

## INTERCESSIONS TRAINING PACKET

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#### 1. Tips on Writing the General Intercessions for St. James Parish

#### 2. Excerpt from the General Instruction on the Roman Missal

Note especially the guidance on the sequence of intentions in #69. This section recommends that we start with the most general petition and work our way down to the more specific.

#### 3. Contents of the Petitions

#### 4. Form of the Closing Prayer

#### 4. Sample of the St. James Format

It is important to get the format for the intercessions right since they must be easy for someone to pick up and read with little preparation time.

#### 5. Names of God

Rather than starting out the Opening & Closing prayer with Heavenly Father or Almighty God each week, you might try using other names for God, such as those on the list found in the training packet.

#### 6. Sample Intercessions from Various Sources

These are some sample intercessions that might help you to get started writing. Some are fairly lengthy and need a bit of editing. When a petition is long, people tend to lose track of what is being said.

**Send** your Intercessions to me by Thursday morning of your assigned week by e-mailing them to: JoannHeld@comcast.net

**NOTE:** Don't worry about getting your Intercessions perfect right away. I always give them a quick look and do some editing before sending them on to the Parish Office. That also gives me a chance to add any last minute items that I may have forgotten to tell you about.

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TIPS ON WRITING THE GENERAL INTERCESSIONS  
ST. JAMES PARISH

1. Selecting Subjects for the Petitions

Your petitions should be based on:

- \* the Scripture readings for the day ([usccb.org/readings](http://usccb.org/readings))
- \* what's happening in our parish (check the bulletin)
- \* what's happening in the rest of the world (read the newspapers)

Please limit yourself to about 4 special petitions in addition to those for the sick, the deceased and the prayers in our request book. (These last three are included every week.)

2. Formatting

- \* Please use Arial 14 point font so that the prayers are easy for everyone to read.
- \* Be sure to leave space for Diane to type in the names of the sick and the deceased. There should be two or three blank lines for each of these Petitions.

3. Please type in the names of the people for whom each Mass is offered. These appear in the bulletin each week. ([stjamespennington.org/bulletins](http://stjamespennington.org/bulletins))

4. When filling in the names for the Mass intentions, please be aware that occasionally there will be intentions for people who are still alive (for example, an intention for a couple's anniversary or when the Mass is offered for "The People of the Parish"). When this happens, please adjust your language so that it is obvious that these prayers are for the living.

5. If you have trouble getting your intercessions done on your assigned day, give me a call or send me an e-mail. I have a lot of old intercessions on my computer that I can recycle quickly.

6. If you have a computer failure and can't type your intercessions, let me know and we'll figure something out.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

1. Read the intercessions out loud once after you have written them. Occasionally there seems to be a word missing and you'll probably notice it if you hear it read.

2. In this packet you will find some sample intercessions that might help you to get started writing. Some are fairly lengthy and need a bit of editing. When a petition is long, people tend to lose track of what is being said.

3. Rather than starting out the Opening & Closing prayer with Heavenly Father or Almighty God each week, you might try using other names for God, such as those on the list found in the training packet.

RESOURCES

Here is one of my favorite places to look for ideas for a particular Sunday  
<http://liturgy.slu.edu>

## General Instruction on the Roman Missal

### The Universal Prayer

69. In the Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful, the people respond in some sense to the Word of God which they have received in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal Priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all. It is desirable that there usually be such a form of prayer in Masses celebrated with the people, so that petitions “may be offered for holy Church, for those who govern with authority over us, for those weighed down by various needs, for all humanity, and for the salvation of the whole world.

70. The series of intentions is usually to be:

- a) for the needs of the Church;
- b) for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
- c) for those burdened by any kind of difficulty;
- d) for the local community.

Nevertheless, in any particular celebration, such as a Confirmation, a Marriage, or at a Funeral, the series of intentions may be concerned more closely with the particular occasion.

71. It is for the Priest Celebrant to regulate this prayer from the chair. He himself begins it with a brief introduction, by which he calls upon the faithful to pray, and likewise he concludes it with an oration. The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community.

They are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful.

*Excerpt From: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “General Instruction of the Roman Missal.” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/H3WMD.l>*

## Content of Petitions

Please keep in mind that in our petitions we are reminding God of our needs, not telling God what to do. Below is an excerpt from an article by Gail Morris which, I think, does an excellent job of clarifying this point.

