

The General Intercessions/Prayers of the Faithful

The final action in the Liturgy of the Word comes in the General Intercessions, also known as the Prayers of the Faithful. Each of these names tells us something important about this prayer. As the Prayer of the Faithful, this prayer is prayed by those who have been baptized and belong to the Order of the Faithful. When there are Catechumens (those preparing to be baptized) at Mass they are dismissed prior to praying the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful. Through Baptism we share in the priesthood of Christ, and just as Christ gave his life for the good of all people, so too we are called to offer prayers and intercessions for the needs of all people. The focus of these prayers should generally include four main categories of intention: *the needs of the Church, public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, those burdened by particular difficulties, and the needs of the local community*. They are not intended to be prayers of thanksgiving. On special occasions prayers related to that specific occasion can be included, but the general areas noted should always be addressed in the General Intercessions. The prayer is called the General Intercessions as it seeks to include the needs of all people, near and far, not just the concerns of those immediately present. These Prayers of the Faithful were included in the Order of Mass for the first time after the Second Vatican Council, and are the only place in the Mass where we can compose and pray our own prayers. All the other prayers in the Mass are prescribed by the official books. We not only *can* write the Prayers of the Faithful each week, *we are supposed to*, so that they really express what is happening at this particular time and in this particular place.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.
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