

Holy Cross, Topsham: Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding Prayers)

1. A rota is prepared for bidding prayer writers by Neville Simmons. Each person writes prayers for Sundays for a whole month. In December, prayers for Christmas day are also required.
2. A uniform format is suggested for all writers (*see sample below*).
3. The heading should include date, lectionary cycle (A, B or C), and position in the Church's calendar. (e.g. 4th Sunday, Ordinary Time). The parish newsletter identifies each Sunday.
4. Both the priest's and reader's sections should fit onto one side of A4. One of our priests has poor eyesight. The priest's opening and closing prayers should be 18 pt font. For ease of reading, the reader's section should be in 14 pt font.
5. The writer should arrive at Mass at least 15 minutes early and leave the printed prayers on the priest's ambo and on the front bench for the reader. If writing is completed in time, writers could also email the prayers to the reader (check who it is on the readers' rota) by Saturday evening at the latest, allowing time for a 'read-through' in peace at home.
6. The main categories of 'intentions' each week are:¹
 - a. For the Pope and/or needs of the Church as a whole
 - b. For public authorities and the salvation of the world
 - c. For those, worldwide, 'burdened by any kind of difficulty'
 - d. For the local community

In practice, this means a minimum of 4 intentions and not more than 6.

7. Preparation: read the newsletter to see if the Sunday has a special designation for prayers (e.g. prisoners) and the Sunday readings to relate the prayers to the readings in some way, if possible. Examples of bidding prayers are available each week on the Redemptorist Publications website² and other sites³ which you may find helpful as a basis for writing your own.
8. Each intention is addressed to the congregation (not to God) beginning, 'Let us pray for ...' or 'For...'. The congregation should have a chance to consider the intention briefly before assenting with 'Lord graciously hear us' (or another formulation) – so the intention should be short (encouraging the reader to speak slowly) and followed by a pause.

¹ www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

² www.rpbooks.co.uk

³ www.catholicunion.org.uk/bidding-prayers-for-sunday-mass/

9. Intentions are necessarily similar week by week and it can be difficult to find fresh ways of expressing them. It is perfectly acceptable to re-use our old ideas and to borrow from other sources but obvious repetition should be avoided by making adjustments.
10. At every Mass, many or most will be struggling with difficulties of some kind, some with major crises. This reality is addressed in the last intention ('For a moment let us now pray for our own intentions') followed by a pause which should be much longer (10 - 15 seconds). At Holy Cross, we don't mention names of parishioners in the bidding prayers; instead, individual references are made as necessary by the priest.
11. Writers should read their own work carefully, preferably out loud, asking themselves: 'Have I made it as straightforward as possible? Have I indicated the pauses as well as I can and in the right places? Might a change in wording make it easier for the reader or listener?' Bear in mind that variety of word- and sentence-length is important for holding attention (and so for understanding).

Further reading

This link to the Liturgy Office website is a summary on a single page with further resources, should you wish to read further.

<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Intercessions.shtml>

Third Sunday in Lent (Year C): Prayers of the Faithful

23 March 2025

Priest:

With confidence we come before our God who hears, who sees, who heals and who loves us, knowing that our prayers will be answered with God's wisdom.

Reader:

For Francis, our Pope: we give thanks for his continued recovery and ask that he may be returned to full health.

[PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

For all those affected by war: may governments, aid agencies and individuals find ways to help those who have lost family members and friends, been hurt or displaced, or are without basic necessities.

[PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

For Christians, Jews and Muslims, all children of Abraham: we may draw closer to each other in understanding, love and friendship.

[PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

For those called to the Easter sacraments: may they find joy in the love of the Lord.

[PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

For all who rely on our prayers, our neighbours, families and friends.

[PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

In a moment of silence we bring our own needs to the Lord.

[10 second PAUSE] Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

May Mary, who was ever attentive to God's word, join her prayers to ours as we pray: **Hail Mary ...**

Priest: God of mercy and compassion, hear the prayers we make, through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

