

### **LET'S TALK LITURGY! – Liturgy of the Word: Part 3**

*Prepared for the Liturgy Committee by Charlette Buescher (published originally in the May 2016 edition of QAC Spirit)*

Our discussion of liturgy continues this month with the actions and prayers that bring to a conclusion the Liturgy of the Word: dismissal of the Catechumens; Profession of Faith; the Universal Prayer; and (at QAC) the Sign of Peace.

Following the readings, the homily and a period of silence, the Catechumens, if there are any preparing for the Easter Sacraments, are dismissed from the Assembly. The purpose of this dismissal is for the Catechumens to continue their reflection on the Sunday readings and related truths of the faith as they come to know Jesus and our community of believers. This dismissal occurs every Sunday until the Catechumens are initiated at the Easter Vigil.

Then, as a community formed together by God's Word, we recite or sing the Profession of Faith. This is our community response to that Word and a statement of the great mysteries of the faith in which we believe. The Profession of Faith is a weekly renewal of our Baptismal promises – individually and as a community.

The Universal Prayer (sometimes called Universal Intercessions or Prayer of the Faithful) follows the Profession of Faith. It wells up from our desire to become the Body of Christ which has been proclaimed in the Scriptures. We pray from our baptismal right as a priestly people. We pray as Christ would pray for the needs of the world and our Church and our community.

The Universal Prayer has three elements: an invitation to pray, a series of intercessions, and a concluding prayer. The invitation to pray is a short introduction to the intercessions and a time for all of those present to put on the mind of Christ. (As an aside to planners: it is NOT appropriate for this invitation to be a second homily or an expression of your particular "take" on the readings!)

The Church suggests that the intentions should generally follow this order:

- 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.

Prayers for a specific occasion may be added (for example, at a Baptism or First Communion or Confirmation, at a funeral, at a marriage celebration, etc.) The General Instruction of the Roman Missal tells us: "The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community." (paragraph 71)

The concluding prayer is a simple conclusion to the intercessions offered and a plea for God's mercy. At QAC and as a recognition of our Marianist roots, we have chosen to add the Marianist Doxology after the concluding prayer.

At Queen of Apostles we conclude the Liturgy of the Word with the Sign of Peace. In most other parishes, this action will occur just after the Lord's Prayer and prior to the Fraction Rite. The Sign of Peace or Rite of Peace is an action on the part of the Church to signify peace and unity for the whole human family. It gives our local community an opportunity to show our love and care for each other.

The next installment of these articles will begin the discussion of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.