

PRAYER

Gracious God,
source of all light and all goodness,
you sent your Son, your living Word,
to reveal to humanity the mystery of your love.
Look with mercy on all who are preparing to serve
as Commentators and Readers of Intercessory Prayers.
Bless them in their service
so that they may be nourished and inspired
by your Word of life,
be transformed by it and faithfully witness to it
through their ministry in your Church.
We praise and thank you, Father,
in the name of Jesus your Son,
and in the love of your Holy Spirit,
God of glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

[adapted from *Celebrations of Installation and Recognition* (2005)]

- Intentions are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by a deacon, cantor, reader, commentator or member of the assembly.
- People stand and express their prayer by a common invocation (e.g. Lord, hear our prayer) after each intention or by praying in silence (GIRM 71). To facilitate the people's participation, there should be a pause for silent prayer before the phrase that invites their response

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

Ensure that the folder containing texts used for commentaries and prayers of the faithful looks dignified. Specially produced liturgical folders, emblazoned with the Christian cross and containing plastic pockets for prepared texts for presiding celebrants and intercessory prayers for commentators, can be obtained from Catholic publishers and bookshops.

suffered shipwreck.
Hymenaeus and Alexander
over to Satan, so that they
aspaseme.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers,
intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for every-
one, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, so
that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in
godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acc-
able in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who
everyone to be saved and to come to the kn-
truth. ⁵For
God;
a mediator betw

FURTHER REFERENCE

- *Celebrations of Installation and Recognition*. Ottawa: CCCB, 2005, p. 94.
- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. In *The Roman Missal*. London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010.
- Julien, D. *Direction du chant d'assemblée, in Eglise qui chante* 81 (1967) 15 cited in Lucien Deiss, *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996. p. 50.
- Kwatera, Michael. *Preparing the Intercessions*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996.

COMMENTATORS AND READERS OF PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL



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Designed by Communications Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne





COMMENTATORS

The ministry of commentator is relatively new in the Church's liturgical tradition. While mention is made of the ministry in liturgical documents prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the role has developed since then to serve the goal of full, conscious and active participation mandated by the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963) arts. 14, 29-30.

Commentators foster congregational participation at Mass by introducing hymns, leading the Responsorial Psalm (in the absence of a cantor), reading the Prayer of the Faithful and making announcements at the end of Mass. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2010) refers to commentators exercising a genuine liturgical ministry, one that therefore requires careful preparation. The GIRM makes the following points:

- If appropriate, the commentator provides the faithful briefly with explanations and exhortations so as to direct their attention to the celebration and ensure that they are better disposed for understanding it.
- The commentator's remarks should be *thoroughly prepared and notable for their restraint* (emphasis added).
- In performing this function the commentator stands in a suitable place within sight of the faithful, **but not at the ambo**, because the ambo is reserved for proclaiming and preaching God's word [GIRM #105b] (emphasis added).

The extent of and necessity for the commentator's ministry needs to be determined in collaboration with the presiding celebrant. According to the GIRM, the priest, as part of his office of presiding over the gathered community, can offer brief comments during the liturgy at the following points:

- Introductory Rites: after the Greeting and before the Penitential Act
- Liturgy of the Word: before the First Reading
- Liturgy of the Eucharist: before the Preface but not during the Eucharistic Prayer
- Concluding Rites: before the Dismissal

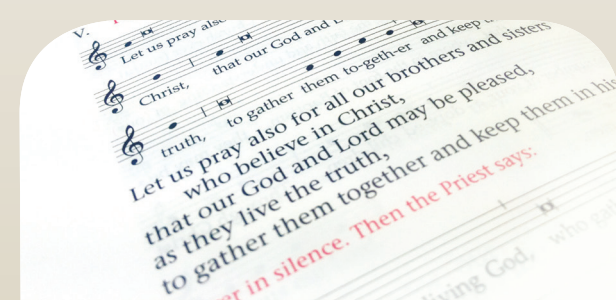
Lucien Deiss' golden rule for choir directors – "minimum intervention, maximum effect" – might equally apply to commentators! This rule is captured in the following advice from D. Julien:

When a phrase suffices, don't give a speech.
When a word suffices, don't utter a phrase.
When a gesture suffices, don't utter a word.
When a look suffices, don't make a gesture.

BE BRIEF!

To prevent the liturgy from becoming burdened by too many words, generally avoid reading texts that people can read for themselves. This applies to announcing names of parishioners undertaking ministries within the liturgy and reading the headings to the readings printed (in italics) at the top of Scriptures in the Lectionary for Mass, Sunday or Weekday Missal, bulletin and service booklet.

On the other hand, commentators can exercise a helpful ministry by leading people in their responses, particularly during liturgies attended by large numbers of people who do not come to Mass regularly (e.g. at Christmas, Easter and funeral liturgies) and during the introduction of liturgical changes that occur from time to time.



READERS OF PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2010) offers helpful guidelines for the celebration of all parts of the Mass, including the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful.

- In the Prayer of the Faithful, the congregation responds to the Word of God, which has been received in faith, and exercises its baptismal priesthood in offering prayers to God for the salvation of all.
- It is desirable that there usually be the Prayer of the Faithful at Masses celebrated with a congregation.

The series of intentions is usually to be:

- For the needs of the Church
- For public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
- For those burdened by any kind of difficulty
- For the local community (particularly the sick and those who have died).

- In particular celebrations (e.g. at Confirmation, a Marriage or a Funeral), the series of intentions may be concerned more directly with the particular celebration [GIRM (2010) 69-70].
- The presiding celebrant leads this prayer from the chair. His introduction, addressed to the people, calls them to prayer. His conclusion, addressed to God, collects/unites the peoples' prayers into one.
- Intentions should be sober, composed with a wise liberty and in a few words, and they should be expressive of the entire community's prayer.
- Given the universal nature of intercessory prayers, intentions need to move from the general to the particular: e.g. We pray for all those who have died recently, particularly ... (local names) ... that they may rest in the peace of Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.
- Readers of intentions should check before Mass regarding correct pronunciation for names of the sick or those who have died.
- The litanic form of the prayers requires that a consistent pattern be adopted during the intentions: e.g. For ... (the general category + particular group) ... that ... (petition) ... Let us pray to the Lord.

