

Ministry Revisit and Review

Ongoing formation opportunities for Liturgical Ministers



How to Prepare Universal Prayers

The Universal Prayer or the Prayer of the Faithful is the prayer of the church for the world in general. The intercessions are not prayers of thanksgiving but petitions from the entire community placed before a loving God. The statements are short and simple but also broad and inclusive. For example, instead of praying for 'those in hospital' the petition can be broadened to 'All who suffer injury or illness especially those in hospital'.

Asking on behalf of another – has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy. The one who prays looks "not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others," even to the point of praying for those who do you harm."
Catholic Catechism of the Church #2653

The intentions take the form of a litany. As litanies they move best when they follow a pattern.

The intention – each petition in a set should commence with the same wording.
For example:

*For those whom God has called to eternal life, **that** they hear the call of the Good Shepherd as reward for their good actions in this life.*

*For world leaders, **that** they work together to bring about world peace and healing to those who suffer as a consequence of war and terrorism.*

The reader's invitation to the assembly to respond to the prayer is by 'Lord, hear us' or similar words. [Live and Proclaim God's Word, A Handbook for Readers](#) in Parish and School, Archdiocese of Perth Liturgical Guidelines - Pages 11 & 12.

Other names for the Universal prayers are Prayers of the Faithful, Bidding Prayers, General Intercessions.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Universal Prayers.

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The Universal Prayer from **The General Instruction of the Roman Missal**

69. In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that petitions may be offered for holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world.

70. The series of intentions is usually to be:

- a) for the needs of the Church;
- b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- d) for the local community.

Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion.

71. It is for the Priest Celebrant to regulate this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he calls upon the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes it with an oration. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community.

They are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful.⁶⁸ The people, for their part, stand and give expression to their prayer either by an invocation said in common after each intention or by praying in silence.

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Examples of Formularies for the Universal Prayer.
from **The Roman Missal, Appendix V, page 1515**

Formula I

For..... intention. That ...prayer

For refugees and all who have fled violence, that they will be guided to places of safety and helped to rebuild their lives.

Formula II

For....intention Let us...prayer

For those who hold public office, let us call on the power of the Lord.

Other Examples:

For our political leaders. May they be blessed with insight and courage and seek to develop policies that serve the common good.

For people whose lives have been devastated by natural disasters. May they be given the support needed for them to rebuild their lives and communities.

Resource:

Pastoral Liturgy have General Intercessions for every Sunday of the liturgical year. Link to this resource is on the Centre for Liturgy, Archdiocese of Perth, website homepage.

[Centre for Liturgy Perth](http://www.centreforliturgy.org.au)