

The Universal Prayer

30. The Universal Prayer follows in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

Bishop:

My dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father
and be of one mind in our prayer,
just as faith, hope and charity,
which proceed from his Holy Spirit, are one.

Deacon or minister:

For these his servants,
whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed:
that, planted in faith and grounded in love,
they may bear witness to Christ the Lord by their way of life,
let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

For their parents and sponsors:
that by word and example
they may continue to encourage
those whom they have sponsored in the faith
to follow in the footsteps of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

For the holy Church of God
together with N. our Pope, N. our Bishop and all the Bishops:
that, gathered by the Holy Spirit,
the Church may grow and increase in unity of faith and love
until the coming of the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

For the whole world:
that all people, who have one Maker and Father,
may acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters,
without discrimination of race or nation,
and with sincere hearts seek the Kingdom of God,
which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
let us pray to the Lord.

℟. Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Bishop:

O God, who gave the Holy Spirit to your Apostles
and willed that through them and their successors
the same Spirit be handed on to the rest of the faithful,
listen favourably to our prayer,
and grant that your divine grace,
which was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed,
may now spread through the hearts of those who believe in you.
Through Christ our Lord.

℟. Amen.

Notes

This text for the Universal Prayer (or Prayer of the Faithful) is taken from the *Order of Confirmation* and included in rites within and without Mass (30, 47). It is intended as a model and may be replaced by a locally prepared text. It should be noted that as with the intercessions at Sunday Mass there is a concern for the needs of the Church, local and universal, and of the world (cf. GIRM 69, 70). Any newly prepared text should reflect this.

The following notes are taken from *Celebrating the Mass*, though intended for the celebration of Mass much of the guidance will apply to celebrations of Confirmation.

The Prayer of the Faithful

171. Enlightened and moved by God's word, the assembly exercises its priestly function by interceding for all humanity. Because 'the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of the people of this age and especially of the poor and those suffering in any way are the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of Christ's disciples,' the Church prays not just for its own needs but for the salvation of the world, for civil authorities, for those oppressed by any burden, and for the local community, particularly those who are sick or who have died.
172. Thus, even though the intercessions may be quite concrete or particular in content, they should always look beyond the concerns of the local assembly to the needs of the whole Church and of the wider world. They are a sign of the communion of the particular assembly with all other assemblies and with the universal Church.

173. The priest celebrant directs the prayer from the chair. He briefly invites the people to pray, and at the end he draws their intercessions together in a brief concluding prayer with a short doxology. The intentions are proposed by a deacon, a cantor, reader, other minister, or members of the assembly at the ambo or another suitable place. After each intention, the faithful respond by silent prayer or a common response or both. They affirm the concluding prayer of the priest with their *Amen*.

- It is appropriate for the Prayer of the Faithful to be included in all Masses.
- Both the priest's introduction and the proposed intentions are addressed to the assembly, not to God. They are invitations or biddings to the faithful, who normally will first pray silently for each intention and then give expression to their common prayer in an invocation sung or said together after each intention. Alternatively the prayer after each intention may simply be offered in silence.
- These intentions should be short, clear, and objective enough for the faithful to understand and respond to them without difficulty. They should express the prayer of the entire community. There should be a significant pause after the intention has been read, while the assembly prays before the response is sung or said
- The response they are to evoke is petition rather than praise, thanksgiving, or repentance.
- On particular occasions, when other Sacraments or particular rites are celebrated in conjunction with the Mass, the range of intentions may be more closely concerned with the occasion; but even so, the intercessions should always include some general or universal intentions.
- For each intention, the invitation to pray and the response may be sung or the entire intention may be sung or even spoken while music is played.
- The Roman Rite does not envisage the inclusion of devotional prayers in the Prayer of the Faithful. As is traditional with liturgical prayer, the Prayer of the Faithful is addressed to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.
- Those who read the intentions return to their place only after the completion of the concluding prayer.
- Sample formulas for the Prayer of the Faithful are given in Appendix III of the *Roman Missal*. Further guidance is provided on the Liturgy Office website
- [<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Intercessions.shtml>].
(*Celebrating the Mass*, 171–173)