

PART IV

Family Prayers from Birth to Death



"The *Christian family* is . . . where God's children learn to pray 'as the Church' and to persevere in prayer" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2685). In addition to the prayer that frames each day, this section offers special blessings and prayers for important moments in the life of a family. Whether in times of joy or times of grief, God is always with us.

General Blessing for a Family or Household

[42]

The celebration of the blessing provided here is a suitable means of fostering the Christian life in the members of a family.

[46]

All make the Sign of the Cross.

[48]

The leader greets those present in the following words:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all,
now and forever.

 Amen.

[49]

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

From the Sacrament of Marriage the family has received newness of life and the grace of Christ. The family is specially important to the Church and to civil society, for it is the primary life-giving community.

In our celebration today we call down the Lord's blessing upon you (us), so that you (we) may continually be instruments of God's grace to one another and witnesses to faith in all the circumstances of life.

With God as our help you (we) fulfill your (our) mission by conforming your (our) entire life to the Gospel and so witness to Christ before the world.

[50]

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture.

Listen to the words of the first Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

12:12-14

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Now the body is not a single part, but many.

[51-52]

Or Ephesians 4:1-6—*Bear with one another lovingly;*
Romans 12:4-16—*Love each other with mutual affection.*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

[55]

The intercessions are then said.

Leader: Christ the Lord, the Word coeternal with the Father, lived among us and chose to be part of a family and to enrich it with his blessings. Let us humbly ask his favor and protection on this family.

✠ Lord, keep our family in your peace.

Through your own obedience to Mary and Joseph you consecrated family life; make this family holy by your presence.

For this we pray: ✠

You made your own family the model of prayer, of love, and of obedience to your Father's will; by your grace make this family holy and make it rich with your gifts.

For this we pray: ✠

[56]

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord's Prayer.

The leader says the prayer of blessing with hands joined:

[57]

O God,
you have created us in love and saved us in mercy,
and through the bond of marriage
you have established the family
and willed that it should become a sign
of Christ's love for his Church.

Shower your blessings on this family
gathered here in your name.
Enable those who are joined by one love
to support one another
by their fervor of spirit and devotion to prayer.
Make them responsive to the needs of others
and witnesses to the faith in all they say and do.
Through Christ our Lord.

R Amen.

The leader may sprinkle all with holy water brought home
from the church.

[59]

The leader concludes by saying:

[60]

May the Lord Jesus,
who lived with his Holy Family in Nazareth,
dwell also with your (our) family,
keep it from all evil,
and make all of you (us) one in heart and mind.

R Amen.

The blessing may conclude with singing "Now Thank We All Our
God" (page 57) or another appropriate song.

[61]

—From Book of Blessings

PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

Prayer for Families

We bless your name, O Lord,
for sending your own incarnate Son,
to become part of a family,
so that, as he lived its life,
he would experience its worries and its joys.

We ask you, Lord,
to protect and watch over this family,
so that in the strength of your grace
its members may enjoy prosperity,
possess the priceless gift of your peace,
and, as the Church alive in the home,
bear witness in this world to your glory.
Through Christ our Lord.

✠ Amen.

Prayer for Mothers

Loving God,
as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
so you watch over your Church.
Bless our mother.

Let the example of her faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, her family,
may honor her always
with a spirit of profound respect.
Through Christ our Lord.

✠ Amen.

Prayer for Fathers

God, you are the giver of all life,
human and divine.

Bless our father.

May he be the best of teachers for his children,
bearing witness to the faith
by what he says and does,
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

✠ Amen.

Prayers for Children**PRAYER FOR BAPTIZED CHILDREN**

[151]

Lord Jesus Christ,
you loved children so much that you said:
“Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me.”

Hear our prayers and, with your unfailing protection,
watch over these children (this child)
whom you have blessed with the grace of Baptism.

When they (he/she) have (has) grown to maturity,
grant that they (he/she) will confess your name in willing faith,
be fervent in charity,
and persevere courageously in the hope of reaching your Kingdom,
where you live and reign forever and ever.

✠ Amen.

At the conclusion of the prayer, the parents, godparents,
grandparents, etc., may trace the Sign of the Cross on each
child's forehead.

PRAYER FOR A CHILD NOT YET BAPTIZED

[166]

All-powerful God and Father,
 you are the source of all blessings, the protector of infants,
 whose gift of children enriches and brightens a marriage.
 Look with favor on this child
 and, when he (she) is reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
 bring him (her) into your own spiritual family, the Church,
 there to become a sharer in your Kingdom
 and with us to bless your name forever.
 Through Christ our Lord.
 ✠ Amen.

At the conclusion of the prayer, the parents, godparents-to-be, grandparents, etc., may trace the Sign of the Cross on each child's forehead.

—From Book of Blessings

Blessing of Grandparents

This blessing may be used at special family visits (such as for holidays), at the beginning or end of a visit, or at another appropriate time. If possible, the oldest grandchild might serve as the leader.

When the grandparents, parents, and children have gathered, all make the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Blessed be God, who is faithful through all generations.

✠ Blessed be God forever.

The leader introduces the blessing in these or similar words:

Grandparents are cherished members of our family. They bring gifts of wisdom, experience, and love and share with us their life of faith. We thank God for their example and ask that he bless them with happiness and good health.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of Psalm 128:

Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
and walk in his ways!
By the labor of your hands you shall eat.
You will be blessed and prosper.

Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive
around your table.
Indeed thus shall be blessed
the husband who fears the LORD.

May the LORD bless you from Zion.
May you see Jerusalem prosper
all the days of your life!
May you see your children's children.
On Israel, peace!

(The family Bible may be used for an alternate reading, such as Ezekiel 37:24b-27.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer. Then the leader prays:

Lord God almighty,
 bless our grandparents with long life, happiness, and health.
 May they remain constant in your love
 and be living signs of your presence
 to their children and grandchildren.
 Through Christ our Lord.
 ✠ Amen.

All make the Sign of the Cross as the leader concludes:

May God bless us and keep us
 all the days of our lives.
 ✠ Amen.

Blessing on Birthdays

It is always appropriate to give thanks to God, but especially so on the occasion of a birthday. The birthday celebration provides an opportunity for acknowledging and giving thanks to God as the author and giver of life. [323]

A birthday is also an appropriate occasion for children to express love and thanks to their parents, who have shared the gift of life and love with them. [324]

All make the Sign of the Cross as the leader says: [340]

Blessed be the name of the Lord.
 ✠ Now and forever.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example: [341]