



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER (PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Office for Worship has prepared the following guidelines for the Universal Prayer. The purpose of the guidelines is to provide some general observations and principles regarding this important part of the Liturgy.

#### **FROM THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL: <sup>1</sup>**

1. GIRM 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.
2. GIRM 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; (for the sick & deceased)
  - 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.

3. GIRM 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.

## **FORM <sup>ii</sup>**

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.

## **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?

## **PREPARED PRAYERS FROM THE ROMAN MISSAL <sup>iii</sup>**

Formulas for the Universal Prayer can be found in Appendix V of the Roman Missal.

Prepared by the Office for Worship  
Diocese of Orange  
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<sup>i</sup> General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), International Committee on English in the Liturgy, 3rd ed., 2010

<sup>ii</sup> Diocese of Fort Worth, Office of Liturgy & Worship

<sup>iii</sup> Roman Missal. 3rd typical edition, Vatican City State: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2008