

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL GUIDELINES

Writers of the Prayer of the Faithful exercise a most important ministry for the parish community. Through these petitions, the writer becomes a voice for the faithful. The Prayer of the Faithful is both an act of faith in the Triune God and a plea for God's intercession in the world. According to the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, in the 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" (*GIRM* #69). The deeply spiritual goal of these prayers is to draw the faithful closer to God. Well-written prayers are a vessel to a deeper spiritual life of faith and must be crafted with care. These guidelines are intended to help you write prayers that are reverent, relevant, and readable, so that the faithful will not be distracted by them but will enter prayer through them.

FORM

The intentions are usually expressed in one of three forms:

- 1) The FULL FORM, "For..... that"
The full form announces who is to be prayed for and what is to be prayed for.
Example: For all Christians, that they celebrate unity around the table of the Lord.
- 2) The PARTIAL FORM, "That..."
The partial form mentions the favor to be requested, referring to the persons to be prayed for with one word.
Example: That all Christians celebrate unity around the table of the Lord.
- 3) The SECOND PARTIAL FORM, "For..."
The second partial form announces only those being prayed for.
Example: For the unity of all Christians around the table of the Lord.

One form should be used in a single set of petitions. For example, if the first petition begins with "for," all the petitions for that liturgy should begin the same way. This lends unity to the prayers and allows the faithful to enter more freely into the prayer. Remember that the petitions are not prayers of thanksgiving, but of petition for God's intercession.

CONTENT

Proceed from the general to the specific. Thus, the series of intentions is always: (1) for the needs of the universal church, (2) for the public authorities and the salvation of the world, (3) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, (4) for the local community, and (5) the other necessity.

1. ***The needs of the universal church.*** This category includes petitions for the pope, bishops and pastors of the Church, missions, Christian unity, and vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
2. ***Public authorities and the salvation of the world.*** This category includes petitions for peace, leaders of government, elections, respect for the freedom of the Church, good weather, the safety of crops, and the resolution of economic crises.
3. ***People burdened by any kind of difficulty.*** This category includes those burdened by poverty or any other tribulation, the unborn, the persecuted, the unemployed, the sick and infirm, the dying, prisoners, and exiles, to name a few.

4. **Local community.** This category represents the local community of faith. People to pray for may include those in the church preparing for baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, holy orders, or marriage; it also includes prayers for the repose of the souls of the deceased. This is where specific parish needs should be communicated: for the upcoming Youth Mission Trip, for the success of the Capital Campaign, etc.
5. **Silent prayers.** At times offer the opportunity for the congregation to silently offer their private prayer. This final petition need only be offered every few weeks or months.

Write no less than five and no more than six petitions for liturgy.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The intentions expressed in liturgy should be rooted in a time and place. Below are some questions to help spark your thoughts about the state of the church and the world, and their connection to living as a community of faith.

1. What are the themes of this Sunday's Scripture readings? What season of the liturgical year are we celebrating?
2. What are the noteworthy national or international news events of this week?
3. What challenges is the Church facing today?
4. What are some of the chronic problems we face at home, at work, in our local community, in our nation, etc.?
5. Are there special local events, national holidays, landmark date or anniversaries to be aware of this week?
6. Are there any specific parish needs to address?
7. Who are the sick or deceased to remember in prayer this week?

STYLE

- Strive to write petitions that are clear, concise, and to the point.
- Be direct about who is addressed in the petition (For the newly baptized...), and/or what action is desired (generally the parish/community members acting with the Spirit).
- Write prose that is poetic but avoids excessive wordiness. Petitions tend to get heavy with extra clauses. Keep it simple and avoid grandiose language.
- The petitions should be uplifting and inspirational for the community, drawing attention to the needs of all.
- Test the petitions you write by reading them aloud. The spoken word is received differently than the written word.
- While we write in our personal voice, these petitions are the voice of the Church universal and of the parish community. They are by necessity inclusive. Avoid including your own agenda in the petitions.
- Writing the Introductory and Conclusion: these introductory and conclusion are reserved for the presider in calling the people gathering their prayers and also intercede to God through his presidential leadership. The writing of the Introductory must guide the faithful to gather their minds and hearts at this moment together lifting their prayers to God. The Conclusion on behalf of the faithful the presider petition to God in the name of Jesus Christ.

