisdom, courage, and loving kindness,
to see [the community] thrive this day and into the future. Amen.

HĪMENE or HYMN

This could either be a congregational or a performance piece. During the singing of the song, opportunity may be given for people to come and congratulate the commissioned person(s).

BLESSING

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa,
te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki, a Ihu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhingatahitanga
ki te Wairua Tapu,
ake, ake, ake Amine.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship
of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all,
now and forever, Amen.