



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN



BISHOP *of* CALGARY

April 6, 2020

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

Ever since the beginning of the suspension of public Masses, we all have been reacting to the various challenges we encounter in our pastoral outreach to the faithful in our parishes. It has been very difficult to stay the course and continue to build on initiatives for growth as we are now merely “catching up” with the evolving measures that continue to unfold with regards the COVID-19 crisis in the Province. Even though it seems that we have been derailed from our normal path, I thank all of you for the sacrifices you have had to make.

In our recent meetings with the Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), it was stated that this reality that we are currently facing has the indications of becoming more like the “new normal” for the rest of 2020. The Church and especially the parishes are being forced to adapt to new and creative methods of outreach in being faithful to our mission. Let us continue to foster this outreach to our people, to be present to them in ways that allow us to remain grounded in Christ. Beginning Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020, parishes who request the opportunity to directly live-stream Masses, liturgies, devotions, and faith formation for their parishioners will be encouraged and supported. I ask that you read the accompanying directives and guidelines which have been developed to assist you in these challenging times.

In all honesty, we have not been derailed, instead, we must see this path as something that the Lord has opened for us as a church to slow down and walk with the people we are called to serve. This time of crisis can teach us to be more simple in our expectations and ultimately to rely on the Spirit working in our church and in our parishes.

I thank you for the extraordinary efforts you are making in being more present to the people of your parish. I believe that we are being called to sacrifice in new ways and to serve without expecting anything in return, faithful to the admonition of the Lord to his disciples.

I am grateful for the fidelity which you continue to exercise in your priestly ministry.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Most Reverend William T. McGrattan

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY

Catholic Pastoral Centre | 120 17 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2S 2T2

Phone: 403-218-5526 | Fax: 403-264-0272 | bishop.mcgrattan@calgarydiocese.ca

LIVE-STREAMING IN THE DIOCESE OF CALGARY

APRIL 6, 2020

Directive on Live-Streaming of the Holy Mass, Liturgies and Devotions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, priests are called to lead parish communities in crisis and that are unable to gather for liturgies and non-liturgical assemblies. The inability to gather as a community, especially for Holy Mass, has created a void in parish life, posing barriers between the clergy and the people. In addition, the regular channels of communication that the parishes ordinarily rely on, such as the parish bulletin and announcements at Mass, are no longer at our disposal.

At the onset of the pandemic, when safety measures were evolving and which prevented parish communities from gathering in large numbers, Bishop McGrattan established two locations for the live-streaming of the Mass in order to foster greater unity in the Diocese in this time of crisis. St. Peter's Church was assigned for the live-streaming of daily Masses where priests across the Diocese were able to sign-up to celebrate the Mass. This gave priests without the facility and equipment for broadcast to be present to the faithful. St. Mary's Cathedral became the location for the Sunday Mass which was exclusively for the celebration of Mass by the Bishop. This was to ensure that the faithful had access to the local ordinary in this time of crisis.

A few guidelines were provided to those celebrating these live-streamed Masses to avoid situations that would pose unnecessary distractions and concerns for people who are participating in their homes. Some examples of these are in limiting the reception of communion to the celebrant, in having only priests, deacons, and seminarians to serve, and in having no choirs and musical accompaniment, and in keeping the Mass times consistent and coordinated.

Masses in various languages were later introduced in response to special requests from linguistic faith communities. A few special accommodations were also given to some ethnic rite communities to live-stream from their church due to their particular circumstances.

Subsequently, we gained a better understanding of the magnitude of this pandemic and the potential for the extension of the suspension of public Masses for an indefinite period. We recognized that these health measures might largely be a part of our new reality, at least until the end of this year. However, we also recognized that as soon as the government lifts these restrictions, public Masses will be restored immediately.

In view of the prolonged negative impact of this pandemic on our ability to host public gatherings and the implication on the spiritual life of the faithful and on relationships in parish communities, Bishop McGrattan will be allowing parishes to live-stream the parish Mass on a daily basis beginning Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020 in accordance with these additional guidelines from the Diocese on the proper way of live-streaming.

- Parishes are required to inform the Office of the Bishop if live-streaming of Masses is to be implemented. The Diocese will list live-streamed Parish Masses and other liturgies and devotions and will promote them throughout the Diocese.
- Parishes are allowed to live-stream Mass daily if pastorally desirable but it is not a requirement.
- The live-streaming of Masses should be a parish initiative and not the personal initiative of priests on their personal websites or social media platforms.
- Parishes may only have one live-streamed Mass on any given day unless for linguistic reasons. Duplication or proliferation of live-streamed Masses in a parish is not allowed.

