

Faith in Five – Adults Blessings



1. Blessings are called "sacramentals" because they prepare us to receive the grace of the sacraments and help us to grow to be more like Christ (CCC, 1670). "Among sacramentals, blessings (of persons, meals, objects, and places) come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for his gifts. In Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father 'with every spiritual blessing' " (CCC, 1671). The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "every baptized person is called to be a 'blessing,' and to bless".
2. Blessing is the divine and life-giving action, the source of which is the Father. It is both word and gift. When applied to us, the word blessing towards God means bowing in adoration and surrender to our Creator in thanksgiving.

At the Mass we give back to God every good thing He gives to us in adoration, praise and thanksgiving - presenting ourselves, His own gifts – back to him. When we bless God, we directly address God. We cannot make God bigger or better when we bless Him, but we recognize his great richness, and express our gratitude and delight in seeing and experiencing it.

3. There are several types of blessings:
 - a. **Constitutive** - These permanently bring about the dedication of a person or object in the service of the Church. For example, the blessing of an altar.
 - b. **Invocative** - These ask God for help to those who are in need or those who will use certain objects.

The proper person to give the blessing depends on the type of blessing. Objects for typical use in a parish or diocese are normally blessed by the bishop. The more the blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is the administration reserved to ordained ministry. For example, the dedication of an altar, the blessing of the oils on Holy Thursday.
4. In the liturgical sense, a blessing is a rite consisting of a ceremony and prayers performed in the name and with the authority of the Church by a duly qualified minister; persons or objects are sanctified as dedicated to Divine service or by which certain marks of Divine favor are invoked upon them.

When blessings are bestowed by priests and bishops on objects such as a new rosary or statue, it becomes a sacramental. God works directly through the words and actions of ordained priests and other clerics as they intercede for the faithful.

5. While the laity can bless, **their blessings are more of a prayer or a plea to God**. A prayer of blessing is one that calls on God's grace to care for a person, place, thing or undertaking. The blessing is involving God to bring about the good for another person.

6. Outside of the liturgy, laypeople can give certain blessings in certain ways. For example, a parent can bless a child, an elder can bless a youngster, etc. – in general, someone by virtue of their special office or authority over another can bless the recipient. When priests and laypeople give blessings, the Church typically provides norms with different words and gestures so that the distinction between their respective roles are clearly defined ([Source](#)).
7. Laypeople should always avoid priestly gestures such as raising their hands in the orans posture, [\[see article 6, § 2\]](#) or making the sign of the cross over others. Perhaps tracing the cross on the forehead is enough, or simply laying a hand on the head, or no gesture at all, are better. In settings where laypeople are praying for one another, such as in a prayer group or setting for healing or deliverance, similar rules should be followed: avoiding overtly priestly gestures, being content to lay hands, or making no gesture at all.
8. The Church's *Book of Blessings* and liturgical books offer provisions for layperson blessings, which omit the use of the sign of the cross over the person or group, and the use of the word 'I'. A priest would say: "I Bless you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", while making the sign of the cross over the person or group. A layperson would say: "We ask God's Blessing be with you (us) in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," while making a personal sign of the cross, and not one over the person or group ([Source](#)).
9. Blessings like the ones contained in *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*, can be prayed by anyone who has been baptized, "in virtue of the universal priesthood, a dignity they possess because of their baptism and confirmation" (Book of Blessings, no. 18).
10. Whenever an ordained minister is present, he should be called upon to give a blessing. However, there may be a time when you are asked for or called upon to lead a prayer of blessing. One good guide, uses the [YOU-WHO-DO-THROUGH](#) structure:

YOU- begin by addressing God or naming God. e.g., God of new beginnings .

WHO- name 'WHO' God is for us, e.g. You are our strength and hope.

DO- we ask God to bless, to 'DO' something e.g., Be with us as we journey together this year, bless the work we undertake.

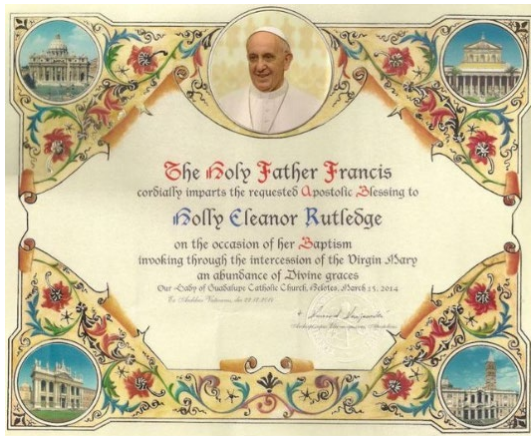
THROUGH - We pray to God in and THROUGH Christ, so our prayer concludes with a simple Through Christ our Lord, Amen [**or in Jesus' Name, Amen**]. (added bracketed information by this writer)
11. The phrase, "**In Jesus' Name**" is a powerful call upon the Lord to hear our prayer. John 14:13-14 states, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it".
12. Right after telling his disciples to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," Jesus instructs them to "bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you"

(Luke 6:28). St. Paul echoes the Lord's command when he exhorts the Romans to "bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them" (Rom 12:14). St. Peter urges that each time we are on the receiving end of evil, we should return "a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9).

13. How to return a blessing to someone who has done you wrong:

- **Place your trust on Christ**, do not look at the offense. Take comfort in God's Word, do not hold on to negative emotions or the hurt inflicted upon you. Offer this burden to God for your own peace and healing.
- **Pray for the person who hurt you**. Pray that the Lord blesses them, that the Holy Spirit may work in them to bring them closer to God.
- **Extend mercy, forgiveness and grace**. Remember God's love and grace towards you. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy." (Matthew 5:7)

14. Papal Blessings - The apostolic blessing or [papal blessing](#) is a blessing imparted by the pope, either directly or by delegation through others. The Holy Father offers blessings for Catholics for special occasions such as Baptisms, Confirmations, marriages, birthdays, and anniversaries. Papal blessings come in the form of printed certificates or parchment with the name(s) of the recipient(s) and the occasion inscribed on them. Many people treasure these certificates as important symbols of sacraments and other special occasions. (Image Source: Google)



As of March 10, 2019, Papal Blessings requests can only be made online or in person at the Office of Papal Charities at the Vatican. All donation proceeds are applied entirely to the charitable works under the direction of the Office of Papal Charities (a service of the Holy See) in the name of the Holy Father, in service to the poor.

The title of the head of the Office of Papal Charities is the Papal Almoner, or the Almoner of His Holiness, who is charged with embodying the Holy Father's care and

concern for the poor. Pope Leo XIII delegated to the almoner the faculty of granting the Apostolic Blessing by parchment certificate. This means that these blessings are only authentic if they bear the signature and seal of the Papal Almoner.

To apply for a blessing online, please visit the [Elemosineria Apostolica](#) website.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits. (Psalm 103:2)

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