

A Guide to Preparing a Mass for Vocations

*“Vocations are born in prayer and from prayer;
only through prayer can they persevere and bear fruit.” - Pope Francis*

What is a Mass for Vocations?

Normally, the Mass celebrated is the Mass of the day, as indicated in the diocesan *Ordo*. We are used to every Mass having an intention (that of the celebrating priest) and in this way, a Mass could be offered for the intention “for Vocations”. The Church also provides a Mass formula – with prayers and readings – in its set of **Masses for Various Needs and Occasions**. The **Mass for Vocations to Holy Orders** is provided for the “pastoral advantage” of the community praying that those called to Holy Orders (to be deacons, priests and bishops) may hear and answer the call.

*Note that there is also a similar Mass formula **for Vocations to Religious Life** (sisters, nuns, brothers, monks etc.) This may be of particular interest to those served by religious, who may wish to have a Mass to pray particularly for vocations to that order.*

When can this Mass be celebrated?

Masses for Various Needs and Occasions may be celebrated when (as shown in the *Ordo*) the day is not ranked as a Solemnity or Feast, during the following times:

- **Weekdays of Advent** up to the 16th December
- **Weekdays of Christmas**, outside the Octave (from 2nd January onwards)
- **Weekdays of Easter** outside the Octave
- **Weekdays of Ordinary Time** (except All Souls Day)

Note that the Archbishop could direct that such a Mass be celebrated on other days, such as during Lent or on Sundays in Ordinary Time.

The colour used for the Mass would be **of the season** (purple during Advent, white during Christmastide and Eastertide, Green in Ordinary Time).

What prayers are used?

The prayers for the Mass for Vocations to Holy Orders are found in *The Roman Missal*, p. 1319. These are the prayers the priest would use at the opening of Mass, at the Offertory and after Communion. There are also antiphons provided for the Entrance and Communion, if hymns are not being sung. A document containing these readings has been provided for ease of reference. (*The prayers for a Mass for Vocations to Religious Life are found in The Roman Missal pp.1330-1331*)

Mass would also include the usual prayers for a weekday celebration (normally no Gloria or Creed). There are options for the following prayers, which should be chosen in consultation with the celebrant:

- A choice of **Penitential Act** (if using Form C, the invocations may be specially composed)
- **Preface** (selected from those in *The Roman Missal* according to the liturgical season)
- **Bidding prayers** (which should be specially composed, but may be omitted altogether)

What readings may be chosen?

The **Readings of the Day**, as set in out in the *Ordo*, may always be used, in particular if they fit the theme of vocation. Often, it may be more desirable to replace them with **Readings for Vocations** found in the *Lectionary*. Readings should be chosen in consultation with the celebrant, in order that his homily reflects the Scripture used.

Most parishes in England and Wales use *The Jerusalem Bible* translation, and the readings are found in Volume III, pages 472-492; other Biblical translations are permitted, and some primary schools might wish to use the *Good News* translation of the Bible. Psalms are taken from *The Grail Psalter*. Documents containing these readings have been provided, but it is preferred that the proclamation of these readings at Mass is done using the *Lectionary*, or at least with the texts placed a worthy folder, signifying the dignity of the Word of God.

From these readings, there would normally be First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and Gospel. Only if the Mass was being celebrated with great solemnity would a Second Reading before the Gospel be included. *Note that a few of these readings are indicated as being specifically for vocations either to Holy Orders or Priesthood.*

What other elements can be included?

If hymns are sung, they might reflect themes of calling and service, as appropriate to the part of the Mass; a list of suggestions is provided.

The Mass might be an opportunity to invite guests who give witness to a particular vocation being lived out; those with a Church ministry should be invited to participate as appropriate (for example, a priest should be given the option of concelebrating or sitting in choir.) A visiting bishop, priest or deacon might be invited to preach the homily; in a Mass for children, a seminarian or religious brother or sister might be permitted to give a post-Gospel reflection.

The Mass could lead into **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**, in order to have a time of prayer and adoration for vocations.

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