



NewsLetter

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CDWDS Confirms *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*

The text of the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, approved in English and Spanish by the USCCB in November 2008, has been confirmed by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; the English text was confirmed on December 8, 2011 (Prot. n. 1422/08/L), and the Spanish text followed on March 1, 2012 (Prot. n. 125/12/L). Timothy Cardinal Dolan, USCCB President, authorized its use in the liturgy as of March 26, 2012, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

This new blessing was originally developed in March 2008 by the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities for inclusion in the *Book of Blessings* and *Bendicional*, and further refined by the Committee on Divine Worship and the body of Bishops. The introduction to the rite observes that the blessing of an unborn child “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.”

Within Mass, the blessing of a child in the womb takes place after the Prayer of the Faithful; an additional solemn blessing at the end of Mass is also provided, drawn from number 272 of the *Book of Blessings*. The blessing may also take place within a celebration of the Word of God, celebrated by a priest or deacon either in a church or at another suitable location (such as a hospital, the home of the parents, etc.).

In sending the *recognitio* for the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, the Congregation also offered the following suggestion: “Supplementary materials for the faithful based on the themes of the ritual or even the text itself, such as a prayer card that could be prayed privately by an expectant mother, could certainly be created and distributed.” While there are no immediate plans to create such resources at a national level, diocesan efforts or even local efforts at the parish level could be undertaken at any time.

The text of the new *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb/Rito de bendición de una criatura en el vientre materno* will be made available on the USCCB website during the week before Mother’s Day (May 13, 2012), with a printed booklet to follow, published by USCCB Communications. (The two U.S. publishers of the *Book of Blessings*, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. and Liturgical Press, are also expected to publish editions of the rite.)

For the benefit of our readers, the English and Spanish texts of the Prayer of Blessing, as taken from the new rite, are reprinted on the next page.

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.

ORACIÓN DE BENDICIÓN

6. Si parece oportuno, se invita a la madre a pasar adelante, junto con el padre y otros miembros de la familia. Con las manos extendidas sobre la madre, el sacerdote concluye las intercesiones con la bendición de la criatura en el vientre materno y de todos los presentes, con las siguientes palabras:

Dios, autor de toda vida,
te pedimos que bendigas a este niño aún por nacer;
dale una constante protección
y un saludable nacimiento,
como signo de nuestro renacimiento, un día,
al gozo de la vida eterna en el cielo.

Señor, que has concedido a esta mujer
el gran gozo de la maternidad,
concédele serenidad en sus preocupaciones
y dale decisión para guiar a su hijo
por los caminos de la salvación.

[Bendición del padre:

Señor de todos los tiempos,
que has escogido a este hombre
para experimentar el don y el honor de la
paternidad,
dale fortaleza en esta nueva responsabilidad
para que sea ejemplo de justicia y verdad para su
hijo.]

[Bendición de la familia:

Señor, derrama sobre esta familia un amor sincero y
constante,
para que se preparen a recibir a este niño entre
ellos.]

Señor, que has puesto en el corazón de todos los
hombres y mujeres de buena voluntad
un gran respeto y admiración por el regalo de una
nueva vida,
haz que esta comunidad (parroquia),
fiel las enseñanzas del Evangelio,
participe en la educación espiritual de este niño,
en Cristo, nuestro Salvador.
Qué vive y reina por los siglos de los siglos.
R/. Amén.

Exploring the Biblical Allusions in the Order of Mass: Communion, Concluding Rites

As we conclude our series on the Scriptural allusions found in the Order of Mass, we turn to the time of Communion and the Concluding Rites. With the exception of the two private prayers said by the priest, these texts are nearly quotes from the Scriptures. The Psalms remain conspicuous, but the New Testament is dominant. The image of the Lamb, as both soteriological (John) and eschatological (Revelation), calls to mind these dimensions for our own Communion, and the faith and humility of the centurion in Luke should also be ours.

Each of the four dismissal formulas now begin with the imperative “Go,” calling to mind the times in the Gospels when Jesus gave a mission together with the command to go and fulfill it. The Bible is liturgical by nature. Its entire context is the initiative and dialogue of God with his people. The liturgy, too, is simply the ritualization of this divine initiative and dialogue. This is why the liturgical air we breathe is and will always be biblical.