PRACTICAL NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITERS

- **Introductory:** The Prayer of the Faithful begins with the presider's own invitation to pray as a community.
- **Content of Prayers:** The prayers contain petitions, not words of thanksgiving or praise.
- **Announcing the Prayer:** The response to prayer is usually signaled by the invitation to pray: "Let us pray to the Lord." During special liturgical seasons this response may change. During Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, the invitation to pray is sung by the cantor and should not be included with the petitions.
- **The Faithful Petition Response:** The faithful respond according to the singular content of each prayer. For example: Let us pray to the Lord....Respond: Lord, hear our prayer.
- **Conclusion of Prayers:** Please include the following note for the deacon or reader at the bottom of the page containing the Prayer of the Faithful:
At the conclusion of the petitions, please turn and face the presider. When he sits down, you may leave the ambo and return to your seat.

PREPARED PRAYERS FROM THE ROMAN MISSAL

APPENDIX V

EXAMPLES OF FORMULARIES FOR THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

1. GENERAL FORMULA I

Priest's Introduction

To God the Father almighty,
dear brothers and sisters,
may every prayer of our heart be directed,
for his will it is that all humanity should be saved
and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Intentions

1. For the holy Church of God,
that the Lord may graciously watch over her and care for her,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Grant this, almighty God.
2. For the peoples of all the world,
that the Lord may graciously preserve harmony among them,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Grant this, almighty God.
3. For all who are oppressed by any kind of need,
that the Lord may graciously grant them relief,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Grant this, almighty God.

4. For ourselves and our own community,
that the Lord may graciously receive us
as a sacrifice acceptable to himself,
let us pray to the Lord.

R. Grant this, almighty God.

Priest's Prayer

O God, our refuge and our strength,
hear the prayers of your Church,
for you yourself are the source of all devotion,
and grant, we pray, that what we ask in faith
we may truly obtain.

Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

2. GENERAL FORMULA II

Priest's Introduction

Brothers and sisters,
as we now make our prayer
for our community and for the world,
let us all pray to Christ the Lord,
not only for ourselves and our own needs,
but for the entire people.

Intentions

- 1a. For the whole Christian people,
let us beseech the abundance of divine goodness.
R. Christ, hear us. or Christ, graciously hear us.
- 1b. For all who do not yet believe,
let us implore the giver of all spiritual gifts.
R. Christ, hear us.
- 2a. For those who hold public office,
let us call upon the power of the Lord.
R. Christ, hear us.
- 2b. For favorable weather and abundant fruits from the earth,
let us entreat the Lord, the ruler of the world.
R. Christ, hear us.
- 3a. For our brothers and sisters
who cannot be present at this sacred assembly,
let us beseech him who observes all things.
R. Christ, hear us.

**3b. For the repose of the souls of the faithful departed,
let us call upon the judge of all humanity.**

R. Christ, hear us.

**4a. For all of us who pray in faith
and ask the mercy of the Lord,
let us entreat the compassion of our Savior.**

R. Christ, hear us.

**4b. For ourselves and those close to us
who await the Lord's goodness,
let us call upon the mercy of Christ the Lord.**

R. Christ, hear us.

Priest's Prayer

**Incline your merciful ear to our prayers,
we ask, O Lord,
and listen in kindness to the supplications of those who call on you.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

3. ADVENT

Priest's Introduction

**As we await with longing
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,
dear brothers and sisters,
let us with renewed devotion beseech his mercy,
that, as he came into the world
to bring the good news to the poor
and heal the contrite of heart,
so in our own time, also,
he may bring salvation to all in need.**

Intentions

**1a. That Christ may visit his holy Church
and keep watch over her always,
let us pray to the Lord.**

R. Lord, have mercy, **or** Kyrie, eleison.

**1b. That Christ may fill the Pope,
our Bishop, and the whole Order of Bishops
with spiritual gifts and graces,
let us pray to the Lord.**

R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.

- 2a. That under the protection of Christ
our times may be peaceful,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.
- 2b. That Christ may guide the minds of those who govern us
to promote the common good according to his will,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.
- 3a. That Christ may banish disease,
drive out hunger, and ward off every affliction,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.
- 3b. That Christ in his mercy may free
all who suffer persecution,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.
- 4a. That as witnesses to Christ's love before all
we may abide in the truth,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.
- 4b. That Christ may find us watching when he comes,
let us pray to the Lord.**
R. Lord, have mercy. **or** Kyrie, eleison.

