

## The Categories of Intentions

Intentions for the Prayer of the Faithful fall into four categories: A) the needs of the universal Church; B) public authorities, and the salvation of the whole world; C) people burdened by any kind of difficulty; and D) the local community of faith, represented by the assembly. At least one intention from each category is to be included. Writers and leaders of the Prayer of the Faithful should become familiar with 69–71 in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Revised* (2010). It is available from OCP (ed. 30108143).

The intentions in these categories should reflect the creative freedom and character of the local church: “The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community” (GIRM 71). See pages 108-109 for common intercessions.

**A** *The needs of the universal Church.* This category includes petitions for the pope, bishops, and pastors of the Church, missions, Christian unity, and vocations to the presbyterate and religious life. Some examples are as follows:

That our Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons  
grow in their love for the body and blood of Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For apostles of Christ who bear witness throughout the world,  
and for missionaries in foreign lands,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That preachers in our Church  
preach what they believe and practice what they preach,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For God’s people,  
loved by God as a bride is loved by her husband,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That all the people of all churches  
come together in one Spirit, one Lord, and one baptism,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**B** *Public authorities and the salvation of the whole world.* This category includes petitions for peace, leaders of government, good weather, the safety of crops, elections, and the resolution of economic crises. Some examples are:

That men and women in positions of trust  
seek justice and peace in all they do,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That our country become a place where people of all races  
are truly equal and at home,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For civil servants in every land,  
for firefighters, paramedics, police officers, and road builders,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That people of every nation  
use natural resources more wisely, and treat creation more respectfully,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That nations never again wage war on one another,  
and that people never again terrorize one another,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That the harvest of the season be abundant,  
and the produce of the earth be plentiful,  
let us pray to the Lord:

**C** *People burdened by any kind of difficulty.* This includes those burdened by poverty or any other tribulation—the persecuted, the unemployed, the sick and infirm, the dying, prisoners, and exiles, among others. Some examples are:

For children at risk,  
and for all God’s little ones,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That all the sick, especially those suffering alone,  
experience the love and support of others,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For the poor, the hungry, and the homeless,  
especially those who have lost hope,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That the blind see, the lame walk, and the deaf hear,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For all the unemployed and underemployed,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For those who hunger to be fed,  
and those who are fed, but hunger for justice,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That all whose lives are in danger, especially those unborn,  
receive strength and safety,  
let us pray to the Lord:

- D** *The local community of faith represented by the assembly.* This includes those in the Church preparing for baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, orders, and marriage; it also includes pastors, an approaching church mission, and deceased loved ones. Here are some examples:

That those preparing for baptism  
find Christ's wisdom in this community,  
let us pray to the Lord:

That this church  
be a haven for all in need,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For the young people of our community,  
and for all members of this church,  
let us pray to the Lord:

For those who have died from hunger, neglect, or abuse,  
and for our loved ones who have passed from our midst,  
let us pray to the Lord:

Note that the sequence of the categories is always the same: universal Church, world affairs, special needs, local church.

Greater flexibility is appropriate for ritual celebrations like weddings and funerals. General intentions should never be completely omitted, but the emphasis should be on the celebration itself (GIRM 70).