

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER, that is, the Prayer of the Faithful or Bidding Prayers.ⁱ

The Prayer of the Faithful is the people's response to the scriptures they have heard. One in Christ, through the gift of their baptism, the community makes their petitions known to God.ⁱⁱ This 'most freely composed part of the liturgy'ⁱⁱⁱ expresses the right and responsibility of the Church to speak up and stand in solidarity with those in need. The Prayer of the Faithful brings the Liturgy of the Word to a conclusion by calling us into the continuing mission of Christ.

Content

The Church guides the intentions for prayer towards four different groups or categories.^{iv}

- The needs of the Church
- Public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
- For those burdened by any kind of difficulty
- For the local community

Helpful models are offered in the *New Zealand Roman Missal*, (*Appendix IV, pg 1447*) and other resource books. However local events, people and immediate concerns always need to be reflected in the intentions for prayer. Some adaptations will need to be made.

Preparation

Begin with the prayerful reading of the Scriptures of the Mass or Liturgy to be celebrated. Then bring to this reading the immediate national, local and global issues and events that impact the hearts and minds of your community. Key words, images or phrases from scripture may be used to add depth, beauty and strength to this prayer.

National celebrations such as Waitangi Day, causes like Caring Sunday and Social Justice Week, local celebrations like the beginning of the School Year and Ritual Masses such as Weddings and Funerals all have a different focus to the Sunday celebration. While these various celebrations provide an opportunity to pray for particular intentions or causes, the scriptures still remain the focus for their preparation.

Writing Intentions

Usually, 5-7 intentions are required for a liturgical celebration.

Each Intention takes the form of a lityny:

- An intention is announced - it is addressed to the people (not God or Jesus Christ)
- A moment of silence is observed – prayer takes root in our hearts
- A short, familiar call and response is made, eg "*E te Ariki: whakarongo mai rā ki a mātou* OR *Let us Pray to the Lord: Lord hear our prayer* – the outward sign of our response in prayer.

Intentions are

- brief, immediate and specific

Intentions include

- prayer for the sick and the dead, especially on Sundays

Intentions need to avoid

- offering partisan views, solutions to political issues or “teaching”
- devotional prayers, such as the ‘Hail Mary’

Intentions follow a discernible pattern

- choose a single pattern or style for each set of intentions

Sample patterns

For all nations and communities, especially *N and N*,
That they may they receive God’s blessing of lasting peace

OR

That all nations and communities may receive God’s blessing of lasting peace,
especially *N and N* (*pause*)

OR

Let us pray that *N and N* and all nations and communities
will receive God’s blessing of lasting peace (*pause*)

Each set of Intentions forms one part of the complete Prayer of the Faithful.

The Prayer of the Faithful

There are three parts to this Prayer, each with their own special character and purpose.

1. The Invitation

This invitation

- is offered by the **presider**,
- addresses the **gathered community** (not God or Jesus) inviting them
- to offer their prayerful intercession in **a spirit of hope and trust**.

Sometimes a word or phrase from scripture may be incorporated into this invitation.

Sample Invitation

Priest: **Brothers and sisters, let us trust God’s mercy and love**
 to embrace all those for whom we pray.

2. *The Intentions and Response*

Each intention

- is announced by the **Deacon, Cantor, Reader** or one of the **lay faithful**, from the Table of the Word, (Ambo) or other suitable place
- addresses the gathered community, (not God or Jesus) inviting them **to pray for some people, or some purpose, that the Lord may bring about something good!**
- is completed by a **prayer of intercession , addressed to God**, which may be sung, said in common, or prayed for in silence

Sample Intention and Response, announced by a Deacon

Deacon	For all nations and communities, especially <i>N and N</i>,
Reader	That they may they receive God's blessing of lasting peace <i>(brief pause for silent prayer)</i>
Reader Calls	Let us pray to the Lord:
Assembly Responds	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>

Sample Intention and Response, announced by a Reader or Cantor

Reader or Cantor	For all nations and communities, especially <i>N and N</i>,
	That they may they receive God's blessing of lasting peace <i>(brief pause for silent prayer)</i>
Reader or Cantor Calls	Let us pray to the Lord:
Assembly Responds	<i>Lord hear our prayer</i>

3. *The Concluding Prayer*

The Concluding prayer which

- Is offered by the **presider** on behalf of all gathered
- **'Collects'** all our prayers and
- **Offers them to God, in the name of Jesus Christ**

We offer our assent by joining in the final **Amen**

Sample Concluding Prayer

Priest: **God of glory, giver of all good gifts,**
 Mercifully receive our prayers.
 Through **Christ our Lord. Amen**

"Preparing the prayer of the faithful is a craft in the service of the liturgy that requires divine assistance, human skill and the fruitful creativity in which both work together." ^v

Resources

How To Write The Prayer of the Faithful Corinna Laughlin, Liturgy Training Publications, 2015

The Collegeville Prayer of the Faithful General Intercessions for Years A,B,C Michael Kwatera, OSB Liturgical Press, 2009

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ⁱ New Zealand Roman Missal article 20.

ⁱⁱ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), Approved for Use in New Zealand* © 2010 New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference #69.

ⁱⁱⁱ Turner, Paul. *The Supper of the Lamb*. Chicago, USA. Liturgy Training Publications, 2011 p 45.

^{iv} GIRM # 70.

^v Kwatera, Michael. *The Collegeville Prayer of the Faithful General Intercessions for Years A,B,C*. Collegeville, Minnesota. Liturgical Press, 2009, pp xii.