

## New and Corrected Translation of the Mass – Part 15

### The Prayer of the Faithful

In the Prayer of the Faithful, the pattern for use at Mass reminds us that the local church gathered in prayer is united to the whole Catholic Church. The priest begins with an exhortation to trust in God's providence and goodness.

Then the intercessions themselves are to be introduced by a deacon, since he is the minister of charity. In the absence of a deacon, a priest, cantor, lector, or a layperson may do so. The order laid down for intentions in the Roman Missal is: (1) For the needs of the Church; (2) For the world; (3) For those in need; (4) For the local community. After intercession for the living, then intercession may be made (5) For the dead. Just like the priest's introduction, the intentions proposed are addressed to the congregation, not to God directly.

The structure of each bidding prayer is (a) the deacon invites us to pray for an intention, and (b) during a significant pause we pray for that intention. There are two options for how we respond after our prayer. One option is by means of prayerful *silence*. The other option is the priest (not the deacon or intercession proposer) prompts us to respond, in one of the following ways.

✠ Lord, in your mercy.	✠ <b>Hear our prayer.</b>
✠ Lord, we ask you:	✠ <b>Hear our prayer.</b>
✠ Lord, hear us.	✠ <b>Lord, graciously hear us.</b>
✠ We pray to the Lord:	✠ <b>Lord, hear our prayer.</b>

We must say our response sincerely. Try to remember at least one of the petitions, and keep on praying for it during the week. In England and Wales it is common to seek Our Lady's intercession at the end of the petitions, praying the 'Hail Mary' (permission for this was obtained by the late Cardinal Heenan). Then the concluding prayer is made by the priest, addressing God now, usually with a Trinitarian formula: to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

The intentions announced should be short, sober, prudent, clear, succinct, and able to be understood by the congregation. They should always look beyond the concerns of the local assembly to the needs of the whole Church and of the wider world. Expressing the prayer of the entire community, they should not be a commentary on the news, a platform to make announcements, a partisan view at odds with Church teaching, or an alternative sermon. Also, the intercessions should not be reduced to the theme for that Sunday or season. They should genuinely seek God's help, rather than 'help us to help others'.