

A word from the Director of the Office for Worship...

Dear Friends in Liturgy and Music,

The second of our Lunch and Learn series will be on **Thursday, April 7, 2016 from 11:45 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Des Moines.** Please RSVP by Tuesday, April 5 with a phone call or email to me at 515-237-5043 or kmandelkow@dmdiocese.org OR Sandy Riesberg at 515-237-5046 or sriesberg@dmdiocese.org. April's topic is "Music, Message, and Ministry," and will be a fresh look on the process of planning for parish liturgies. This same topic will be repeated in a bit of a longer format on **Saturday, April 23rd in Council Bluffs.** I look forward to seeing you on Thursday, April 7th.

Sincerely in Christ,

Kim Mandelkow
Director, Office for Worship

Easter and Springtime is First Communion Time! If you have a special young person who is making their First Communion this year and you are looking for that perfect gift, I might suggest the following book.

Dear Pope Francis: The Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World

If you could ask Pope Francis one question, what would it be?

Children have questions and struggles just like adults, but rarely are they given the chance to voice their concerns and ask the big questions resting deep in their hearts. In Dear Pope Francis, Pope Francis gives them that chance and celebrates their spiritual depth by directly answering questions from children around the world. Some are fun. Some are serious. And some will quietly break your heart. But all of them are from children who deserve to know and feel God's unconditional love. Also available in Spanish as *Querido Papa Francisco*.

"Feels akin to sitting in on a series of intimate conversations." -*Publishers Weekly*

"The People's Pope shows that he is a down-to-earth man who understands both religion and children." -*Kirkus Reviews*

OFFICE FOR WORSHIP

April 2016

A Walk through the Mass Continues...

Picking up on where we left off in March with the Liturgy of the Word, we continue our walk through the elements of the Mass in hopes of providing an opportunity for us all to stop and reflect on why we do what we do at Mass. This month, we take an in-depth look at the Prayer of the Faithful and its composition.

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

In the Universal Prayer, or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in a certain way to the word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is fitting that such a prayer be included, as a rule, in Masses celebrated with a congregation, so that petitions will be offered for the holy Church, for civil authorities, for those weighed down by various needs, for all men and women, and for the salvation of the whole world. — GIRM, 69

The Prayer of the Faithful

The composition of the text of the Prayer of the Faithful is completely free. Most of the Catholic Mass is heavily scripted, but this prayer is designed to be freely composed parish by parish, Mass by Mass, so that particular needs may be brought to the attention of the community and commended to God. When writing intercessions for Mass, here are 10 principles to keep in mind:

1. **These are "general" intercessions.** "General" does not mean "generic" in the sense that they are "pre-packaged" petitions you find in intercession books, homily resources services, or liturgical calendars. "General" in this case means that the prayers must be capable of being owned and assented to by the whole assembly. That is, the assembly must be able to fully, consciously, and actively *want* to pray for the petition being voiced. If they cannot honestly do this, it cannot genuinely be their petition. It might be a portion of the assembly's petition, or it might be one person's petition, but it cannot be claimed by everyone, thus it cannot be the "Prayer of the Faithful."
2. **These are petitions.** As nice as it might be, this is not the time to list the things for which we are thankful. For example, at the anniversary Mass of a parish, you might hear, "In thanksgiving for the pastor and staff of this parish and for the good work they do..."



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The form of the general intercessions need to be petitionary — asking God, not thanking God. This example can easily become petitionary by rewording it: “For the pastor and staff of this parish: that the Spirit will guide them in their continued good work and faithful leadership, we pray...”

