

## **Prayer of the Faithful**

The Liturgy of the Word ends with the prayer of the faithful (not prayers but prayer), also called the universal prayer, which the priest presides from the pulpit or the chair by commencing and concluding it.

In the liturgy of the Jewish synagogue, there were prayers of intercession in the form of litanies. From this came the Christian custom of doing something similar in the Eucharistic



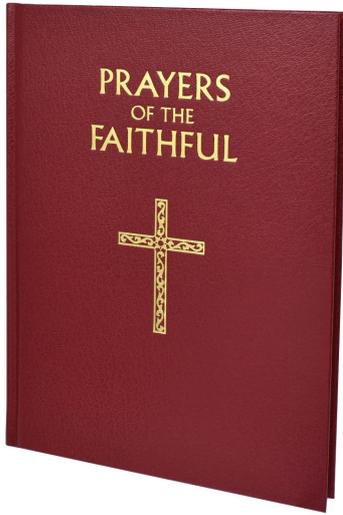
celebration. It seems that this custom goes back to the apostolic times. St. Paul asks that prayers be offered for all men, especially for governors, since “God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:1-4) St. Justin, around the year 153, describes in the Mass, “common prayers that we fervently offer for ourselves, for our brothers, and for the rest of men wherever they may be.” (I Apology 67, 4-5)

In the Oriental Churches, this prayer commonly adopted the form of a litany of intercessions, pronounced by the deacon, to which the people responded, “Kyrie, eleison.” The Churches of the West also had this form of prayer. In Africa we have the testimony of St. Augustine, who would end his homilies with an invitation to turn towards the East and raise to God a series of petitions, to which the people responded, “Amen.”

In the Roman Liturgy of the Fifth Century, the universal prayer was located at the end of the liturgy of the Word and appears to have had a structure very similar to the solemn prayers of our Good Friday.

In our current liturgy, “in the general intercessions or prayer of the faithful, the people, exercising their priestly function, inter-

cede for all humanity. It is appropriate that this prayer be included in all Masses celebrated with a congregation, so that petitions will be offered for the Church, for civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs for all people and for the salvation of the world.” (GIRM, 45)



During the prayer of the faithful we must be very conscious that the Eucharist, the Blood of Christ, is offered for Christians “and for all people, for the forgiveness of sins.” The Church is the “universal sacrament of salvation,” in such a way that all who reach salvation do so through the mediation of the Church, directly when they are Christians or indirectly, simply spiritually, when they are not Christians. This is the same as we see in the Gospel, when Christ sometimes cures by physical contact and other times at a distance. In any case, no one heals the true illness of a human person, which is sin, except by the grace of Christ the Savior, who since Pentecost always “associates His beloved spouse the Church to Himself” (SC 7b) and does nothing without her.

In this prayer, the lay faithful also exercise their baptismal priesthood, united to Christ the priest, interceding before God for the spiritual and material needs of all men. It is significant that after the reform of Vatican II, the prayer of the faithful is situated after the dismissal of the Catechumens. Since they are not baptized, they cannot yet join with the priestly people and exercise this mediation.