Parishes are strongly encouraged to think beyond the context of Mass, liturgies, and devotions and possibly use live-streaming and video conferencing to widen the scope of their outreach and address other pastoral and spiritual needs.

Guidelines on Live-Streaming of the Holy Mass

In our Tradition, we have the maxim, *lex orandi, lex credendi*: the way we pray establishes what we believe. It is important that the model of liturgical prayer communicates truly what the Church believes. While the live-streaming of liturgical services and devotions is not a novel concept, it is a new practice for many parishes and it must be done well to be effective. Our current circumstances are unique and may require liturgical adaptations. The directive and guidelines outline the liturgical principles that should be followed by all parishes that live-stream Masses and prayers in addition to the technical requirements to live-stream well and the alternatives for parishes that do not have the resources to do so.

Liturgical

Compliance with Health Measures

All live-streaming must abide by all Alberta Health Services requirements in terms of the number of people gathered, including the camera person and crew. During this time of pandemic, please only have present the smallest number of people possible. While the current measure from AHS does not allow for gathering of more than 15 people, and this may change, the size of the space being used for live-streaming may even only allow for 5 and under. Camera angles should make it apparent to those watching that social distancing is maintained.

Being in front of a camera, every detail of the live-streaming is magnified. Priests, deacons, and seminarians must avoid anything that may become a source of distraction for the viewers. Be self-aware and be mindful of habits that may not be in compliance with the recommendations of AHS, such as coughing on your hands, shaking hands, hugging or any other personal contact, or forgetting to maintain the required physical distance.

Mass

In our current situation of no public Masses, the Mass is celebrated without the presence of the faithful. This circumstance calls for a sophisticated understanding of the nature of ritual performance and participation.

Many of the faithful will watch the live stream in order to unite with the sacrifice that the priest is offering on their behalf through the Mass. They want to maintain the routine of attending the Mass, they want to hear the Word of God and the preaching of the Gospel in the Homily, they want to make a spiritual communion at the time of the Eucharist, and receive the consolation of the prayers and of seeing that the Mass continues to be offered even though they cannot attend. Some may even choose to join with the assistant in giving voice to the responses and may assume the different bodily postures normally taken at different points in the liturgy. In these ways, the live stream is a communication tool that enables the faithful to pray in a genuine way.

Despite these virtual interactions that may or may not be taking place, the sacramental interaction is only between the celebrant and the assistant. Although liturgy is performative by nature, the minister(s) should not act as though the faithful were in attendance when they are not. The Mass must be celebrated as an authentic act of worship by those present, which through technology the faithful are able to view for their edification and spiritual nourishment.



Form of the Mass

The priest should celebrate the Mass according to the guidelines already sent for the celebration of Masses alone, with one minister, or with concelebrants. The rule of thumb, however, is as few ministers as possible, i.e. celebrant and the assistant. It is advisable for live-streamed Masses that only priests, deacons, and seminarians are asked to assist at the Mass and that only the celebrant will receive Holy Communion. It is encouraged that Mass be celebrated simply and not elaborately during a time of pandemic.

Chanting or Singing

Chanting or singing is not encouraged or required. However, if the celebrant and/or assistant are competent in chanting, parts of the Mass may be chanted keeping in mind the hierarchy of progressive solemnity. Progressive solemnity is the principle that determines the degree of chanting in the liturgy. It is based upon the occasion, nature of the assembly, and the degree of solemnity of the liturgy. As well, progressive solemnity determines the hierarchy of musical priorities within the liturgy. Of primary importance are always the acclamations. Should you wish to chant while celebrating a Mass without the faithful present, the following hierarchy of chant is recommended:

1. Gospel Acclamation, Preface Dialogue (and Preface), Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen
2. Responsorial Psalm, Gloria (when prescribed)
3. Entrance and Communion antiphons (the antiphon chants would be most suitable)
4. Other ritual dialogues and the presidential prayers

For example, you would not chant the Entrance and Communion antiphons (#3) if you were speaking the acclamations (#1).

When chanting is involved, it is crucial that the required social distancing is strictly observed to prevent any possibility of transmission through singing.

Recorded Music

Recorded music is never permitted in the liturgy due to its inauthenticity.

Homily

Priests and deacons should be mindful that homilies delivered at live-streamed Masses are recorded and will be made available online to anyone who accesses them. The context for which the homily has been delivered may eventually be lost to the viewer as time goes on. Priests and deacons ought to be very discerning as to what is being said in the homily as these videos will not “go away” and may become viral for the wrong reasons.

Ordinary principles of preaching should be observed but mindful of the special circumstance of a wider audience online.

