

Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb

Introduction

1. The Church welcomes with joy and compassion the mothers who, recognizing that all life is a gift from God, come to the Church seeking a blessing for their unborn child. Such a blessing sustains the parents by imparting grace and comfort in time of concern and need, unites the parish in prayer for the unborn child, and fosters respect for human life within society. The blessing may be given by the Priest Celebrant within Mass, using the rites of blessing provided in nos. 3-9, or as a blessing outside Mass, celebrated by a Priest or, in his absence, by a Deacon, according to the rites given in nos. 10-22.
2. This Rite may be used for the blessing of an individual mother or of both the mother and the father, or on the occasion of a gathering of expectant parents.

A. Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb within Mass

3. The readings in the Liturgy of the Word are taken from the Lectionary for Mass for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America. Depending on what is indicated by the rubrics, the readings used are those of the day or may be taken from the section for Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions.

4. The homily follows the proclamation of the Gospel. In it, the Priest or Deacon, basing himself on the sacred text, gives an appropriate explanation of the grace and mystery of human life.

Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

5. The Prayer of the Faithful follows, either in the form used at Mass or in the form provided here. From the following intentions those most appropriate for the occasion may be used, or other appropriate intentions may be composed.

Priest:

We commend our cares and concerns to our heavenly Father through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as we say:

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or Reader:

For our Holy Father, Pope N., for our Bishop N., and for all those who have dedicated their lives to the service of God's people, that they may be faithful to the vocation they have received, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For our civic leaders, that performing their duties with justice and compassion, they may respect the gift of human life, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all expectant mothers, that as they await the birth of their children they may experience tranquility and good health, and safely deliver their children, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all families, that they may grow in their faith, strengthened in their love for one another and in their commitment to follow Christ, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For children who are unwanted, unloved, abandoned, or abused, that the Lord may inspire his people with compassion and courage to protect and care for them, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those for whom we pray in our personal intentions, that they may receive the graces they need, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the faithful departed, that they may enjoy in heaven the vision of God promised to all his sons and daughters, we pray to the Lord.

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer of Blessing

6. *If appropriate, the mother is invited to come forward, along with the father and other family members. With hands extended, the Priest concludes the intercessions by blessing the child in the womb and all those present, in these words.*

**God, author of all life,
bless, we pray, this unborn child;
give constant protection
and grant a healthy birth
that is the sign of our rebirth one day
into the eternal rejoicing of heaven.**

**Lord, who have brought to this woman
the wondrous joy of motherhood,
grant her comfort in all anxiety
and make her determined
to lead her child along the ways of salvation.**

[For the father:

**Lord of the ages,
who have singled out this man
to know the grace and pride of fatherhood,
grant him courage in this new responsibility,**

**and make him an example of justice and truth for
this child.]**

[For the family:

**Lord, endow this family
with sincere and enduring love
as they prepare to welcome this child into
their midst.]**

**Lord, you have put into the hearts of all men and
women of good will
a great awe and wonder at the gift of new life;
fill this (parish) community
with faithfulness to the teachings of the Gospel
and new resolve to share
in the spiritual formation of this child in Christ
our Savior,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

R/. Amen.

The prayer of blessing in the plural is included as an appendix to the Rite, for occasions in which more than one expectant mother is present.

7. If appropriate, the Priest, in silence, may sprinkle the parents of the unborn and any other family members present with holy water.

8. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist the *Order of Mass* as printed in the Missal is observed. If appropriate, some of the faithful bring forward bread and wine for the celebration of the

Eucharist and perhaps other gifts to relieve the needs of families in difficulty.

9. At the end of Mass, the Priest blesses those present in the usual manner, or with a more solemn formula of blessing, either from the Missal or with the following:

The Deacon or, in his absence, the Priest himself, says the invitation:

Bow down for the blessing.

Then the Priest, with hands extended over the people, says:

**May God, the source of all life,
protect you by his goodness.**

R/. Amen.

**May he deepen your faith,
build up your hope,
and constantly increase the gift of his love in you.**

R/. Amen.

**May he keep all children
strong in body and in spirit.**

R/. Amen.

**And may almighty God bless all of you,
who are gathered here,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.**

R/. Amen.