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the
Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy
that you should come under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

May the Body (Blood) of Christ
keep me safe for eternal life.

What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,
may we possess in purity of heart,
that what has been given to us in time
may be our healing for eternity.

V/. Blessed be the name of the Lord.
R/. Now and for ever.
V/. Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Go forth, the Mass is ended.
Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
Go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). “Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the wedding feast of the Lamb’” (Rev 19:9).

The centurion sent friends to tell [Jesus], ‘Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Therefore, I did not consider myself worthy to come to you; but say the word and let my servant be healed’” (Lk 7:6-7).

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” (Jn 6:54; cf. Phil 4:7; Ps 121:7, 8).

“The aim of this instruction is love from a pure heart (1 Tim 1:5; cf. Mt 5:8; Ps 73:1).

“The leaves of the trees serve as medicine for the nations” (Rev 22:2).

“May the name of the LORD be blest both now and forevermore” (Ps 113:2).

“Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Ps 124:8).

“May God Almighty bless you...” (Gen 28:3; cf. Nm 6:23-27; Dt 14:29; Ps 29:11). *See also Mt 28:19.*

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16:15; cf. Mt 28:10; Mk 16:7; Acts 5:20). “He went home glorifying God” (Lk 5:25; cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 2 Thess 1:12). “The priest said to them, ‘Go in peace! The journey you are making is under the eye of the LORD’” (Jgs 18:6, NABRE; cf. 1 Sm 1:17; Mk 5:34; Lk 7:50, 8:48).

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gifts!” (2 Cor 9:15).

Two Upcoming Revised Liturgical Books from USCCB Communications

In recent months, attention has turned toward the republishing of various ritual editions which are influenced or affected by texts from the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. Many of the changes revolve around the replacement of texts which have a new translation (such as Collects, responses, and other prayers) and elements of style such as the capitalization of certain words and phrases. Two books from USCCB Communications will be published in the coming months to meet the pastoral need for coordinated liturgical books.

Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP)

A revised, English-only edition of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP)* will be published in mid-2012. Updated texts include the Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed), the Invitation to Communion ("Behold the Lamb of God," "Lord, I am not worthy"), and the response "And with your spirit" when a deacon greets the people.

In addition, minor changes in some of the rubrics better emphasize which texts and options are used during the liturgy without a priest. For example, there was confusion in chapter two (Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word) concerning which text was to be said as the opening prayer, and which was used as the prayer concluding the Prayer of the Faithful. The long-form composed prayer in no. 189 is always used as the opening prayer, while the "prayer of the day" drawn from the Collects of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, and located in Appendix III, is provided as an option for the prayer which concludes the Prayer of the Faithful.

In those places where the use of *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* has been permitted, this ritual has met an important pastoral need, while remaining faithful to the Church's commitment to keep the Eucharistic sacrifice ever before us as we pray for more vocations to the priesthood: may the Lord of the harvest send strong and worthy ministers to tend his vineyard.

Communion and Viaticum by an Extraordinary Minister / La Comunion y el Viático por un Ministro Extraordinario

One area of pastoral need is the administration of Holy Communion to those who are sick and cannot be present at Mass. *Communion and Viaticum by an Extraordinary Minister* is a bilingual edition of chapter 2 from *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, entitled "Administration of Communion and Viaticum to the Sick by an Extraordinary Minister." This short booklet offers both the longer and shorter rite of giving Communion to the sick, and the rite of viaticum to the dying. In addition to this particular resource from USCCB Communications, several other publishers have also prepared updated editions of similar resources derived from *Pastoral Care of the Sick*.

The Committee on Divine Worship, working in conjunction with liturgical publishers, is continuing to identify and update the books that are most needed at this time. In addition, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) has been authorized to prepare new translations of the *Rite of Confirmation* (first edition) and the *Rite for Celebrating Marriage* (second edition). Preliminary drafts ("Green Books") have been presented to English-language Conferences of Bishops for consultation. Consultation by the USCCB will take place this summer. ICEL plans to have final drafts ("Gray Books") presented to Conferences sometime in 2013. The development and renewal of the liturgy, particularly through the inculturating medium of an accurate and pastoral vernacular, is an essential though complicated process. The patience of all is appreciated, and the continued work of mystagogical catechesis for a more profound living of the mystery is to be encouraged.



**The Committee on Divine Worship
Wishes You a Blessed Easter!**