

Order of Celebrating Matrimony

Examples of the Universal Prayer

Introductory Note

Two different resources are offered for the Universal Prayer (or Prayer of the Faithful). They may be used as printed, adapted or new texts composed.

The first is taken from the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* and offers two model sets of intercessions.

The second resource is more extensive and comes from a forthcoming resource *To love & to cherish*. It offers a number of text for both the initial invitation and the concluding prayer. The intentions are arranged thematically (e.g. *For the Married Couple*) and those compiling the Intercessions will wish to choose one or more intentions from a number of the themes.

Finally, some notes are provided on the Universal Prayer.

Contents

From the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*

Set A	2
Set B	3

From *To love and to cherish*

Invitations	4
Responses	4
Intentions	
The Church	4
The world	4
Particular Needs	5
The Assembly and Local Community	5
The Married Couple	5
Marriage Needs	6
The Faithful Departed	6
Particular Occasions: Time of Engagement	6
Particular Occasions: Anniversaries	7
Conclusions	7

Notes	7
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Examples from the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*

251. **Priest**

Dear brothers and sisters,
as we call to mind the special gift of grace and charity
by which God has been pleased to crown and consecrate
the love of our sister N. and our brother N.,
let us commend them to the Lord.

Deacon or minister:

That these faithful Christians, N. and N.,
newly joined in Holy Matrimony,
may always enjoy health and well-being,
let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Or another appropriate response of the people.

That he will bless their covenant
as he chose to sanctify marriage at Cana in Galilee,
let us pray to the Lord. **R:**

That they be granted perfect and fruitful love,
peace and strength,
and that they bear faithful witness to the name of Christian,
let us pray to the Lord. **R:**

That the Christian people
may grow in virtue day by day
and that all who are burdened by any need
may receive the help of grace from above,
let us pray to the Lord. **R:**

That the grace of the Sacrament
will be renewed by the Holy Spirit
in all married persons here present,
let us pray to the Lord. **R:**

Priest:

Graciously pour out upon this husband and wife, O Lord,
the Spirit of your love,
to make them one heart and one soul,
so that nothing whatever may divide those you have joined
and no harm come to those you have filled with your blessing.
Through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

252. Priest

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us accompany this new family with our prayers,
that the mutual love of this couple may grow daily
and that God in his kindness
will sustain all families throughout the world.

Deacon or minister:

For this bride and groom,
and for their well-being as a family,
let us pray to the Lord.

℟: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Or another appropriate response of the people.

For their relatives and friends,
and for all who have assisted this couple,
let us pray to the Lord. ℟:

For young people preparing to enter Marriage,
and for all whom the Lord is calling to another state in life,
let us pray to the Lord. ℟:

For all families throughout the world
and for lasting peace among all people,
let us pray to the Lord. ℟:

For all members of our families
who have passed from this world,
and for all the departed,
let us pray to the Lord. ℟:

For the Church, the holy People of God,
and for unity among all Christians,
let us pray to the Lord. ℟:

Priest:

Lord Jesus, who are present in our midst,
as N. and N. seal their union
accept our prayer
and fill us with your Spirit.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

℟: Amen.

Examples from *To love & to cherish*

In compiling intercessions, an intention may be chosen from any of the following sections, as appropriate. Others in similar form may be composed.

INVITATIONS

- A Heartened by the love of God that we see reflected in the love of N. and N., let us approach the Father in renewed confidence.
- B Having listened to the riches of God's word, let us speak to him with confidence of our hopes and needs.
- C With faith and trust, let us place our hopes and prayers before our God.
- D Knowing that our all-loving Father desires only good for his children, let us pray to him with confidence.

RESPONSES

One of the following is include after each intention. Other responses may be used.

Let us pray to the Lord.

℟: Lord, we ask you hear our prayer.

or:

Lord, in your mercy.

℟: Hear our prayer.

INTENTIONS

The Church

- A That all who bear the name of Christian may be faithful to the new and everlasting covenant.
- B That we may nurture and support all Christian couples in their family life.
- C (For the people of God,) that we may journey together in generosity of heart.
- D That whatever our calling, we may be seen as Christ's love, alive and active in the world.

The World

- A For governments and leaders of nations; that they may work more closely together to foster freedom, justice, and peace.
- B For our government and society; that the laws and policies of this country may uphold marriage and the family.
- C For the world; that the peace of Christ will touch all nations and lead them to understanding, harmony and compassion.
- D For the world; that in its hunger for love it may turn to Christ and acknowledge him as Lord.

Particular Needs

- A For all in any kind of need,
especially for those experiencing difficulty in their marriage and family;
that they will know the gentle presence of the Lord.
- B For people whose lives lack hope and meaning,
that today's celebration of new life in marriage will help us all
to radiate God's love to the world.
- C For those who are homeless and without work;
that Christian love may respect and support them in their need.
- D For those who have plenty;
that Christian faith may find expression in true generosity of heart.
- E For all troubled in mind and body;
that they may find comfort and help in their time of affliction.
- F For those who are suffering or anxious and those who care for them;
for those who have died and those who mourn,
that they find strength and hope in the life of Christ.

The Assembly and Local Community

- A That we who share in today's wedding celebrations
might be refreshed in our commitment to selfless love.
- B For our local community;
that our homes may be filled with love
and that we may serve each other with kindness and understanding.
- C For all of us gathered here;
that we may rightly use the good things that God provides in this life,
and keep our hearts set on the life to come.