3. **Be poetic.** All the prayers of the liturgy are meant to be poetic. That is, the words need to stir our hearts, engage our imagination, and cause us to desire the very thing we think is impossible and unimaginable—the reign of God on earth. Jesus used poetry to describe this reign. He never said, “Heaven is the concrete proleptic manifestation of the salvific action of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, enabled by the Holy Spirit, made real for believers in Christ.” Instead, Jesus used poetry: “The Kingdom of Heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field...” (Matthew 13:24), or “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed...” (Matthew 13:21). Jesus used these metaphors and images to move people’s hearts, because moving a person’s heart is the first step toward conversion. Try using the images, phrases, and moods from the scriptures of the day or liturgical season to inspire the wording of your intercessions.
4. **Be concise. Don’t be preachy.** Crafting good prayer is a bit like writing good music. It needs rhythm and meter, flow and gracefulness. Basically, the long sentences lose rhythm and tend to have stilted feel. Shorter sentences and phrases, similar to a litany, have a movement and pace that makes the prayer almost like breathing, impelling us to reply: “Lord, hear our prayer.” Longer sentences also have a tendency to be “preachy,” narrowing the “generalness” of the intercession and the ability of the assembly to assent to it. Stick with shorter phrases, and speak the words out loud, listening for a smooth rhythm to the words and a fluid transition between sentences.
5. **Be consistent.** The structure of the intercessions should be consistent among all the petitions. Petitions usually take one of three forms: 1. “For _____, we pray...” 2. “That _____, we pray...” or 3. “For _____: that _____, we pray...” All three forms are acceptable. The first tends to flow better and be less preachy. The last allows for the use of more images. Whichever form you use, use it for all the petitions. Don’t change it up part way through the intercessions. Also, don’t change the assembly’s response every week as it confuses people. Using a different response for the various liturgical seasons is an idea, but keep that response for the whole season.
6. **Be Musical.** Singing prayer well is usually preferred to simply speaking prayer. Many parishes use a seasonal sung response for the intercession. Consider having a cantor chant the petitions.
7. **Do your role and only your role.** The liturgy is like a living body. In a healthy body, each part has a particular function, and only that body part does that function. If the body is healthy, the foot never takes over the hand’s job. In a similar way, each member of the liturgical assembly has a particular function and should do only that function. The presider, though he may be capable of reading the intercessions, should do only his job of presiding. His job is to call the assembly to pray at the beginning of the Prayer of the Faithful and to collect all the petitions into a final concluding prayer. If there is a deacon present for the Mass, he is the primary reader of the petitions. If there is no deacon, the second lector takes that function. If the prayers are sung, the cantor takes this role.
8. **These are prayers of the “faithful.”** The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 69 says, “In the Universal prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all.” Only the baptized can genuinely pray the Prayer of the Faithful, and it is their right and responsibility to offer these prayers. Thus, during

It is important to note that, in place of singing, the organ may play instrumental music. Instruments are not to play solos during Lent, except on the Fourth Sunday, solemnities, and feasts (GIRM 313). In practice, there really should be no music during Lent and only instrumental music during the offertory during the rest of the year.

The offertory song does serve a very practical purpose by covering the action, and sometimes “business” of the children returning from their celebration of the Liturgy of the Word, the collection, and the procession and presentation of the gifts; however, the music is meant to conclude when the gifts are placed on the altar. If your parish chooses to sing an Offertory Chant/Song, a refrain-style song works best because the verses can be ended at the appropriate time.

The set of ceremonies that precedes the Eucharistic Prayer is called the Preparation of the Gifts.

The altar is prepared, the gifts are brought forward, and God is praised for them.

Preparation of the Gifts

The Liturgy of the Eucharist has two high points: the Eucharistic Prayer and the sharing of Holy Communion. The other elements prepare for and flow from these key moments. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest prays that the Holy Spirit will change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. During Holy Communion the faithful share in the sacrament, establishing their union with Christ and with one another. The set of ceremonies that precedes the Eucharistic Prayer is called the Preparation of the Gifts. The altar is prepared, the gifts are brought forward, and God is praised for them.

The preparation of the altar was a practical matter that evolved into a detailed ritual involving the elements to be placed there. In the current rite, the Order of Mass expects that the altar has been bare up to this point, except perhaps candles, and for the Book of the Gospels, which has since been carried to the ambo. Ministers—not the priest—bring various elements to the altar. The corporal is to be laid there at this time, though many worshipping communities keep it on the altar from one Mass to the next. The purificator, which will be used to wipe the rim of the chalice, may also be carried to the altar. The paten is not mentioned because the bread will be sitting on it when it is brought forward. The pall—the stiff square that may cover the chalice—is optional, and is mentioned only here in the Missal. The Missal is also brought forward at this time. If the priest uses a bookstand, it would logically come as well. In most churches, the Missal is set to the side and turned toward the priest.