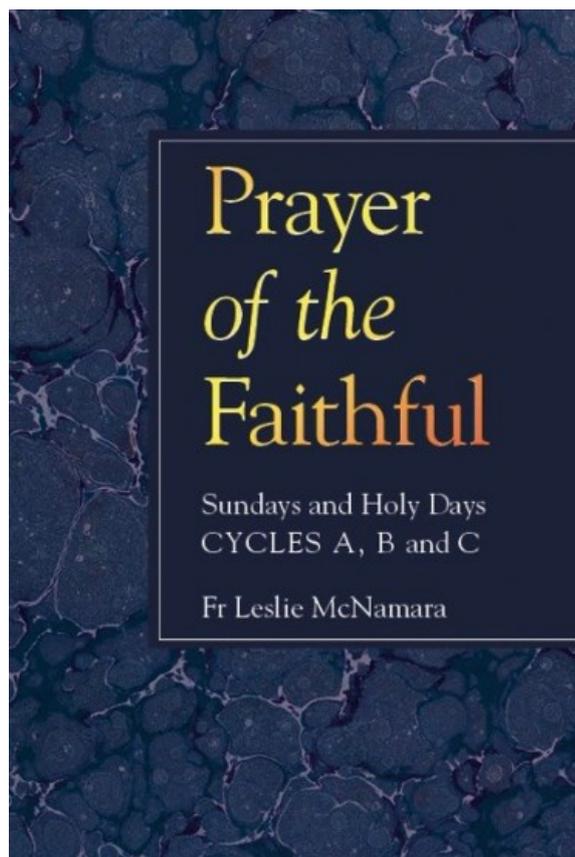
Accordingly, the Church, through her teaching and action and especially through the universal prayer and Eucharistic sacrifice, continuously sustains the world, granting it countless material and spiritual goods through Christ and impeding its total ruin.

The first Christians, so few and so badly considered in the

world of their time, were clearly conscious of this. This firm conviction is reflected, for example, in the Letter to Diognetus, written around the year 200, “What the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. The soul is present in all the members of the body and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The flesh hates and combats the soul, though it has never received injury by her, because she allows no enjoyment of pleasure; the world hates the Christians, though it has received no damage by them, because they renounce pleasures. The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body, Christians are confined in the world as in a prison, and yet they are the preservers of the world. This is the position God has given them and they cannot forsake it.” (VI, 1-10)

Yet we are often men of little faith and we do not ask. “You do not have because you do not ask.” (Jas. 4:2) Or if we do ask for something and God grants it to us, we easily attribute it to certain second causes without remembering that: “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming from the Father of lights.” (Jas. 1:17) It cannot be doubted, for example, that cloistered religious and humble souls who go to daily Mass contribute much more powerfully to the good of the world than all the leaders and politicians who fill the newspaper pages and television screens. These humble believers have the most influence on the events of the world. Only a little bit of faith is needed to believe so.

During the prayer of the faithful we must be very conscious that the Eucharist, the Blood of Christ, is offered for Christians and for all men, for the forgiveness of sins.



# TE ARA A MARIA—MARY'S WAY

## Rededication of Aotearoa New Zealand to Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven

On Sunday 15 August 2021 we renewed our country's dedication to Mary, Mother of God, Assumed into Heaven. We have called this Te Ara a Maria – Mary's Way. This had been an opportunity for all of us to honour Mary as she is now - alive, body and soul, rejoicing in the happiness of God's kingdom.

Bishop Pompallier was our country's first bishop and was from France. He settled in Hokianga. Pompallier dedicated Aotearoa to Our Lady while celebrating his first mass here in 1838. Hokianga is seen as the cradle of Catholicism in Aotearoa.

Covid-19 brought anguish to our country. We saw other countries struggle during the pandemic and as a country we took measures to unite to protect ourselves. During this testing time many sought aid and comfort. Our Bishops received requests and they decided to renew Pompallier's dedication.

To mark the renewal of the dedication, our Bishops had a special mass at St Mary of the Angels in Wellington on 15 August 2021. This service saw the unveiling of artwork specially commissioned to honour Mary.

The artwork have been on a hikoi around New Zealand. It will visit us for a day on the 5th July in our Church of St. Joseph's Levin.

By the 15th August, the artwork will be permanently housed at St Mary of the Angels which will become a National Shrine.

### **CLOSED DOWN BOOK SHOP**

For Sale – hundreds of Christian books + others

**All \$2 each or less.**

*Books were all donated for the ministry started in the Philippines by Simon & Anna Newman. All funds raised will be sent to the Philippines*

**Friday 8th July and Saturday  
9th July, 1pm – 3pm.**

253 A Cambridge St. – In the Garage down the drive.

*Please park on the road.*