- It should be lectionary-based and therefore guided by the liturgical season.
- In this time of crisis and as in any time, avoid speculative theology or preaching. Be faithful to the teachings of Christ in the Church.
- Avoid the tendency to over-share personal information that does not have any bearing on the readings.
- Avoid the sharing of jokes that may be inappropriate even if they relate to the readings.
- Prepare your homily in advance and practise the delivery, perhaps in front of a mirror, in order to avoid mannerisms that may be distracting.
- In general - less of us, more of the Word.

Universal Prayer

During the pandemic, *Living with Christ* provides a daily PDF of the universal prayer for free:

<https://www.livingwithchrist.ca/index.php/intentions>

Liturgy of the Hours

Along with the Mass, the *Liturgy of the Hours* constitutes the official public prayer of the Church. Therefore, if you live-stream the celebration of the Divine Office, those present must celebrate the liturgy as an authentic act of worship and should not act as though the faithful were present.

In addition to phone apps, those who watch can find the text of the current hour from the Roman Breviary downloadable for free here:

https://www.ebreviary.com/ebreviary/usa4/current_print_prayer.nsf!OpenDatabase

Devotions

Popular piety or devotions play a significant role in our spiritual life, “Genuine forms of popular piety, expressed in a multitude of different ways, derives from the faith and, therefore, must be valued and promoted. Such authentic expressions of popular piety are not at odds with the centrality of the Sacred Liturgy. Rather, in promoting the faith of the people, who regard popular piety as a natural religious expression, they predispose the people for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.” (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, no. 4)

There is an opportunity for priests and/or deacons in the parish to foster an authentic connection with the faithful by the live-streaming or the video conferencing of popular devotions such as the rosary, the chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Stations of the Cross, novenas, and other special prayers.

The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may also be considered provided that it is held in the parish church, not in any other space such as private chapels, and that the priest or deacon lead the liturgy. All the necessary preparations should be made in order to assure the dignity and solemnity proper to the Blessed Sacrament.

Technical

Our diocesan guide with links to step-by-step and best practices for live-streaming are available here: <https://www.catholicyc.ca/blog/livestream>

Please note that it is not easy to produce a properly carried-out live stream. It requires planning and preparation, and some parishes may not have the resources. No parish should feel pressured to do so.

The live-stream from St. Peter’s Church will continue to provide the ability for priests to sign-up and celebrate. As well, the Bishop will continue to provide the live-stream of the Sunday Mass from the Cathedral.

Other Ways to Connect

- Connect individually with parishioners over the phone or video chat.
- Connect through e-mail or mailing list (i.e. [FlockNote](#), [Mailchimp](#), Parish Friendly bulk email).

- Connect through online conference meeting using tools such as [Zoom](#), [Webex](#), [Skype](#), [Google Hangouts](#), [Microsoft Teams](#) or [Facebook Messenger](#). These tools can be used effectively for ministry or community meetings, devotional or liturgical prayers (*i.e.* rosary, novena, morning and evening prayers, Stations of the Cross), as well as spiritual formation (*i.e.* bible studies)
- Connect through social media (*i.e.* [Facebook](#) Page, [Instagram](#))
- Connect through a moderated online group (*i.e.* Facebook Group, WhatsApp).
- Make sure to have your website updated with current information, contact information, and any online meeting or prayer schedules. Note: To prevent third party hijacking, use e-mail to provide meeting URL, and never post meeting URL on social media or on the parish website.

Our diocesan guide with links to step-by-step and best practices for online conference are available here: <https://www.catholicyc.ca/blog/conference>





TEN PRINCIPLES
for writing the
PRAYER *of the* FAITHFUL

DIANA MACALINTAL

The logo for Liturgy.Life features a stylized cross symbol on the left, composed of a vertical red bar and a horizontal black bar. To the right of the cross, the word "Liturgy.Life" is written in a black serif font, with a red dot at the end of the word "Life".

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10 Principles for Writing the Prayer of the Faithful

When writing intercessions for Mass, you don't have to stress. Just breathe, and keep these 10 principles in mind.

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PRINCIPLE 1

Intercessions are universal

With the new translation of the Roman Missal, the name of these prayers changed from “General Intercessions” to “The Universal Prayer.” The new title helps us better understand that these are *not* generic prayers. While you can find “universal” petitions in intercession books, homily services, or liturgical calendars, they aren’t meant to be used word for word.

