

Understanding the Mass

Part 14 in a series

The Prayer of the Faithful – The Universal Prayer

We have just finished proclaiming our beliefs in the Creed and we now turn to God and offer our prayers for the salvation of the whole world. The intentions are announced by the Deacon, or, in his absence, by a reader.

You will notice that the prayers that we offer during each Mass follow a general pattern. The series of intentions, in general, are as follows.

- a) For our Pope (his bishops, priests, deacons)
- b) For the needs of the Church
- c) For the salvation of the world and for those who govern it
- d) For those burdened by any kind of difficulty (e.g. the afflicted)
- e) For those who have died
- f) For the local community (for the intentions that we personally bring before our God)

Again, just as with our recitation of the Creed, we should listen attentively to what is being offered to our Lord in prayer during the Prayer of the Faithful. Remember, it is not the deacon or priest who is offering these prayers by themselves. These prayers are being offered to God on behalf of all who are present. We respond to each intention with “Lord, hear our prayer” or a similar expression. This is a way of saying, “God, we are asking you to listen to what we are requesting of you.”

We offer our prayers to God with the utmost confidence. Why? Because Jesus tells us to do so. (Homework! Read Matthew 7: 7-11, John 16: 23).

The priest will conclude our prayers by affirming that they are offered through our Lord Jesus Christ with confidence that He will intercede for us with the Father.

The conclusion of the Universal Prayer marks the end of the first part of the Mass; the Liturgy of the Word. We will now move to the second part, the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Like the Liturgy of the Word, it is made up of many portions and we will take a brief look at each one. Just like with the earlier portions of the Mass we must continue with our commitment to participate, not just observe!