

ANNOUNCEMENTS, BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS OVER THE PEOPLE

Announcements

If there are to be announcements these are made following the *Closing Prayer*, that is, at the beginning of the *Concluding Rites*. The announcements should be brief and should deal with subjects pertaining to the whole parish community. As far as possible, Parish Announcements are better left to the Parish Bulletin. The announcements should be made from a lectern distinct from the ambo. The ambo is reserved for the proclamation of the Word of God, and may also be used for the Easter Exsultet, the homily and the intentions of the Prayer of the Faithful, but not for the announcements or the leading of song.

Blessings and Prayers over the People

As part of the *Concluding Rites*, the priest gives a blessing. This blessing takes the form of a wish: *May almighty God . . .* made by the priest-celebrant on behalf of the people. As at other times in the Mass, the people make the prayer their own by their response, *Amen*.

This blessing may take one of three forms:

1. Simple Form

In this form the priest asks God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to bless all those present. The people respond with an *Amen*. This blessing with its response also concludes the other two forms, the *Solemn Blessings* and the *Prayers over the People*.

2. Solemn Blessings

Solemn Blessings are generally used on feasts and solemnities and may also be used on Sundays and other occasions at the discretion of the priest-celebrant. In this form the people are asked to bow their heads and pray for God's blessing. The priest then prays one or more invocations over those assembled.

To each of these invocations the people respond *Amen*. The concluding blessing by the priest with the people's response is then prayed.

3. *The Prayers over the People* are associated principally with Penitential Seasons and in the new *Roman Missal*, a full set of *Prayers over the People* has been added for the weekdays of Lent. In this form there are always three invocations, but apart from that, their format is similar to that of the *Solemn Blessings*, with the response *Amen* given by the people to each invocation. They also conclude with the Trinitarian blessing and the people's response, *Amen*.

The texts of the Solemn Blessings and Prayers over the People enrich the Eucharistic Celebration with profound and beautiful texts drawn from the treasury of prayers built up over the history of the liturgy. They can deepen understanding of the varied facets of the Liturgical Year as they are keyed to the different feasts and seasons. While some of these prayers were a part of the former edition of the Roman Missal, in the new edition, many more have been added, including the new selections for Lenten Weekdays.

