

Prayer of the Faithful (General Intercessions)

One of the components of synagogue liturgy was a series of eighteen blessings containing requests for individual and universal needs. At a very early period a similar prayer became a part of the liturgy both in the East and in the West. St. Justin the Martyr, writing in the mid-second century describes the celebration of Baptism and then adds that "all offer prayers in common for ourselves, for him who had just been enlightened and for people everywhere". He goes on to mention the Eucharist which followed. These prayers disappeared from the Roman Mass, except on Good Friday, until restored in the style of a litany by the Second Vatican Council. The Prayer of the Faithful in popular speech is often referred to as "General Intercessions", since they extend beyond the needs and concerns of the local community.

Therefore, after the recitation of the Creed, the priest, by means of a brief introduction, invites the faithful to participate in the Prayer of the Faithful. The lector or another person announces the intentions while facing the people, who take their part by responding in supplication. As a rule, the series of intentions is: for the needs of the Church, public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, those burdened by any kind of difficulty and the local community. At special celebrations the intentions may more closely reflect the occasion. Following the intentions, the priest concludes the petition with a prayer. The people sit down after the prayer.