

## Feast of the Holy Family

### Blessing on Families

*Growing up in a prayer-filled home is a beautiful and powerful thing. Parents can pray over their children from the moment they are conceived through adulthood. Children can learn alongside their parents how to pray to the Lord themselves. Siblings can pray for and with one another as they resolve conflict and build strong relationships. Extended family can cover loved ones in prayer through both joyful and challenging seasons. Praying together as a family can be a transformative experience that not only brings family members closer to God, but closer to one another!*

*The following blessing has been adapted from the 'Book of Blessings: Order for the Blessing of a Family' (International Commission on English in the Liturgy, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1989). For pastoral considerations, the blessing below may be administered during the celebration of Mass on the Feast of the Holy Family, in a separate 'Service of Blessing', or on request.*

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

My dear friends, 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, so that you may continually be instruments of God's grace to one another and witnesses to faith in all the circumstances of life. With God as your help you will fulfil your mission by conforming your entire life to the Gospel and so witness to Christ before the world.

*The following texts from scripture may be read if the blessing is administered outside the celebration of Mass. If administered during the celebration of Sunday Mass, the readings of the day should be read.*

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

(4:1-6)

Bear with one another lovingly. I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Or

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians: (12:12-14)

We are all one body. 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

Or

Romans 12:4-16--Love each other with mutual affection.

1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:7--Love is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

### **Intercessions**

*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.*

### **Minister:**

Christ the Lord, the Word co-eternal 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 for his favour and protection on this family.

**R. Lord, keep our family in your peace.**

**Or: R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

Through your own obedience to Mary and Joseph you consecrated family life; make this family holy by your presence. (For this we pray:) R.

Your heart was set on the concerns of your Father; make every home a place where he is worshiped with reverence. (For this we pray:) R.

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:) R.

You loved those who were close to you and they returned your love; bind all families together in the bonds of peace and of love for each other. (For this we pray:) R.

At Cana in Galilee, when a new family was beginning, you gladdened it with your first miracle, changing water into wine; alleviate the sorrows and worries of this family and change them into joy. (For this we pray:) R.

In your concern for the integrity of your family you said: "Let no one separate those whom God has bound together"; bind this husband and wife ever more closely together in the bond of your own love. (For this we pray:) R.

**Minister:**

Gracious God, help us to love each other fervently. Inspire us with a spirit of hospitality, love, mutual respect and compassion. We ask these prayers through Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

*If the Order of Blessing is administered outside of Mass, the minister may invite all present to conclude the intercessions by praying the Lord's prayer.*

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour taught us:

All: Our Father...

## Prayer of Blessing

*With hands outstretched over those gathered, the ministers says:*

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.

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

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**R. Amen.**

Or

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.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**R. Amen.**