**Parents before childbirth**

**VII. ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF PARENTS BEFORE CHILDBIRTH**

Introduction

215 A husband and wife participate in God's love through the sacrament of marriage and cooperate in the gift of life through the conception of a child. It is appropriate that they receive God's blessing together as they wait in faith and hope for the birth of their child.

When only the mother is present, the Order for the Blessing of a Mother before Childbirth, nos. 240-252, is used.

216 The blessing may be celebrated at any time during the pregnancy.

217 These orders may be used by a priest or a deacon, and also by a layper�son, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister, or a family member.

**A. ORDER OF BLESSING**

Introductory Rites

218 When the community has gathered, a suitable song may be sung. After the singing, 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:

R. Amen.

219 A minister who is a priest or deacon greets those present in the fol�lowing or other suitable words, taken mainly from sacred Scripture.

May Christ, who became like us in the womb of the Vir�gin Mary, be with you all.

And all reply:

And also with you.

220 A lay minister greets those present in the following words:

Brothers and sisters, let us bless the Lord Jesus, who in the womb of the Virgin Mary became like us. Blessed be God for ever.

R. Blessed be God for ever.

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

God, the Lord of life, brings every human creature into being and rules and sustains the life of each one of us. He has particular care for those born of a Christian mar�riage, since through the sacrament of baptism they will receive the gift of divine life itself. These parents-to-be are partners in God's love and seek his blessing because they already cherish the child they have conceived and because they await the hour of their child's birth in faith and hope.

Reading of the Word of God

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

Samuel: 1:19-20, 24 � 2:1 � The birth of Samuel.

223 or

Luke 1:39-45 � The baby leapt in my womb for joy.

Luke 1:26-38 � You shall conceive and bear a son.

Luke 2:1-14 � She gave birth to her firstborn son.

224 As circumstances suggest, the following responsorial psalm may be sung, or some other suitable song.

Psalm 32 � R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

225 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.

Litany

226 The litany is then said. The minister introduces it and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the invocations. From the fol�lowing those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other invocations that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The minister says:

Christ the Lord, the blessed fruit of Mary's womb, by the mystery of his incarnation filled the world with his grace and goodness. Let us therefore raise our voices to praise him, saying:

R. Blessed are you, O Lord, for your loving kindness.

Assisting minister:

Christ our Lord, you bless the love of husband and wife through the sacrament of marriage. We pray: R.

Assisting minister:

Christ our Lord, you assumed our nature in order that we may be reborn as children of God. We pray: R.

Assisting minister:

Christ our Lord, you give the example of Mary and Joseph to N. and N., that they may be loving parents. We pray: R.

Assisting minister:

Christ our Lord, through the ministry of parents you fill the Church with joy by enriching it with new children. We pray: R.

227 After the litany the minister, in the following or similar words, invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer.

Remember us, Lord, when you come to your kingdom, and teach us how to pray:

All:

Our Father . . .

Prayer of Blessing

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

Gracious Father,

your Word, spoken in love, created the human family

and, in the fullness of time,

your Son, conceived in love, restored it to your friendship.

Hear the prayers of N. and N.,

who await the birth of their child.

Calm their fears when they are anxious.

Watch over and support these parents

and bring their child into this world safely and in good health,

so that as members of your family

they may praise you and glorify you

through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

Concluding Rite

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

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

R. Amen.

May the Son nourish your faith, build up your hope,

and deepen in you the gift of his love.

R. Amen.

May the Spirit of love be attentive to your prayers

and strengthen you as the hour of childbirth draws near.

R. Amen.

Then he blesses all present.

And may almighty God bless you all,

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

R. Amen.

230 A lay minister concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May God, who chose to give us the joys of eternal salva�tion

through the motherhood of Mary and the protection of Joseph,

bless and keep us in his care, now and for ever.

R. Amen.

231 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

**B. SHORTER RITE**

232 All make the sign of the cross as the minister says:

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Now and for ever.

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

1 Samuel 1:19-20, 24 � 2:1 � The birth of Samuel.

234 or

Luke 1:39-45 � The baby leapt in my womb for joy.

Luke 1:26-38 � You shall conceive and bear a son.

Luke 2:1-14 � She gave birth to her firstborn son.

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Watch over and support these parents

and bring their child into this world

safely and in good health,

so that as members of your family

they may praise you and glorify you

through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, now and for ever.

R. Amen.