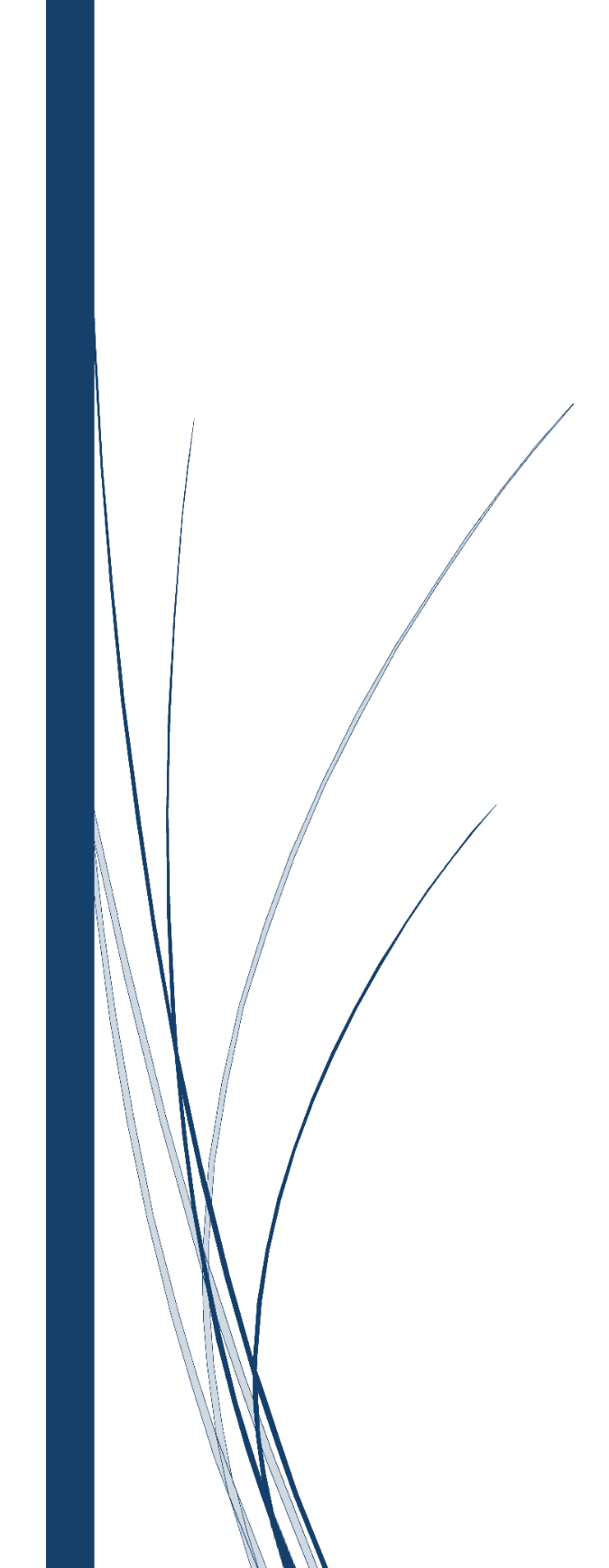
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**Reflecting and Praying with our Values for Ministry:**

**Excellence**

*Aspiring to serve God’s people in the best possible way; showing and growing competencies and skill in my work; showing care in all aspects of my work; pursuing relevant goals; suggesting improvements; being the best public and internal face of SSND/ministry/department as possible.*

**Prayer Activities:**

Look at yourself in the mirror. Smile 😊! See the work of excellence that YOU are. Say to yourself: “I am a work of EXCELLENCE. I am a work of art.” How do you feel about this? How does this resonate in your heart?

Take a walk in nature. Where do you see excellence in the creation that surrounds you? How might creation inspire your own capacity to do excellent work? In your own words, who/what is the source of ‘Excellence’?

Perhaps you want to enter your thoughts and reflections into a journal, or talk to God about it.

**From the SSND Foundations:**

Below are some quotes of Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger (1797-1879), excerpted from her many letters. How might they inform the SSND understanding of pursuing ‘Excellence’ in the work place?

* What good will all our work do, if we do not work as God wills? (4262)
* Everything good must be fiercely struggled and fought for, but precisely by this struggle it proves itself the work of God. (1754)
* How wonderfully and gently the works of God proceed! We need only embrace the dear cross daily and not let Jesus out of our sight. (215)
* Grant us, heavenly Father, . . . patience in suffering, fidelity in prayer, a pure intention in all our work, … and perseverance in your grace until the end. (2053)
* My divine master, I will indeed try to avoid … all short-comings in myself. If, however, I should commit a fault, … in God’s service I will continue to work steadfastly with myself. (2)
* Go to school to Jesus and learn from him, not to create worlds or work miracles, but to become humble and gentle. (2941)
* God, I desire to love you earnestly and to make this love visible by fulfilling the responsibilities of my state of life. (2)

*- over -*

* With the dear Lord what we do is less important than how we do it. Through a good intention and a pure motive, everything becomes divine service. (5203)

**A PSALM BEFORE BEGINNING WORK**

To you, O Divine One, from whose hands

comes the work of creation, so artfully designed,

I pray that this work I am about to do

may be done in companionship with you.

May the ministry that I have begun

sing praise to you

as songbirds do

May the ministry that I have just begun

add to the light of your presence

because it is done with great love.

May the ministry that we are about to do

speak like a prophet of old

of your dream of beauty and unity.

May the ministry that I have just begun

be a shimmering mirror of your handiwork

in the excellence of its execution,

in the joy of doing it for its own sake,

in my poverty of ownership over it,

in my openness to failure or success,

in my invitation to others to share in it

and in its bearing fruit for the world.

May I be aware that through this ministry

I draw near to you.

I come to you, Beloved,

with ready hands

and an open heart.

Adapted from: Edward Hays *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*

*Note: For using this prayer in a group setting, you can exchange ‘I’ and ‘my’ with ‘we’ and ‘ours’.*

**For Reflection:**

What does the prayer evoke in you? Perhaps you want to journal about it or share it with a friend or colleague and talk about it. What is emerging?