Priest's Prayer

**Almighty ever-living God,
who bring salvation to all
and desire that no one should perish,
hear the prayers of your people
and grant that the course of our world
may be directed by your peaceful rule
and your Church rejoice in tranquility and devotion.
Through Christ our Lord.**
R. Amen.

4. CHRISTMAS TIME

Priest's Introduction

**On this day (on this night, in this time)
when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior have appeared,
let us, dear brothers and sisters,**

**humbly pour forth to him our prayers,
trusting not in our own good works, but in his mercy.**

Intentions

- 1. For the Church of God,
that in integrity of faith she may await
and may welcome with joy
him whom the immaculate Virgin conceived by a word
and wondrously brought to birth,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, have mercy.**
- 2. For the progress and peace of the whole world,
that what is given in time may become a reward in eternity,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, have mercy.**
- 3. For those oppressed by hunger, sickness or loneliness,
that through the mystery of the Nativity (Epiphany) of Christ
they may find relief in both mind and body,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, have mercy.**
- 4. For the families of our congregation,
that, receiving Christ,
they may learn also to welcome him in the poor,
let us pray to the Lord.
R. Lord, have mercy.**

Priest's Prayer

**We pray, O Lord our God,
that the Virgin Mary,
who merited to bear God and man in her chaste womb,
may commend the prayers of your faithful in your sight.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

5. LENT I

Priest's Introduction

**We should pour forth prayers at all times,
dear brothers and sisters,
but, above all, in these days of Lent
we ought to watch more intently with Christ
and direct our petitions more fervently to God.**

Intentions

- 1. For the whole Christian people,
that in this sacred time they may be more abundantly nourished
by every word that comes from the mouth of God,
let us pray to the Lord.**
- 2. For the whole world,
that in lasting tranquility and peace
our days may truly become
the acceptable time of grace and salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.**
- 3. For sinners and the neglectful,
that in this time of reconciliation
they may return to Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.**
- 4. For ourselves,
that God may at last stir up in our hearts
aversion for our sins,
let us pray to the Lord.**

Priest's Prayer

**Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that your people may turn to you with all their heart,
so that whatever they dare to ask in fitting prayer
they may receive by your mercy.**

Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

6. LENT II

Priest's Introduction

**As the Solemnity of Easter approaches, dear friends,
let our prayer to the Lord be all the more insistent,
that all of us, and the whole multitude of the baptized,
together with the entire world,
may come to share more abundantly in this sacred mystery.**

Intentions

- 1. That God may be pleased to increase faith and understanding
in the catechumens who are to be initiated by Holy Baptism
in the coming Paschal Solemnity,
let us pray to the Lord.**

2. That peoples in need may find help
and that peace and security may be firmly established everywhere,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. That all who are afflicted or suffering temptation
may be strengthened by his grace,
let us pray to the Lord.
4. That all of us may learn to distribute the fruits of self-denial
for the good of those in need,
let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

Have mercy, O Lord, on the prayers of your Church
and turn with compassion to the hearts that bow before you,
that those you make sharers in the divine mystery
may never be left without your assistance.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

7. WEEKDAYS OF HOLY WEEK

Priest's Introduction

In this time of the Lord's Passion,
when Christ offered prayers and supplications to his Father
with loud cries and tears,
let us humbly beseech God,
that in answer to his Son's reverent submission
he may in mercy hear our prayers also.

Intentions

1. That the Church, the Bride of Christ,
may be more fully cleansed by his Blood
in this time of his Passion,
let us pray to the Lord.
2. That through the Blood of Christ's Cross
all things in the world
may be brought to peace for the sake of salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. That God may grant fortitude and patience
to all who through sickness or hardship
have a share in Christ's Passion,
let us pray to the Lord.

4. That we may all be led through the Lord's Passion and Cross to the glory of his Resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

Be present, O Lord, to your people at prayer, so that what they do not have the confidence or presumption to ask they may obtain by the merits of your Son's Passion. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

8. EASTER TIME

Priest's Introduction

Dear brothers and sisters, filled with paschal joy, let us pray more earnestly to God that he, who graciously listened to the prayers and supplications of his beloved Son, may now be pleased to look upon us in our lowliness.