“Universal” in this case means that the prayers must be capable of being owned and assented to by the whole assembly. That is, the assembly must be able to fully, consciously, and actively want to pray for the petition being voiced. If they cannot honestly do this, it cannot genuinely be their petition. It might be a portion of the assembly’s, or it might be one person’s petition, but it cannot be claimed by everyone, thus it cannot be the “Universal Prayer of the Faithful.”

To use an extreme example, the following is not a universal prayer:



“For our nation: for [name of your favorite candidate] to win the presidential election. We pray to the Lord.”

Not everyone in your assembly will agree to this prayer. Yet, praying for the elections is a good thing. Simply word it in such a way that all can honestly take part in and assent to the prayer. For example:

*“For our nation and the upcoming elections:
for integrity and honesty among all the candidates;
for the spirit of wisdom upon all who vote.
We pray to the Lord.”*

Here are more subtle forms of non-universal intercessions:

“For those who kill unborn babies, that they will know the evil of their sin. We pray to the Lord.”

*“For my uncle Joe who undergoes surgery on Tuesday.
We pray to the Lord.”*



Praying for an end to abortion and for those who are sick are certainly prayers we should make. But in the first example, the wording communicates a negative and almost hateful attitude toward the subject of our prayer. **Our prayer must never be used to incite hatred for other people.**

Word the petition instead this way:

“For those in difficult and unexpected pregnancies; for strength and courage to choose the path toward life; for enduring support from family and friends. We pray to the Lord.”

In the second example, it is good to pray for the sick, but at the parish’s Sunday Mass, we cannot single out one person alone and let that be the whole prayer. To make this a general intercession, pray instead:

“For the sick, for all undergoing surgery this week, for those waiting for a cure, especially for: [insert names of those to be remembered]. We pray to the Lord.”



PRINCIPLE 2

Intercessions are petitions

As nice as it might be, this is not the time to list the things we are thankful for.

For example, at the anniversary Mass of a parish, you might hear:

“In thanksgiving for the pastor and staff of this parish and for the good work they do. We pray to the Lord.”

The form of these prayers needs to be petitionary — asking God, not thanking God. The above example can easily become petitionary by rewording it:

*“For the pastor and staff of this parish;
for their continued good work and faithful leadership.
We pray to the Lord.”*



PRINCIPLE 3

Be poetic

All the prayers in the liturgy are meant to be poetic. That is, the words need to stir our hearts, engage our imagination, and cause us to desire the very thing we think is impossible or unimaginable—the reign of God on earth.

Jesus used poetry to describe this reign. He never said, “Heaven is the concrete proleptic manifestation of the salvific action of the cross and resurrection, enabled by the Holy Spirit, made real for those who believe.” Instead, Jesus used poetry: “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field...” (Mt 13:24), or “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed...” (Mt 13:21). Jesus used these metaphors and images to move people’s hearts because moving a person’s heart is the first step toward conversion. **Use the images, phrases, and moods from the day’s scriptures or from the liturgical season to inspire the wording of your intercessions.**



PRINCIPLE 4

Be concise

Crafting good prayer is a bit like writing good music. It needs rhythm and meter, flow and gracefulness.

Long sentences lose rhythm and tend to ramble.

Short sentences move. Short phrases breathe. Litanic styles impel a reply: “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Long sentences lean toward preachiness, restricting the universality of the intercession and the ability of the whole assembly to assent to it.

Stick with shorter phrases, and speak the words out loud. Listen for a smooth rhythm to the words and a fluid transition between sentences.



PRINCIPLE 5

Be consistent

The structure of the intercessions should be consistent among all the petitions. Petitions usually take one of several forms:

- 1) “For _____.”
- 2) “That _____.”
- 3) “For _____, that _____.”
- 4) “For _____. May _____.”

The first form tends to flow better and can be less preachy. It also allows for more use of images.

Whichever form you use, use it for all the petitions.

Also, don't change the assembly's response every week. Changing the response just confuses people. If you want to use a different response, use that response for at least the whole liturgical season, or during long stretches in Ordinary Time that have a common theme, such as the Bread of Life Sundays.



PRINCIPLE 6

Be musical

Singing a prayer well is usually preferred to simply speaking a prayer. **Singing heightens the words, slows down the pacing to let people hear, and enhances the solemnity of the moment.** Singing also establishes a natural rhythm of response so that the people are compelled to breathe together as they make their sung response together, creating a deeper sense of unity.

If you have not yet incorporated singing into your intercessions, start with just using a seasonal sung response. One of the simplest is the traditional Byzantine chant that can be found in most hymnals. It sets music for the invitation, “Let us pray to the Lord” and the people’s response, “Lord, hear our prayer.” This is typically sung *a cappella*. The invitation can be sung by your cantor even if the intercession itself is spoken by a reader. For more solemn occasions, consider having the deacon or cantor chant the entire intercession as well as the invitation.



