

The Rite of Blessing of the Child in the Womb **A guide to having a ceremony within Mass during Advent**

Timeline:

1. Meet with your Pastor in October or early November to discuss the program and get his approval to hold the ceremony (See guidelines below).
2. Turn in bulletin announcement (see attached) by mid-November.
3. Run this bulletin announcement for at least 3 weeks, so that it will be in the bulletin for the last weeks of November and the first weeks of December, inviting expectant mothers and their families to attend this mass.
4. Use other methods of publicity, if appropriate, such as placing an announcement and invitation on your church website or adding it to e-communications.

Your committee may wish to organize a reception following the mass, to further honor these parents. Some parishes have given out flowers to the expectant families, or the lovely little booklet, *Gift of Joy*, by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz and Msgr. J. Brian Bransfield.

Guidelines for Ceremony (to be discussed with Pastor):

1. It is suggested that the blessing follows the Prayers of the Faithful within the mass.

Please refer to the USCCB document for suggested prayers of the faithful can be found beginning on page 5 in the document, followed by the blessing on page 6 for one family:

<http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/upload/Rite-for-the-Blessing-of-a-Child-in-the-Womb.pdf>

The text below can be found on pages 20 and 21 (using the plural form, if multiple mothers will be present). There is also a Spanish version, immediately following the English version, beginning on page 22.

2. Ask your Pastor to review and approve the bulletin announcement (see next page).

Immediately following the Prayers of the Faithful, the mothers are invited to come forward, along with fathers and other family members who are present. With hands extended, the celebrant blesses the children in the womb and all those present, in these words:

Blessing of the Child in the Womb:

**God, author of all life, bless, we pray, these unborn children;
give them constant protection and grant them a healthy birth
that is the sign of our rebirth one day into the eternal rejoicing of heaven.
Lord, who have brought to these women the wondrous joy of motherhood,
grant them comfort in all anxiety and make them determined
to lead their children along the ways of salvation.**

[For the fathers:

**Lord of the ages, who have singled out these men to know the grace and pride of
fatherhood,
grant them courage in this new responsibility, and make them examples of justice and truth
for these children.]**

[For the family:

**Lord, endow these families with sincere and enduring love as they prepare to welcome these
children into their midst.]**

**Lord, you have put into the hearts of all men and women of good will a great awe and
wonder at the gift of new life;
fill this (parish) community with faithfulness to the teachings of the Gospel and new resolve
to share in the spiritual formation of these children in Christ our Savior, who lives and
reigns forever and ever.**

R/. Amen.

Suggested Bulletin Announcement:

Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb



Expectant parents in the Diocese of Raleigh are invited to participate in a ceremony to bless their child in the womb, which will be held on Sunday, December XX, at [all masses . . . the 11:00 mass. . . other?] This Sunday is sometimes called Gaudete Sunday (Gaudete means “Rejoice”) which reminds the church of the joy that Christ’s birth will bring to us. *(Or alternatively the Feast of the Holy Family is an appropriate time for this blessing).*

This ceremony during Mass not only provides the opportunity for God's blessing for expectant parents and their child in the womb, but also for effective witness to the sanctity of human life from the first moment of conception.

The Committee on Divine Worship of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) crafted the booklet to support parents awaiting the birth of their child, to encourage parish prayers for—and recognition of—the precious gift of the child in the womb, and to foster respect for human life within society. It was released in

May of 2012 for use by dioceses in the United States.

*God, author of all life,
bless, we pray, this unborn child;
give constant protection and grant a healthy birth
that is the sign of our rebirth one day
into the eternal rejoicing of heaven...*

- excerpt from "[Rite for the Blessing](#) of the Child in the Womb."