

# The Solemn Intercessions of Good Friday

Kathy Kuczka

During the Sacred Triduum, the faithful gather on Good Friday to commemorate the passion of the Lord. This liturgy is composed of three distinct parts: the Liturgy of the Word, the Adoration of the Holy Cross, and Holy Communion. As early as the fourth century, the Christian community would gather on Good Friday to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus and to offer prayers for the Church, the world, and for all people.

## THE FORMAT OF THE SOLEMN INTERCESSIONS

These prayers, which take place after the Liturgy of the Word, have evolved to become what we now know as the Solemn Intercessions. These ten prayers have a slightly different format than the general intercessions at Sunday Mass. Each of the Solemn Intercessions begins with an invitation to pray for a specific intention and is followed by silent prayer, and then the priest's praying for the intention.

## AN EXERCISE OF OUR BAPTISMAL PRIESTHOOD

Like the intercessions that the faithful pray at every Mass, these petitions help the assembly respond to the Word of God and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by offering prayers for the good of all humankind. Unlike the general intercessions typically written by persons at the parish level, the same Solemn Intercessions in *The Roman Missal* are prayed at parishes throughout the world. The missal presumes that the people will pray all ten prayers. The prayers are for the following:

- The holy Church
- The pope
- All orders and degrees of the faithful
- Catechumens



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In the seasons prior to the Sacred Paschal Triduum, parishes can lead people to reflect on how the paschal mystery is lived out daily.

- The unity of Christians
- The Jewish people
- Those who do not believe in Christ
- Those who do not believe in God
- Those in public office
- Those in tribulation

## ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

The prayers underscore the interconnectedness of all people as members of the human family. The petitions echo St. Paul's instruction to Timothy that the community be concerned with and, therefore, pray for the needs of all, whether Christian or non-Christian:

First of all, then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all. (1 Timothy 2:1–6)

## A CALL TO SOLIDARITY

Though rooted in the earliest days of the Church, the Solemn Intercessions on Good Friday take on added meaning today. In a world marked by division and injustice, these prayers are a collective cry for healing and renewal. Through these intercessions, Catholics all over the world—people of different races, cultures and backgrounds—find common ground as they seek peace, unity, and salvation for all. The Solemn Intercessions call us beyond ourselves to solidarity with and compassion for all people and unite us in a shared vision of hope for the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace.

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