Contact the Worship Office

Have a liturgical question? [Contact](#)

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Visit us on the web at
www.dmdiocese.org

Important Dates

Saturday, April 2, 2016

8:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Encuentro Diocesano 2016

Thursday, April 7, 2016

11:45 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Catholic Pastoral Center
Lunch and Learn Series

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

At the Last Supper Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples. He also blessed a cup of wine and gave it to them. “This is my body,” he said. “This is my blood. Do this in memory of me.” In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the Church enters into the action of Jesus at the Last Supper by giving thanks to God, breaking the bread, and sharing Communion.



The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins after the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful). If children celebrated the Liturgy of the Word in a separate place, they are brought back to the full assembly for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. As everyone changes posture from standing to sitting, the children return to their places.

From the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

When all this has been done, the Offertory Chant begins. Meanwhile, the ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar.

Offertory Chant

The offertory chant/song begins at the conclusion of the Prayer of the Faithful. It is important to remember that this is optional. It does not serve the same function as the Gathering or Communion Song. If people are to sing, the cantor may need to announce and invite the singing.

The offertory song dates back to the early years after the Second Vatican Council as the Church was implementing liturgical changes. It was during those early years following the Council that parishes started singing four hymns at Mass: entrance, offertory, Communion, and closing. The pre-2002 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) de-emphasized the significance of singing the offertory. The 2002 GIRM preserved the tradition, but did not require it like the opening or Communion songs.

the period of the catechumenate, catechumens are dismissed from the assembly before the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful. Because they are baptized and have a right and duty to pray the Prayer of the Faithful, *candidates* remain in the assembly. They should never be dismissed from Mass. There should be an intercession for the catechumens.

9. **Follow the sequence.** There are four basic things we pray for, and these are outlined in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 70. They are: 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. There should be at least one intercession for each of these topics. Feel free to compose more than one intercession for each topic so that you don't try to cram everything that needs to be prayed for into one petition. For example, have one petition for the nation and another petition for local authorities.
10. **Know the world around you.** Like preaching, writing good intercessions requires that you read the newspaper, watch the news, and know what's going on in your local and global communities. It's amazing to hear how many parishes simply use the "canned" intercessions from books that were published at least a year ago without incorporating anything that is on the hearts and minds of real people in their parish, city, nation, and world today. No "pre-written" intercession resource could have prepared for September 11, Hurricane Katrina, the San Francisco earthquake in 1989, the Newtown, Connecticut tragedy, Columbine, or the Boston Bombing. It is our responsibility and duty as baptized people to pray for these very needs and concerns.

Writing the Prayer of the Faithful takes skill and talent, but you don't have to be a published author in order to do it. You may want to consider the following steps for crafting the Prayer of the Faithful.

- a. Read the 10 Principles above.
- b. Pray for wisdom, creativity, and guidance.
- c. Read the Gospel, first reading, responsorial psalm and second reading for the Mass for which you are writing. Underline key phrases that stand out to you. Look for things like actions that God has done, is doing, or will do; metaphors and poetic phrases; commands.
- d. List a few images from the liturgical season for which you are writing (e.g. Easter would have images of new life, resurrection, mission).
- e. If possible, find out what music is being planned for the celebration. Look for strong phrases and images from the texts.
- f. List the concerns that are on people's minds. Include what is going on in the parish, surrounding community, nation and world.
- g. Pick one of the forms discussed above: a) "For..." b) "That..." c) "For...that..."
- h. Begin writing, playing with the images and scriptural phrases using the four basic topics as your starting point.
- i. Speak out loud what you have initially written. Check for "preachy" attitudes or narrow wording. Imagine your assembly: Can they all assent to this prayer? Can they all participate fully in this intention? If there's doubt, rewrite.
- j. Speak out loud your second draft. Listen for the rhythm of the words and the way each line flows into the next. Cross out and rewrite weak images, phrases, or clichés. Avoid "church-speak" or code language, such as "RCIA."
- k. Speak out loud your final draft. Get another's opinions and test it with fellow parishioners before Mass. Be ready to change it Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning if a critical event takes place between the writing of your final draft and Mass.