PRINCIPLE 7

Do your role and
only your role

The liturgy is like a living body. In a healthy body, each part has a particular function, and only that body part does that function. If the body is healthy, the hand never takes over the foot's job. It could try, but it wouldn't be as good at it, nor would the body be as effective. In a similar way, each member of the liturgical assembly has a particular function and should do only that function.

The deacon is the primary reader of the petitions. If there is no deacon, the cantor takes on that function.

The presider, though he may be capable of reading the intercessions, should do only his job of presiding. His job is to call the assembly to pray at the beginning of the Prayer of the Faithful and to collect all the petitions into a final concluding prayer.



If there is no deacon and the cantor does not lead the intercessions, then another reader — who is not a lector that day — takes on this role. For the same reason that the presider does not read the petitions, the lectors should refrain from leading the petitions and should concentrate only on proclaiming the readings.

Similarly, whoever leads the intercessions should let the people make the response and not say or sing it with them. This is a dialogue between the reader and the people. So let each dialogue partner do their own role.



PRINCIPLE 8

Honor baptism

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, says,

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. (#69, emphasis added)

Only the baptized can genuinely pray the Prayer of the Faithful, and it is their right and responsibility to offer these prayers because of their baptism.

Thus, catechumens are dismissed from the assembly before the Creed and the Prayer of the Faithful. (Don't forget to include an intercession for the catechumens.)

Because they are baptized and have a right and duty to pray the Prayer of the Faithful, candidates remain in the assembly. They should never be dismissed from Mass.



PRINCIPLE 9

Follow the sequence

There are four basic things we pray for, and these are outlined in #70 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

- 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

There should be at least one intercession for each topic. If needed, compose more than one intercession for each topic so you don't try to cram everything that needs to be prayed for into one petition. For example, have one petition for the nation and another petition for local authorities. But be careful that you don't have too many intercessions, otherwise it starts sounding like a laundry list of needs. Discern what is most important for this particular time and place.



Many communities include an intercession for those who have died. This is certainly appropriate as part of the needs of the local community. However, after recalling a deceased loved one, some communities also add “for whom this Mass is offered.”

We do have a venerable practice of remembering our dead at specific Masses, especially on the anniversary of their death. But it is not necessary to add “for whom this Mass is offered” into the intercessions. It is better to just prayerfully and clearly say the person’s name in the intercession for the dead without referring to a practice that may be misunderstood. The presider can also include the deceased person’s name in the Eucharistic Prayer when we remember the dead.

Finally, remember that the Prayer of the Faithful is public, communal prayer. It is not time for private prayer for our individual needs. Therefore avoid using either of the following:

“For our own special intentions.”

“For the prayers we hold in the silence of our hearts.”



Neither of these examples, and other intercessions like them, can be *universal* prayers if the gathered assembly doesn't know what they're praying for.

If your community needs some time for recalling individual needs during the Prayer of the Faithful, it is better to help them focus that silent time of prayer so that there is a sense that we are all praying together for the same intention. One example of this may be:

*“For all who have asked us to pray for them, and for those who have no one to remember them this day.
[pause for silent prayer] We pray to the Lord.”*



PRINCIPLE 10

Know the world around you

Like preaching, writing good intercessions requires that you read the newspaper and know what's going on in your local and global communities. Yet it's surprising to hear how many parishes simply use the “canned” intercessions from books that were published at least a year ago without incorporating anything that is on the hearts and minds of the people in their community.

No “pre-written” intercession resource could have prepared for September 11, devastating hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires, mass shootings and other acts of terror in our cities, churches, and work places.

If we are to exercise the office of our baptismal priesthood, we must take seriously our responsibility, duty, and privilege to pray for these very needs and concerns.



About the Author

Diana Macalintal is the cofounder of TeamRCIA.com, a free online resource for catechumenate ministry. She is an author and speaker on liturgy, music, RCIA, and intercultural ministry. She holds a Master of Arts in Theology from Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and has served in campus, parish, and diocesan ministries for 30 years. Her latest books include *The Work of Your Hands*, a collection of prayers; *Joined by the Church, Sealed by a Blessing*, a parish resource for marriage preparation which she wrote with her husband, Nick Wagner; *Living Liturgy*, a Sunday by Sunday liturgical year resource; and *Your Parish Is the Curriculum: RCIA in the Midst of the Community*, all published by Liturgical Press. You can find her at her website, Liturgy.life, where she helps you bring liturgy to life and life to the liturgy.