The Married Couple

- A For all married couples, and especially for N. and N.;
that they may grow together in holiness.
- B For N. and N., now united in marriage,
and for their salvation.
- C For N. and N.,
that they may faithfully live out the vows they have made today in our presence.
- D For N. and N.;
that their life together may be a witness to God's love in this troubled world.

All Married Couples

- A For the families of N. and N.;
that true friendship will deepen the bonds brought about by this marriage.
- B For all married people;
that they may become more aware of God's love for them
in times of trouble and in happiness.

- C For all married people,
those newly married, and those celebrating anniversaries;
that, living in faith, they may be a constant source of light and happiness to all.
- D For all married couples present here;
that they may renew their commitment to love
and to share with the world the mystery of God's friendship.
- E For all who are married in the Lord;
that God will help them grow in love
and sustain them in their efforts to give of themselves to others.

Marriage Needs

- A For those suffering a breakdown in family life;
that the Lord will bring them healing.
- B That we all may support and encourage those who find difficulty
in living out their marriage commitment.
- C For married people who now live in separation;
that they may be strengthened in the challenge and difficulty of life
without their partner.
- D For widows and widowers;
that the love they have known in marriage may continue to sustain and inspire.
- E For those whose family life is broken;
that pain will yield to new life, and forgiveness banish all bitterness.
- F For those who have lost their partners, either in death, separation, or divorce;
that they find comfort and consolation in the love of Christ.

The Faithful Departed

- A For the deceased parents (grandparents) of N. and N.;
that they may find eternal rest;
that the blessings they gave in life may be treasured by their family.
- B For our deceased family and friends (especially N.);
that they may see God face to face.

Particular Occasions: Time of Engagement

- A For N. and N.;
that in the time ahead as they prepare for marriage,
they may come to know the richness of God's love which they share.
- B For N. and N.;
that they be assured of our love and prayers
in their final weeks of preparation for marriage.
- C For N. and N., and for all who wish to marry;
that the Lord will grant them maturity and discernment.
- D For N. and N.,
and all those helping them prepare for marriage.

Particular Occasions: Anniversaries

- A For N. and N. as they give thanks for their life together;
that in the years ahead they may continue to grow in love,
strengthened in the knowledge of God's abundant love for them.
- B For N. and N.;
that the love they have known for many (n) years may grow ever stronger in Christ.
- C For N. and N.;
that they be assured of our love and prayers at this time of celebration.
- D For N. and N.;
that as they have known God's blessing for many (n) years,
they may continue to love and grow in God's blessing.

CONCLUSIONS

- A Almighty God,
source of life and love,
may your answer to our prayers
your kingdom grow among us
through Christ our Lord.
- ℟: Amen.
- B Loving God,
hear our prayers as we celebrate this joyful occasion.
Bless our desire to live in true communion
with you and with one another.
We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- ℟: Amen.
- C Listen, Lord, to the prayers of your people.
Hear us where faith is strong
and strengthen us where faith is weak.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- ℟: Amen.
- D Loving Father,
hear our prayers on this day so blessed with your love.
Heal our world with love
so that all peoples may come to know you.
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.
- ℟: Amen.

Notes

The following notes are taken from *Celebrating the Mass*, though intended for the celebration of (Sunday) Mass much of the guidance will apply to celebrations of Marriage.

The Prayer of the Faithful

171. Enlightened and moved by God's word, the assembly exercises its priestly function by interceding for all humanity. Because 'the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of the people

of this age and especially of the poor and those suffering in any way are the joy and hope, the struggle and anguish of Christ's disciples,' the Church prays not just for its own needs but for the salvation of the world, for civil authorities, for those oppressed by any burden, and for the local community, particularly those who are sick or who have died.

172. Thus, even though the intercessions may be quite concrete or particular in content, they should always look beyond the concerns of the local assembly to the needs of the whole Church and of the wider world. They are a sign of the communion of the particular assembly with all other assemblies and with the universal Church.
173. The priest celebrant directs the prayer from the chair. He briefly invites the people to pray, and at the end he draws their intercessions together in a brief concluding prayer with a short doxology. The intentions are proposed by a deacon, a cantor, reader, other minister, or members of the assembly at the ambo or another suitable place. After each intention, the faithful respond by silent prayer or a common response or both. They affirm the concluding prayer of the priest with their Amen.
- It is appropriate for the Prayer of the Faithful to be included in all Masses.
 - Both the priest's introduction and the proposed intentions are addressed to the assembly, not to God. They are invitations or biddings to the faithful, who normally will first pray silently for each intention and then give expression to their common prayer in an invocation sung or said together after each intention. Alternatively the prayer after each intention may simply be offered in silence.
 - These intentions should be short, clear, and objective enough for the faithful to understand and respond to them without difficulty. They should express the prayer of the entire community. There should be a significant pause after the intention has been read, while the assembly prays before the response is sung or said
 - The response they are to evoke is petition rather than praise, thanksgiving, or repentance.
 - On particular occasions, when other Sacraments or particular rites are celebrated in conjunction with the Mass, the range of intentions may be more closely concerned with the occasion; but even so, the intercessions should always include some general or universal intentions.
 - For each intention, the invitation to pray and the response may be sung or the entire intention may be sung or even spoken while music is played.
 - The Roman Rite does not envisage the inclusion of devotional prayers in the Prayer of the Faithful. As is traditional with liturgical prayer, the Prayer of the Faithful is addressed to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.
 - Those who read the intentions return to their place only after the completion of the concluding prayer.
 - Sample formulas for the Prayer of the Faithful are given in Appendix III of the *Roman Missal*. Further guidance is provided on the Liturgy Office website [<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Documents/Intercessions.shtml>].

(*Celebrating the Mass*, 171–173)