



**DIOCESE OF TYLER**  
**Sacred Liturgy – Uses and Practices - Guide**

**Masses for Various Needs and Occasions / Votive Masses**

1. In anchoring our celebration of the Sacred Mysteries to the Roman Missal, it is worth taking a look at some of the richness the Missal provides. We regularly use the cycle of the Liturgical year with the great Feasts of the Lord in the front segment, and the yearlong Sanctoral cycle with the corresponding Commons. In the Missal, beyond the Commons are Masses for Ritual celebrations, which includes Funeral Masses. Perhaps the least used prayers are those for “Various Needs and Occasions” and the “Votive” Masses. (See GIRM 368-385)
2. In this year for Consecrated Life, parishes and missions might particularly want to offer Masses for Religious (#13) or for Vocations to Religious Life (#14). With the hardship suffered by Christians in Africa and the Middle East perhaps the Mass for Persecuted Christians (#19) or with many refugees around the world the Mass for Refugees and Exiles (#32). For our Local Church an occasional Mass for Vocations to Holy Orders (#9) or for the Evangelization of Peoples (#18)
3. These Masses can be offered on any open weekday throughout the year, with no special permission. In case of some grave need for a time other than an open weekday, permission can be requested from the Bishop, in accord with GIRM 374. The conditions for their use is also spelled out in rubrics at the beginning of their section in the Roman Missal.
4. Masses for Various Needs are celebrated in the color proper to the day or of the liturgical season or the color violet if they have a penitential character. Votive Masses specify color in the rubric for the Mass itself.

### **Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions<sup>1</sup>**

"He is always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). The Sacrifice of the Mass makes present to the faithful Christ's eternal act of intercession for us. In that sense, the Mass is the Church's greatest intercessory prayer.

This is why, over the centuries, the Church has provided for her children Mass formularies "For Various Needs and Occasions" as the current *Roman Missal* calls them. These are Masses that make specific intercession for particular concerns of the time.

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<sup>1</sup> USCCB Website: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/votive-masses-and-various-needs/>  
cf GIRM 368-374.

The *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, for example, has:

- 20 Masses "For Holy Church," (with prayers offered for the Church as a whole, or for the Pope, or for small gatherings of the faithful, etc.);
- 17 Masses "For Civil Needs," (with prayers offered for the Nation or State, for Refugees and Exiles, or for various kinds of weather, etc.); and
- 13 Masses "For Various Intentions," (with prayers offered for various virtues or particular situations).

These Masses may be prayed on open weekdays through the Church year. For other days of the year, the Missal states:

In case of some grave need, a corresponding Mass may be said on the instructions of the local Ordinary or with his permission, on any day except on Solemnities, the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, days within the Octave of Easter, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), Ash Wednesday, and on the weekdays of Holy Week.

If, however, some real necessity or pastoral advantage requires it, in the judgment of the rector of the church or the Priest celebrant himself, an appropriate Mass or a Collect may be used in a celebration with the people even if on that day there occurs an Obligatory Memorial or a weekday of Advent up to and including December 16, or a weekday of Christmas Time from January 2 or a weekday of Easter Time after the Octave of Easter. (Introduction to "Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions" no. 2)

The Missal contains four Eucharistic Prayers "For Various Needs" which may be used with these formularies. Certain of the Prayers are recommended to go with particular formularies.

## **Votive Masses<sup>2</sup>**

Whereas the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions respond to the concerns and demands that weigh on the Christian in the world, Votive Masses respond to the devotional desires and preferences. These Masses highlight 19 central aspects of the faith and are intended to foster the devotion of the faithful toward these central mysteries, which include the Trinity, the Mercy of God, Christ, the Cross, the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, Mary, the Angels and the Saints. These Masses may be used under the same circumstances as those For Various Needs, though they are not so connected to the Eucharistic Prayers of that title.

March 13, 2015  
Diocese of Tyler Liturgical Commission

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, cf GIRM 375-378.