The Universal Prayer

The Universal Prayer (also referred to as the Prayer of the Faithful) concludes the Liturgy of the Word at Mass. As a priestly people, we unite with one another to pray for the needs of the Church and the world.

Prayers of intercession have their roots in the Hebrew tradition. The Jewish *Amidah* is a prayer of thanksgiving that also includes petitioning God for aid in personal, community and world needs. Jesus and the apostles likely knew this prayer. Through natural development, petitioning God on behalf of all people became a part of the prayer of the early church in response to the proclamation of God's Word. There is reference to this as far back as the year 155 in the writings of Justin Martyr.



The people respond to the Word of God and offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that the form of prayer petitions 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.

The celebrant begins the Universal Prayer with an introduction by which he calls upon the faithful to pray. This is followed by the series of intentions which are usually:

- for the needs of the Church,
- for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world,
- for those burdened by any kind of difficulty and,
- for the local community.
- Note — in a particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the occasion.

The celebrant follows the petitions with an oration; this concludes the prayer.

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 stand and give expression to their prayer either by an invocation said in common after each intention or by praying in silence.

Sources: Breaking Bread; The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB); angelusnews.com/faith/liturgy-the-universal-prayer-raising-an-echo-in-our-hearts/