Intentions

1. For the shepherds of our souls, that they may have the strength to govern wisely the flock entrusted to them by the Good Shepherd, let us pray to the Lord.
2. For the whole world, that it may truly know the peace given by Christ, let us pray to the Lord.
3. For our brothers and sisters who suffer, that their sorrow may be turned to gladness which no one can take from them, let us pray to the Lord.
4. For our own community, that it may bear witness with great confidence to the Resurrection of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

O God, who know that our life in this present age is subject to suffering and need, hear the desires of those who cry to you and receive the prayers of those who believe in you. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

9. ORDINARY TIME I

Priest's Introduction

Dear brothers and sisters,
gathered as one to celebrate the good things
we have received from our God,
let us ask him to prompt in us
prayers that are worthy of his hearing.

Intentions

1. For **N.** our Pope and **N.** our Bishop
and all the clergy,
with the people entrusted to their charge,
let us pray to the Lord.
2. For those who hold public office
and those who assist them in promoting the common good,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. For those who travel by sea, land or air,
for captives and all held in prison,
let us pray to the Lord.
4. For all of us gathered in this sacred place
by faith and devotion
and by love and reverence for God,
let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

May the petitions of your Church
be pleasing in your sight, O Lord,
so that we may receive from your mercy
what we cannot ask out of confidence in our own merits
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

10. ORDINARY TIME II

Priest's Introduction

We have all gathered here,
dear brothers and sisters,
to celebrate the mysteries of our redemption;
let us therefore ask almighty God

that the whole world may be watered
from these springs of all blessing and life.

Intentions

1. For all who have vowed themselves to God,
that with his help they may faithfully keep to their resolve,
let us pray to the Lord.
2. For peace among nations,
that, delivered from all turmoil,
the peoples may serve God in freedom of heart,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. For the elderly who suffer from isolation or sickness,
that they may be strengthened
by our love of them as brothers and sisters,
let us pray to the Lord.
4. For ourselves gathered here,
that, as God does not cease to sustain us
with the things of this life,
we may know how to use them in such a way
that we may hold even now
to the things that endure for ever,
let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

May your mercy, we beseech you, O Lord,
be with your people who cry to you,
so that what they seek at your prompting
they may obtain by your ready generosity.
Through Christ our Lord
R. Amen.

The General Formulas printed above, nos. 1–2, may also be used in Ordinary Time.

11. IN MASSES FOR THE DEAD

Priest's Introduction

Let us in faith call upon God the almighty Father,
who raised Christ his Son from the dead,
as we pray for the salvation of the living and the dead.

Intentions

1. That God may establish the Christian people in faith and unity,

let us pray to the Lord.

2. That he may rescue the entire world from all the evils of war,
let us pray to the Lord.
3. That he may be pleased to show himself a father
to our brothers and sisters
who lack work, food or housing,
let us pray to the Lord.
- 4a. That he may be pleased
to admit for ever to the company of the Saints
his deceased servant **N.**,
who once through Baptism received the seed of eternal life,
let us pray to the Lord.
- 4b. That on the last day he may raise up **N.**,
who fed on the Body of Christ,
the Bread of eternal life,
let us pray to the Lord.

(Or for a Priest):

That he may grant **N.** a share in the heavenly liturgy,
for he exercised the priestly office in the Church,
let us pray to the Lord.

- 4c. That he may grant to the souls
of our brothers and sisters, friends, and benefactors
the reward of their labors,
let us pray to the Lord.
- 4d. That he may welcome into the light of his face
all who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection,
let us pray to the Lord.
- 4e. That he may graciously help and comfort
our brothers and sisters who are suffering affliction,
let us pray to the Lord.
- 4f. That he may be pleased to gather into his glorious Kingdom
all who have gathered here in faith and devotion,
let us pray to the Lord.

Priest's Prayer

May the prayer of those who cry to you
benefit the souls of your servants, O Lord:
free them, we pray, from all their sins

**and make them sharers in your redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.¹**

¹ *[The Roman Missal: Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II.](#)* (2011). (Third Typical Edition, pp. 1461–1473). Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.