

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER OR PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The Bidding Prayers are addressed to the congregation, not to God. Each one is an invitation to the congregation for them to pray for the specified intention. Once the intention has been read, there should be a pause, whilst the congregation pray in silence, before the response is invited.

CONVICTION, REVERENCE AND PREPARATION

- Prepare for your reading during the week before you are to minister the word to the congregation:
 - Take time to understand what you are reading: What is the writer saying, what is its context? What does it mean to us today? How does it relate to the other readings?
 - Practise reading out loud: What challenges are there in saying the words aloud? How can you proclaim the passage to give fresh and authentic voice to God's living word?
 - Consider how to proclaim the scriptures effectively: consider where to speak more slowly, or more quickly, more quietly or more loudly to emphasise words or phrases; where to pause to give shape and rhythm
 - Pray the reading: Make time to respond in prayer to what you have discovered in the reading; Speak to the Lord about what you have read and what it has said to you; Bring before the Lord the community that you are called to serve, pray for them and for yourself
- Arrive at church early to avoid any last minute rush and to help with any preparations
- Spend time before Mass quietly in prayer and reflection, read the scriptures for the day again; read through the Bidding Prayers
- Dress smartly, put on your 'Sunday Best', take off your outside coat
- When you are on the sanctuary, set an example to the congregation, be attentive, join in all the prayers and all the hymns
- If you need to move around, do so gently, avoid moving during a prayer and try not to cross in front of the altar
- When preparing to receive Holy Communion move to the back of the sanctuary and stand in a line with the other ministers and altar servers so that Holy Communion can be distributed easily
- Above all, never make a fuss and avoid doing anything that will distract the faithful from their prayer

This document and others in the series can be found on our website: <http://stmaryandstpaul.org.uk/> These have been produced based on a series of resources prepared by the **Westminster LITURGY Commission** who kindly agreed to its use to support the continuing formation of liturgical ministers in the parishes of St Mary and St Paul. The originals and other resources can be found on their website: <http://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/liturgy/>
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PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

*An introduction for commissioned ministers of the
Word in the parishes of St Mary's, Dukinfield and St
Paul's, Hyde*



MINISTERING THE WORD

The Church recognises that there is a family relationship between a range of ministries which she groups as ‘ministries of the word’. These are all ministries which are exercised so that others might more clearly understand and be fed by the living word of God.

When God shares his word with us, he awaits our response, that is, our listening and our adoring ‘in Spirit and in truth’ (John 4:23). The Holy Spirit makes our response effective, so that what we hear in the celebration of the liturgy we carry out in the way we live: ‘Be doers of the word and not hearers only’ (James 1:22)

Introduction to the Lectionary, 6

MINISTERING THE WORD OF GOD AT MASS

A reader is asked to do more than simply read the readings at Mass. The readings are intended to be proclaimed in such a way that they might be heard, and that they might bring those who hear them to a deeper knowledge and love of the Lord. The minister has the responsibility of leading the assembly into a time of listening.

The liturgy of the word must be celebrated in a way that fosters meditation; clearly, any sort of haste that hinders reflectiveness must be avoided. The dialogue between God and his people taking place through the Holy Spirit demands short intervals of silence, suited to the assembly, as an opportunity to take the word of God to heart and to prepare a response to it in prayer.

cf. Introduction to the Lectionary, 28

The Word of God offers us enlightenment and guidance. In proclaiming the word of God from Sacred Scripture, readers exercise their responsibility in mediating the presence of Christ. God speaks to the assembly through them, and the impact of God’s message will depend significantly on their conviction, their preparation, and their delivery. (*See later.*)

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Mass is made up of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which are so closely connected as to form one act of worship.

In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the Eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is embodied and renewed. The chosen people entered into a special covenant with God at Sinai, a covenant that was renewed and fulfilled on Calvary. By hearing the

word proclaimed in worship, the faithful again enter into the unending dialogue between God and the covenant people, a dialogue sealed in the sharing of the Eucharistic food and drink. The meaning of Communion is proclaimed in the word; the message of Scripture is made actual once again in the Communion banquet. The proclamation of the word is thus integral to the Mass and at its very heart.

Celebrating the Mass

THE ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The minister of the Word reverently carries the Book of the Gospels (or in our case the Lectionary) elevated so that the congregation can see it and consider it as a sign of God’s presence.

THE ANTIPHONS

The Entrance Antiphon should be read if there is no Entrance Hymn; it is led by the Reader before the priest says the Greeting. The Communion Antiphon is said after the priest consumes the Blood of Christ.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

The dignity of the Word of God requires that there is a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and that is clearly visible to the faithful. From the ambo only the readings, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation are to be proclaimed; it may be used for giving the Homily and for announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the Word should stand at it.

Announce the reading in the following format using the information in the Lectionary;

‘The First Reading A reading from the book of Exodus’ or ‘The Second Reading A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.’

End with:

‘The Word of God’, remembering that we no longer say ‘This is the Word of God.’

The Responsorial Psalm is called that because it is a response to the first reading, the congregation join in the refrain, so don’t use the words ‘The Response is’, introduce the Psalm with: ‘The Responsorial Psalm’ and then say the refrain. The congregation will know to repeat it.