

# Litany

A litany, which, in its original Greek means a "supplication" or "petition," was used for a wide range of liturgical occasions. Litanies originated in the 4th century, and were later incorporated into the Mass. Today, they're used in the liturgy of the Church, and other forms of public worship. A litany is the combination of invocations alternating with petitions in a rhythmic, repetitive pattern. Through this inspirational chorus of voices reaching towards heaven, we hope to strengthen our faith and obtain the favors for which we're praying.

Litanies are a form of prayer, led by a priest or deacon, containing a series of petitions to which people make fixed responses. Litanies have a definite structure: first the invocation of the persons of the Trinity, then the petitions corresponding to a distinctive theme, followed by three invocations of the Lamb of God, and closing with a short prayer that summarizes the petitions made.

Since the Second Vatican Council, these litanies have been formally indulgenced, i.e., a partial indulgence for every recitation. There are five litanies approved for public worship: the Holy Name, the Sacred Heart, the Precious Blood, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the saints. Other litanies, approved for use by the faithful but not thus indulgenced, number over a hundred.

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