*From **General Intercessions: The prayer of the baptized** by Gail Morris. In Ministry & Liturgy (June-July 2003 issue) page 10.*

### **Are we telling God what to do, or are we reminding God of our brothers' and sisters' pain and need of healing?**

Sometimes the nature of our wording can imply that we have the best solution and that we want God to be sure to use it! A colleague once commented, "God created us in God's own vision and we kindly return the favor." If we can approach the intercession through the lens of lovers and try to not control or limit God, our intercessory prayer may take on a new tone. We know that throughout the ages God has always been with us, so we ask God to look with mercy and compassion on the needs we are especially aware of this day. How can the wording reflect this lens? Consider:

~ For the gift of peace in a world shackled by the threat of war, we pray to the Lord.

~ For the conversion of the leaders of Iraq to have strength and the ability to see the errors of their ways and how it hampers world peace, we pray to the Lord.

The first intention helps bring to light our awareness and our plea to God for peace in unsettled times. The second gives God our solution and expresses our lack of confidence that God has the solution, thus limiting God's power in our lives. It also narrows our prayers to one place of world unrest. Fewer but more picturesque words present our intentions in a manner that is confident of God's response.

### Form of the Closing Prayer

The Closing Prayer is not a chance to sneak in an extra petition, no matter how broad. The Closing Prayer should take the following form. (See also samples on the next page.)

- The prayer is addressed to God.
- It asks God to look favorably upon the prayer of the Assembly.
- It concludes in the name of Jesus.

#### *Sample Closing Prayers from The Sacramentary*

God of love,  
our refuge and our strength,  
hear the prayers of your Church,  
and grant us today  
what we ask of you in faith.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Father,  
we come before you with faith and love  
to praise your goodness  
and to acknowledge our need.  
We ask you to hear the prayers we make  
in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen

Father,  
have mercy on your Church in its need,  
hear the prayers we offer with all our hearts,  
and never abandon the people who share your life.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Father,  
you know the many different needs  
your people have in this life.  
Hear us and answer the prayers of all  
who believe in you.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Father,  
hear the prayers of your people.  
Give us what you have inspired us  
to ask you for in faith.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**GENERAL INTERCESSIONS:** Format Example from April 2002

**PRESIDER:** With trusting hearts, let us offer our intercessions to our God whose blessing shelters the poor and the lowly.

**Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**READER:** That the Good Shepherd **may** raise up in the church those who will lead with courage and serve with love. We pray:

**Guide** our leaders as they respond to acts of terrorism and war. We pray:

That those who have been robbed of innocence and joy by the abuse of others **may** find the goodness of the Shepherd in all who care for them. We pray:

**Inspire** our community to take on your work of making the world a just and peaceful place. We pray:

That **we** who are being called by our Good Shepherd **may** have courage to follow and openness to welcome all others who hear his call. We pray:

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*Notes*

1. Make the **headings for Presider and Reader bold or caps** or somehow distinctive so that they can find their parts at a glance.
2. Use Arial Font, if possible, with a font size of 14. This is easiest for our Deacons to read.
3. Put the most universal petition first (such as for the Church, or for our nation, or for world peace) and then work down to the most personal (such as “For all gathered here...”)
4. I added **the word “may” to petitions to complete the verb**. I know that a lot of the examples in other materials do without this word quite often, but it’s easier for a listener to follow the thought if we always complete the verb.
5. It’s fine to start each petition with “For” or “That”, but you might **try starting with an action verb** like “Guide”, Inspire”, “Bless” or “Grant” occasionally.

6. *Be concise. Don't let each petition become a mini-sermon; people just won't be able to remember most of it.*

*Here's a great petition that was just too long and had multiple intentions. I edited it down to two. (Note that I also took out, "O Lord" since we usually have "Lord" in the people's response.)*

Two (or more) intercessions rolled into one:

Help us, O Lord, as individuals, as a Christian community, as a nation and as world citizens to be inclusive of all men and women. Hearing in today's readings your message, that your invitation is open to all and no one has exclusive claim to it. May we have the grace to live in open heartedness with all even those very different from ourselves.

