**CHAPTER 9**

**ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF TRAVELLERS**

**Introduction**

617 The practice of having special prayers to ask for God's protection upon travellers, a custom often mentioned in the Bible, should be respected. The order of blessing presented in this chapter provides a model for such prayers, in order that this devout practice will continue to be observed.

This order may be used especially in the case of those who leave their country or home, even if only temporarily, to seek employment or for others who travel, for example, on holiday.

618 The present order may be used by a priest, a deacon, or a lay minister. While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the minister should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

619 If just one traveller is to be blessed or a small group, the shorter rite provided in nos. 635-638 may be used.

**I. ORDER OF BLESSING**

**Introductory Rites**

620 When the community has gathered, the minister says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross and reply:

Amen.

621 A minister who is a priest or deacon greets those present in the following or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

May the Lord, the dawn from on high who breaks upon us to guide our feet into the way of peace, be with you all.

All make the following or some other suitable reply.

And also with you.

622 A lay minister greets those present in the following words.

May the Lord turn his face toward us and guide our feet into the way of peace, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

623 In the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing.

Let us entrust those who are leaving to the hands of the Lord. Let us pray that he will give them a prosperous journey and that as they travel they will praise him in all his creatures; that they will experience God's own goodness in the hospitality they receive and bring the Good News of salvation to all those they meet; that they will be courteous toward all; that they will greet the poor and afflicted with kindness and know how to comfort and help them.

**Reading of the Word of God**

624 A reader, another person present, or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture.

Luke 3:3-6 Make straight the path of the Lord.

625 or

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Take to heart these words at home and abroad.

626 or

Genesis 12:1-9 Go forth to a land I will show you.

Genesis 28:10-16 1 am with you, l will protect you wherever you go.

Tobit 5:17-22 May God in heaven protect you on the way and bring you back safe and sound.

Luke 24:13-35 Jesus approached and began to walk with them.

John 14:1-11 I am the way, the truth, and the life.

627 As circumstances suggest, one of the following responsorial psalms may be sung or said, or some other suitable song.

Psalm 22 R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Psalm 24:5-6, 9-10, 12-13 R. Teach me your ways, O Lord.

Psalm 90:1-2, 10-15 R. He has put his angels in charge of you, to guard you in all your ways.

628 As circumstances suggest, the minister may give those present a brief explanation of the biblical text, so that they may understand through faith the meaning of the celebration.

**Intercessions**

629 As circumstances suggest, the prayer of blessing may be preceded by the intercessions. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following intentions those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed. The intentions are followed immediately by the prayer of blessing, no. 631.

The minister says:

God is the beginning and the end of every road we take. In confidence we call upon him, saying:

R. Lord, watch over our every step.

or

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Assisting minister:

Father, all-holy, you gave us your only Son as our way to you; make us follow without faltering wherever he may lead. (For this we pray:) R.

Assisting minister:

At every moment and in every place you are near to those who serve you; keep our brothers and sisters in your fatherly care, so that they will find that you are with them on their journey, even as they hope to live with you in heaven. (For this we pray:) R.

Assisting minister:

Of old you made yourself the guide and the way for your people as they wandered in the desert; be our protector as we set out on this journey, so that we may return home safely. (For this we pray:) R.

Assisting minister:

You made hospitality to strangers one of the signs of your coming kingdom; grant that all those who are homeless may find a permanent place to live. (For this we pray:) R.

630 When there are no intercessions, the minister, before the prayer of blessing and using the following or other similar words, invites those present to ask for God's help.

Lord, teach us your ways: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

Minister:

Lord, send help from your sanctuary: Lord, have mercy. R.

Minister:

Lord, be our tower of strength: Lord, have mercy. R.

Minister:

Lord, save your servants, for they hope in you: Lord, have mercy. R.

As circumstances suggest, all may then pray for a moment in silence before the prayer of blessing.

**Prayer of Blessing**

631 A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.

A minister who is not going to accompany the travelers says the following prayer.

All-powerful and merciful God,

you led the children of Israel on dry land,

parting the waters of the sea;

you guided the Magi to your Son by a star.

Help these our brothers and sisters and give them a safe journey.

Under your protection let them reach their destination

and come at last to the eternal haven of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

632 A minister who is to accompany the travelers says the following prayer.

All-powerful and ever-living God,

when Abraham left his own land and departed from his own people,

you kept him safe all through his journey.

Protect us, who also are your servants: walk by our side to help us;

be our companion and our strength on the road

and our refuge in every adversity. Lead us, O Lord,

so that we will reach our destination in safety

and happily return to our homes.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

**Concluding Rite**

633 A minister who is a priest or deacon concludes the rite by saying:

May the Lord remain constantly at your (our) side

and in his mercy guide your (our) journey

in ways that are pleasing to him.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Then he blesses all present.

And may almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

634 A lay minister invokes God's blessing on the travelers and all present by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May almighty God bless us

and hear our prayers for a safe journey.

R. Amen.

**II. SHORTER RITE**

635 The minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

636 One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Tobit 4:19

John 14:6

637 Then the minister says the prayer of blessing.

All-powerful and ever-living God,

when Abraham left his own land

and departed from his own people,

you kept him safe all through his journey.

Protect us, who also are your servants:

walk by our side to help us;

be our companion and our strength on the road

and our refuge in every adversity.

Lead us, O Lord,

so that we will reach our destination in safety

and happily return to our homes.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

638 or

May God bless you with every heavenly blessing

and give you a safe journey;

wherever life leads you,

may you find him there to protect you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.