



Centre for Liturgy

Archdiocese of Perth

How to Prepare the Universal Prayer

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 [them] harm.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #2635

The intentions take the form of a litany. Litanies they flow best when they follow a pattern.

Each petition should commence with the same wording.

For example:

*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.*

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

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 Prayer are Prayer of the Faithful and General Intercessions.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Universal Prayer.



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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. 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, pp.1515-1527.

Formula I

For ... intention, that ... petition.

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 ... petition.

For those who hold public office, let us call upon the power of the Lord to guide them in their duties.

Other Examples:

For our political leaders, that 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, that they be given the support needed to rebuild their lives and communities.

Points to note:

1. The priest's introduction and the petitions are addressed to the faithful.
2. The concluding prayer is addressed to God. The prayer concludes with "Through Christ our Lord."
3. Paragraph 70 of the GIRM* lists four types of intentions. In general, 4-6 petitions should be enough.

**General Instruction of the Roman Missal*