1. Help us as individuals, as a Christian community, as a nation and as world citizens to be inclusive of all men and women.
2. Hearing that your invitation is open to all, may we have the grace to live in open heartedness with all even those very different from ourselves.

## NAMES FOR GOD

There are many, many names that we can use to address God. Here are some possibilities taken from the *Order of Christian Funerals*.

God of endless ages  
God of loving kindness  
God of all consolation  
God of mercy and love  
Faithful God  
All-powerful God  
God of blessings  
God of our ancestors in faith  
Almighty and faithful creator  
God, lover of souls  
Lord of all gentleness  
O Lord, whose ways are beyond our understanding  
Father of mercies

SAMPLE INTERCESSIONS FROM Litany: When the Church Gathers (James Hansen)

Gathered together in Christ as brothers and sisters  
we remember God's many blessings  
and ask that the prayers of our need be heard.

For the Holy Church of God,  
for Bishops, Priests, Deacons and all ministers  
who lead by word and example.

For unity among all who confess Christ as Lord  
and seek to do his will.

For all churches of the world,  
for all communities gathered around the Table of the Lord.

For prophets and teachers everywhere,  
for ministers of word and sacrament.

That our community may look to the needs of those without enough.

For leaders of powerful countries  
that they may speak words of peace and reconciliation.

For all those living and dead who have in times of need  
offered their lives in service to their country.

That children may be welcomed generously into this world,  
that they may be fed, taught and sheltered  
with warmth, attention and love.

For those who are still poor, still hungry, still victimized,  
that they may experience the saving power of God.

For the oppressed and the beaten down,  
for men and women everywhere,  
victims of persecution, injustice and violence.

For every need that is in our hearts,  
for our deepest yearnings, spoken and unspoken,  
and for those who hold special place in our hearts.

And for those who have asked our prayers,  
and for those lodged in our hearts  
for whom we have special care.

God of all that is,  
do not turn away from our prayer

but fill the earth with your peace  
all the days of our lives.  
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

IDEAS FOR INTERCESSIONS FROM **CELEBRATION** (APRIL 1996)

For our ancestors in faith who have brought us to this day

For the clergy, religious and lay people who have taught us what it means to believe

For the women and men who have never spoken to us but taught us by their example

For those who work in schools and those who sacrifice for education

For those who bring light to the dim places of the world

For all who struggle to believe

For the Holy Father and all who serve the gospel in the world

For those who seek unity where there is division, truth where there is confusion, charity where all else fails

For those who respect life which is weak and unable to speak for itself

For those who lead lives of desperation, who have no one to turn to but God and us

For those who live quietly in the shadows and on the margins

For those who suffer from indifference

For those who will know no sheltered bed nor warm food today

For Bishop Smith who has come among us to teach, to sanctify, to govern, to be a good shepherd

For the voice of God in the hearts and consciences of our young people

## PETITIONS FROM THE ORTHODOX LITURGY

Remember, Lord, the people present here,  
and those who are absent for reasonable causes;  
replenish our storehouses with all manner of goods;  
preserve our marriages in peace and harmony;  
nourish the babes, instruct the youths, console the elderly;  
comfort the feeble-minded,  
collect the scattered,  
bring back the wandering and unite them to your holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Free those who are bothered by unclean spirits;  
sail with those at sea,  
travel with the travelers,  
defend the widows,  
shield the orphans,  
preserve the prisoners,  
heal the sick.

Remember, O God, those who stand before tribunals,  
and those in exile and in all kinds of tribulations and accidents,  
and all who need your great mercy;  
those who love us and those who hate us,  
and those who have begged us, unworthy though we be,  
to remember them in our prayers.

Remember all your people, O Lord our God,  
and upon all pour forth your rich mercies,  
granting them everything they need for salvation.

And those we have omitted through ignorance or forgetfulness  
or because of the multitude of their names,  
you yourself remember, O God who know the name and age of each,  
who have known each one from their mother's womb.

For you, O Lord, are the helper of the helpless,  
the hope of the desperate,  
the saviour of the tempest-tossed,  
the harbor of voyagers,  
the physician of the sick.

Become all things to all people,  
O you who know each person and their need,  
each house and its necessity.

Preserve, O Lord, this city and every city and country place  
from plague, famine, earthquake, flood, fire, war, battle, invasion and riot.