

Prayer of the Faithful

Roman Missal (2011)

Universal Prayer: Then [after the Creed] follows *the Universal Prayer*, that is *the Prayer of the Faithful* or Bidding Prayers.¹

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2011)

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. (*GIRM* no. 70)

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.* (*GIRM* no. 69)

Scripture

St. Paul and the Universal Prayers

First of all, then, *I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. ³This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all... ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. ⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire ¹⁰but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion.* (1 Timothy 2:1-10)

Tradition

The Prayers of the Faithful in the Roman Liturgy (2nd Century)

St. Justin Martyr: In this way *we may offer prayer in common both for ourselves and for those who have received illumination and for people everywhere....* When the prayers have concluded, we greet one another with a kiss.² ...All stand up together and *offer prayers*, as I said before, when we have concluded our prayer, bread is brought

¹ Roman Missal, *Order of Mass*, no. 20.

² Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 65, 67. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 1:67, 68.

forward...³

The Gelasian Decretals and the Prayer of the Faithful (5th Century)

a. Let all say: *Lord, hear us and have mercy.*

b. *For the faithful* we call upon the Father of the Only-Begotten, and the Son of God who begets, and God the Holy Spirit.

Kyrie eleison.

1. For the stainless Church of the living God, the Church established throughout the whole world

+we request the riches of divine goodness+

Kyrie eleison.

5. For pious rulers and all their attendants, who love justice and right judgment

+we implore the power of the Lord+

Kyrie eleison.

6. For agreeable weather, for suitable rain, for gentle and refreshing winds, and for a favorable change of seasons

+we entreat the Lord, the ruler of the world+

Kyrie eleison.

9. For those disquieted by the necessity of traveling and for those oppressed by the power of evil or hostility

+we pray to our Lord and Savior+

Kyrie eleison.

14. *For the souls of the faithful departed*, especially the souls of the Lord's holy priests who here presided over the Catholic Church, that they may obtain rest

+we entreat the Lord of spirits and the judge of all flesh+

*Kyrie eleison.*⁴

The Solemn Intercessions of the Good Friday Liturgy (20th Century)

1. For the Holy Church.

2. For the Pope.

3. For all orders and degrees of the faithful.

4. For catechumens.

5. For the unity of Christians.

6. For the Jewish people.

7. For those who do not believe in Christ.

8. For those who do not believe in God.

9. For those in public office.

10. For those in tribulation (e.g., disease, hunger, prisons, travelers, sick, dying).⁵

³ Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 67. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 1:68.

⁴ *The Deprecatio Gelasii* 1-2, 5-6, 8-9, 13-14. In Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church*, 3:155.

⁵ Roman Missal, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, nos. 11-13.

Mystical Meaning of the Rite

The Fulfillment of St. Paul's Words

Catechism: After the homily, which is an exhortation to accept this Word as what it truly is, the Word of God, and to put it into practice, *come the intercessions for all men, according to the Apostle's words*: "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in high positions." (1 Tim 2:12) (CCC 1349)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. How ancient are the Prayers of the Faithful? What role do they play in the Liturgy?

2. What basic form should the Prayers of the Faithful take according to the Roman Missal?

For Further Reading

Jungmann, Joseph, S.J. *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*. 2 Volumes. Translated by Francis A. Brunner, C.S.S.R. Reprint. Notre Dame, Ind.: Christian Classics, 2012.

Lang, Uwe Michael. *The Roman Mass: From Early Christian Origins to Tridentine Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.